

The Feast of Dedication

1-14-18 AM

John 10:22 At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; 23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.

In John 10:22, Jesus is shown at the temple attending the Feast of Dedication. In the list of feasts in Leviticus 23, this one is absent. It is because this feast was created following events that occurred in what we call the inter-testament period, between the book of Malachi and Mark. In a sense, it is still referenced in Scripture indirectly through the prophecy of Daniel.

The Abomination of Desolation

In Daniel 11:31, Daniel foresaw a Greek king who would desecrate the temple in Jerusalem. This is the abomination of desolation that occurred again after Jesus' time (see Matt. 24). It happened around 163BC, when the Greek king Antiochus came to Jerusalem. In the non-inspired history 1 Maccabees, we read that King Antiochus *"entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials. and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off"* (1 Mac. 1:21-22). The same text goes on to say that Jerusalem's *"sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness, her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach her honour into contempt. As had been her glory, so was her dishonour increased, and her excellency was turned into mourning* (1 Mac. 1:39-40). Later, the Jews restored the temple, and instituted the feast of dedication.

There are several themes that we might use in preparing ourselves for a new year in service to God. The first pertains to the lampstand, and the second to dedicating ourselves to God.

The Lampstand

Of particular note in the desecration of the temple was the theft of the lampstand. This was a special lampstand which provided all of the light to the sanctuary (Ex. 25:31, 26:35). A priest required the light of this lampstand to enter and perform his duty. One of the emblems of this feast became this lampstand. It remembered when the light was out, and it was a promise not to let it happen again. The lampstand became an image of the concept of re-dedication

Keeping the Light in the Church

There are two important concepts of the temple today. The Temple is the church that Jesus built (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:16). It is similar to the ark of Noah in that it has one door (John 10:7 w/ Gal. 3:27) and only one source of light (2 Peter 1:19). This relates to us a very simple idea: the church can only do what Scripture reveals. That light is the Spirit of God, who is manifested as the Scriptures. Thus, we have the word, which is a light to our feet as we walk by faith. *"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place"* (2 Peter 1:19).

Keeping the Light in the Body

According to Scripture, our individual body is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). It is necessary that here too the light is present. It is like the altar of David in 1 Chron. 21; it must be purchased and has been directed by God (Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 6:20). Your steps are guided by the Word of God. This is the light in the body.

Consider Rededication.

When the Jews repaired the temple, they purged out the old materials (the Greek idols) and they replaced the instruments of worship. In this way the light was restored. Then they pledged to remember the temple. This is a lesson to us on rededication. A rededication of YOUR temple to God requires us to Remove the idols (Col. 3:5), renew your heart as an instrument of worship, (Rom. 12:2) and to keep your pledge to God (2 Cor. 9:13).

*Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God.....
Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit,
perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

2 Corinthians 6:16-17:1