



Festival of Lights

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE
OF HANNUKAH

Hanukkah

The observance of Hanukkah takes place on the 25th day of Kislev (Hebrew calendar) and is celebrated for eight nights.

In 2021 Hanukkah takes place from Sunset November 28 until sunset on December 6.

Historical context

To understand Hannukah we should understand the Maccabean Revolt and the writings of the Apocrypha.

The Maccabean Revolt

A Jewish rebellion led by the Maccabees against the Seleucid Empire and against Hellenistic influence on Jewish life. The main phase of the revolt lasted from 167-160BC.



Antiochus Epiphanes

launched a massive campaign of repression against the Jewish religion in 168 BCE. The reason he did so is not entirely clear, but it seems to have been related to the King mistaking an internal conflict among the Jewish priesthood as a full-scale rebellion.



Judas Maccabeus & The Maccabees

This repression triggered exactly the revolt that Antiochus IV had feared, with a group of Jewish fighters led by Judas Maccabeus and his family rebelling in 167 BC and seeking independence.

Apocrypha

The apocryphal books of Maccabees 1 and 2 are not in the protestant Bible... why?



FACTS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- Consists of 14 books
- Written during the inter-testamental period
- No prophet was recognized during this 400 year period
- Earliest church fathers did not recognize them

FACTS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- Earliest list of Old Testament canon dates to 170 AD by Melito of Sardis and does not include Apocrypha
- Neither Jesus or His apostles quoted from or alluded to any of the 14 books

FACTS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- The books themselves make no claim of being inspired
- The Apocrypha were not canonized until the council of Trent in 1546
- A method to distinguish protestant from Catholic is the adoption of a slightly different Bible

FACTS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- The Apocrypha contain theological discrepancies such as condoning magic, salvation by works (giving alms purges sins), offering for the dead (giving money for forgiveness of sins of the dead), and more...

FACTS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- 1st and 2nd Maccabees and 1st and 2nd Esdras contain some good history and errors
- The Apocrypha should not be considered inspired or placed in line with Scripture



There was a group called the Maccabees and there was a revolt but as a whole the Apocrypha should not be considered canon.



Is Hanukkah Biblical

WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT
CELEBRATE?

Traditional view

Antiochus ordered an altar to Zeus to be erected in the Temple. He banned circumcision and ordered pigs to be sacrificed at the altar of the temple.



Shabbat 21b: The William Davidson Talmud

"For when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the [kohen gadol](#) (high priest),

Shabbat 21b: The William Davidson Talmud

but which contained sufficient [oil] for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein, and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving."



The Menorah



**Nes Gadol Haya
Sham:
“A Great Miracle
Happened There.”**





Is a Christian required to
celebrate Hanukkah?

