



## *Addendum to Chanukah and Assimilation Study*

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As we have concluded the celebration of Chanukah for another year, I had done a little additional study in preparation for another presentation of our PowerPoint on Chanukah: ***Assimilation? Chanukah is for Christians, too!***

Here at Set Apart Ministries, we remain convinced of the importance of this celebration for our remembrance of the need to resist assimilation into the world culture. We still see this annual reminder as a powerful message for us today, in the midst of so much hostility toward Israel and all who bless Israel. May we be modern day Maccabees and stand firm for our Messiah, the God of Israel, whether we are of Judah or Joseph or of the grafted-in ones, their companions!

Yet even in the final chapters of the story, we see evidence of the assimilation. Mattithias and his sons were zealous for our YHWH and His Torah, refusing to “go along to get along” with the prevailing world power and spent many years of their lives in resistance. The part of the story that isn’t often told is that the dynasty that came of their resistance during the lifespan of Mattithias sons did eventually become corrupt and was guilty of forcing other people to “convert” to the ways of YHWH in much the same way they initially resisted. Apparently they lost their zeal for our Elohim and became more interested in control? How quickly we can forget our ideals and even adopt the very thing we once stood against!

In presentation of what Chanukah means today, we find the heroic story of the Maccabees and even mention of the many times throughout history that Jewish people have been so persecuted. One of those times led to the inclusion of a gambling game as a ruse to hide their study of Scriptures, spinning the dreidel. The point of it, at the time, was that they were in fact studying the Word which was prohibited by the authorities. They knew they could be interrupted and caught at any time. So they kept the dreidel at hand so that they could ***appear to be*** playing the game when in fact, they were in the Word. They even developed a story to fit the letters on the top to match the story of the miracle of the oil.

Today, though I am sure there are some people who would study the Word by the candlelight of the modified menorah, by far the biggest emphasis seems to be on playing the dreidel game. The ruse has ***become*** the cherished behavior.

How carefully we must watch that even traditions begun in good faith and for good reason can fall away and become something that is not pleasing to our God.