John 8:12

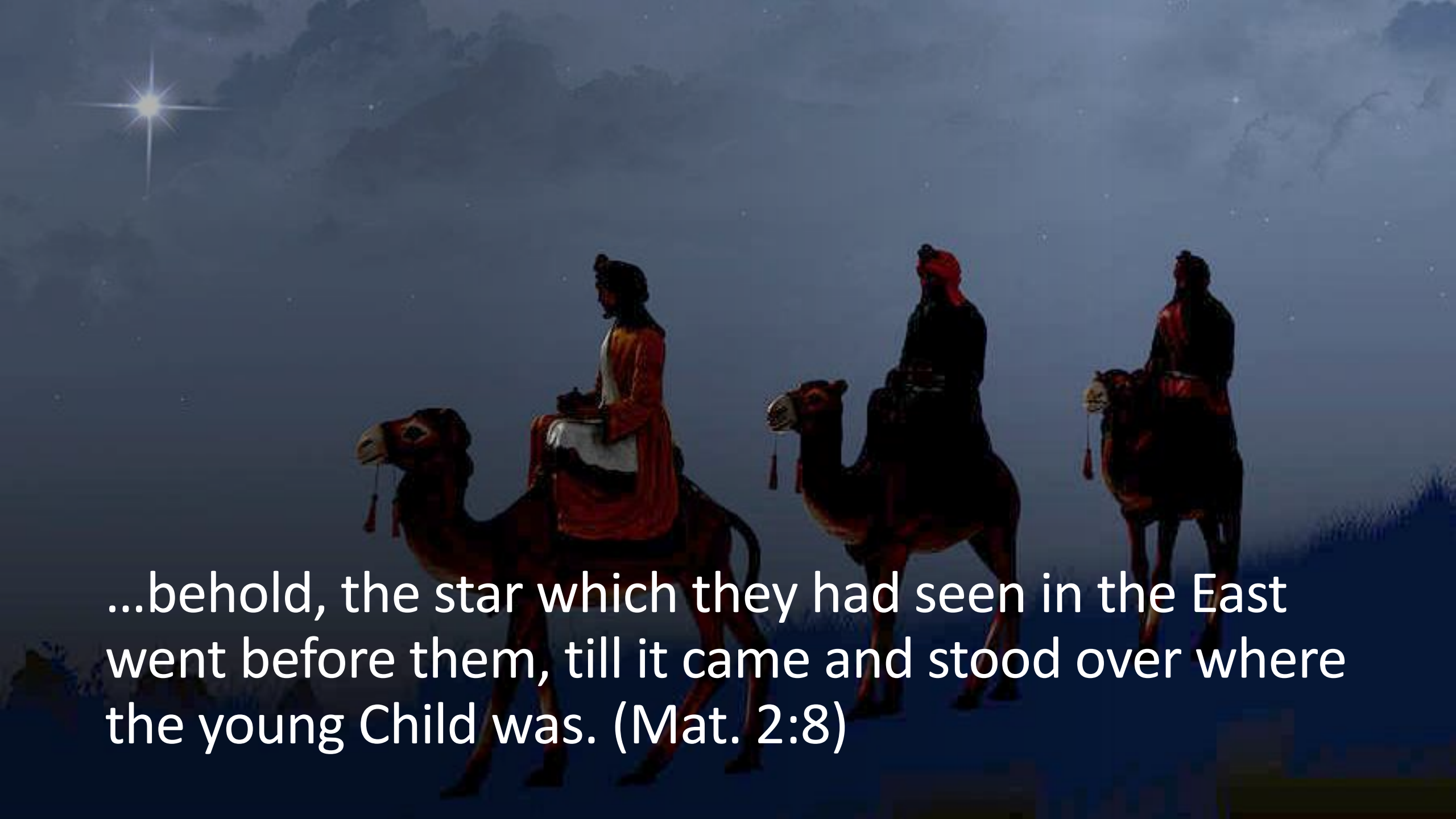
Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”



Matthew 5:14

“You are the light of the World. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”



The image depicts three wise men, or Magi, riding camels across a dark, starry night sky. They are silhouetted against the deep blue and black background, with their forms highlighted by a soft, ethereal light. The lead camel is on the left, followed by the other two. In the upper left corner, a bright, multi-pointed star shines prominently, representing the Star of Bethlehem. The overall mood is mysterious and divine.

...behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. (Mat. 2:8)

a Psalm
of Thanksgiving



Psalm 30: A Psalm of Thanksgiving

“You I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted
me up,
And have not let my foes rejoice over me.

Psalm 30:2

O LORD my God, I cried out to You,
And You healed me.

Psalm 30:3

O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave;
You have kept me alive, that I should not go
down to the pit.

Psalm 30:4

Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His,
And give thanks at the remembrance of His
holy name.

Psalm 30:5

For His anger *is but for* a moment,
His favor *is for* life;
Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy *comes* in the morning.

Psalm 30:6

Now in my prosperity I said,
“I shall never be moved.”

Psalm 30:7

LORD, by Your favor You have made my
mountain stand strong;
You hid Your face, *and* I was troubled.

Psalm 30:8

I cried out to You, O LORD;

And to the LORD I made supplication:

Psalm 30:9

“What profit *is there* in my blood,
When I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise You?
Will it declare Your truth?”

Psalm 30:10

Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me;
LORD, be my helper!”

Psalm 30:11

You have turned for me my mourning into
dancing;

You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me
with gladness,

Psalm 30:12

To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to You
and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You
forever.



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