

THE HISTORY OF CHANUKAH



In 300 BC when Greek soldiers came to the Middle East they brought with them many aspects of their culture.



Including:

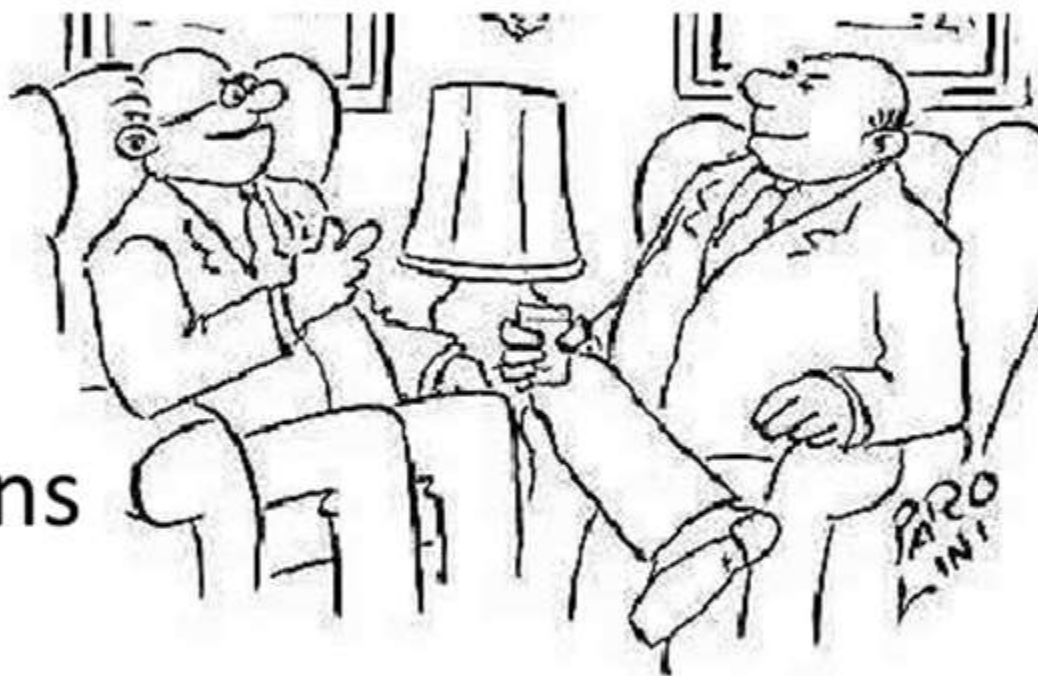
- Art
- Philosophy
- Architecture
- Sports



And a new culture was formed called:

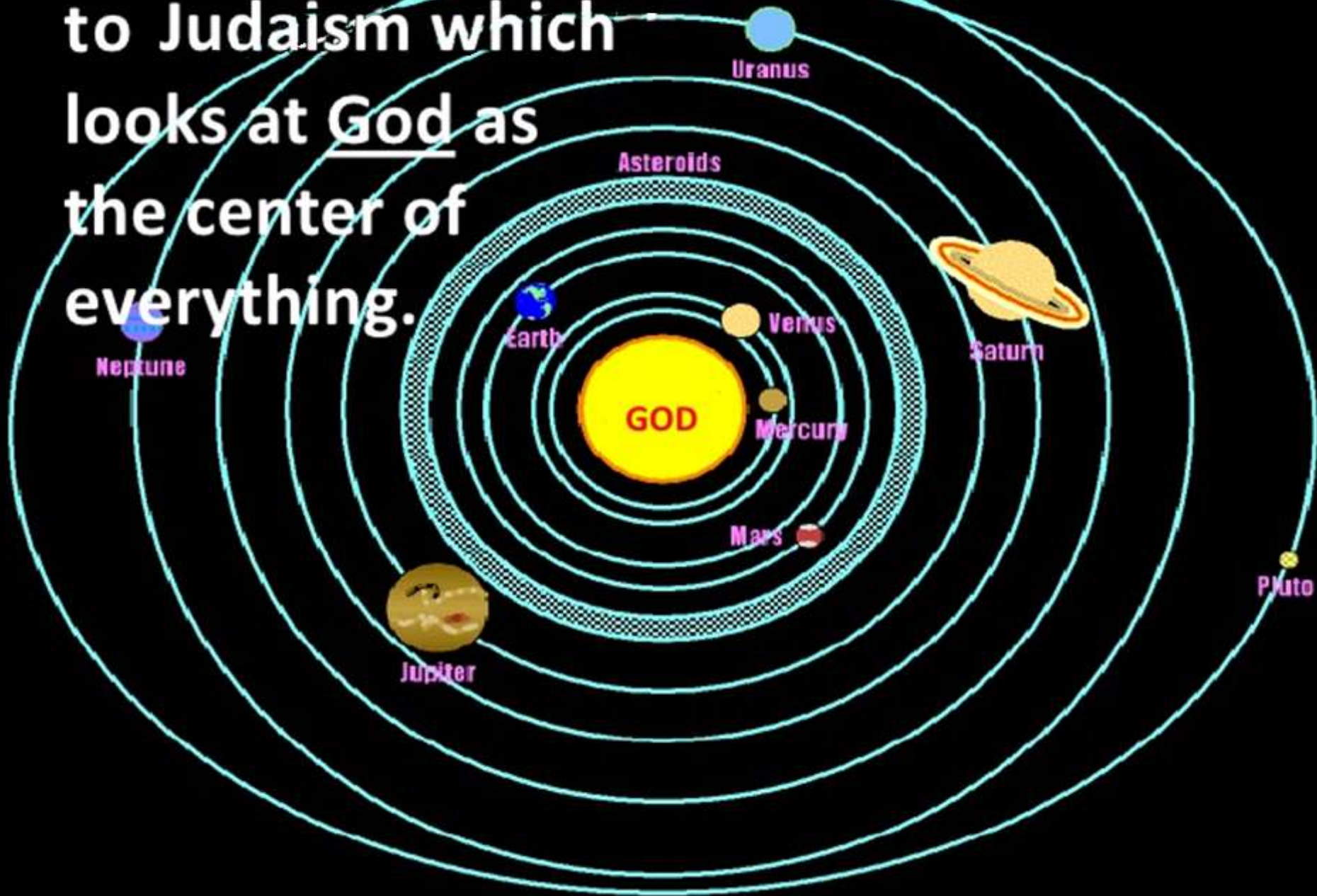
Hellenism

One of the central themes of Greek culture was that of Humanism. Humanism is the belief that humans are at the center of everything.



"Then I came to the conclusion that the greatest cause for humanity was me."

This is very different
to Judaism which
looks at God as
the center of
everything.



The Greeks believed so strongly that their culture was superior to all others that they wanted to impose their lifestyles upon everyone.



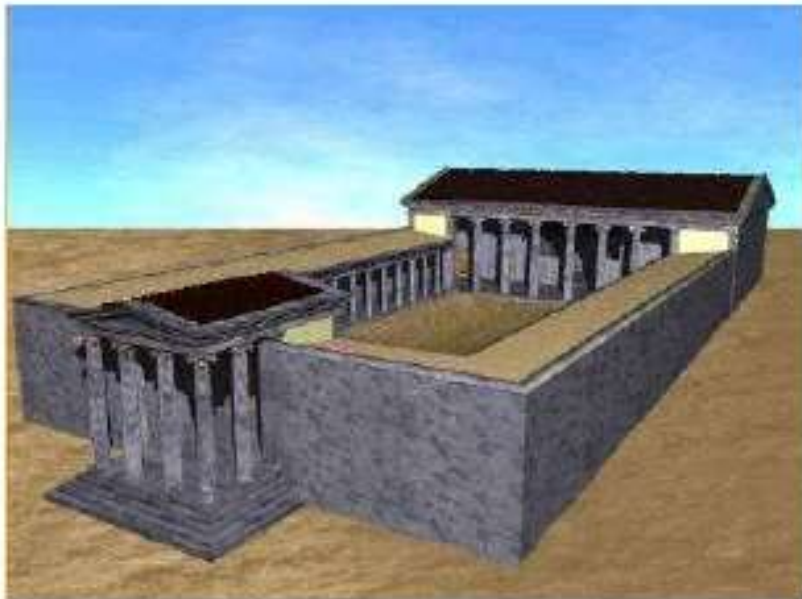
Many Jews became very attracted
to the Greek culture.

JGOC

Jewish Greek Council

The group was small, but very vocal and very powerful

And they became just as Greek
as the Greeks. They began to
send their kids to the
gymnasium.

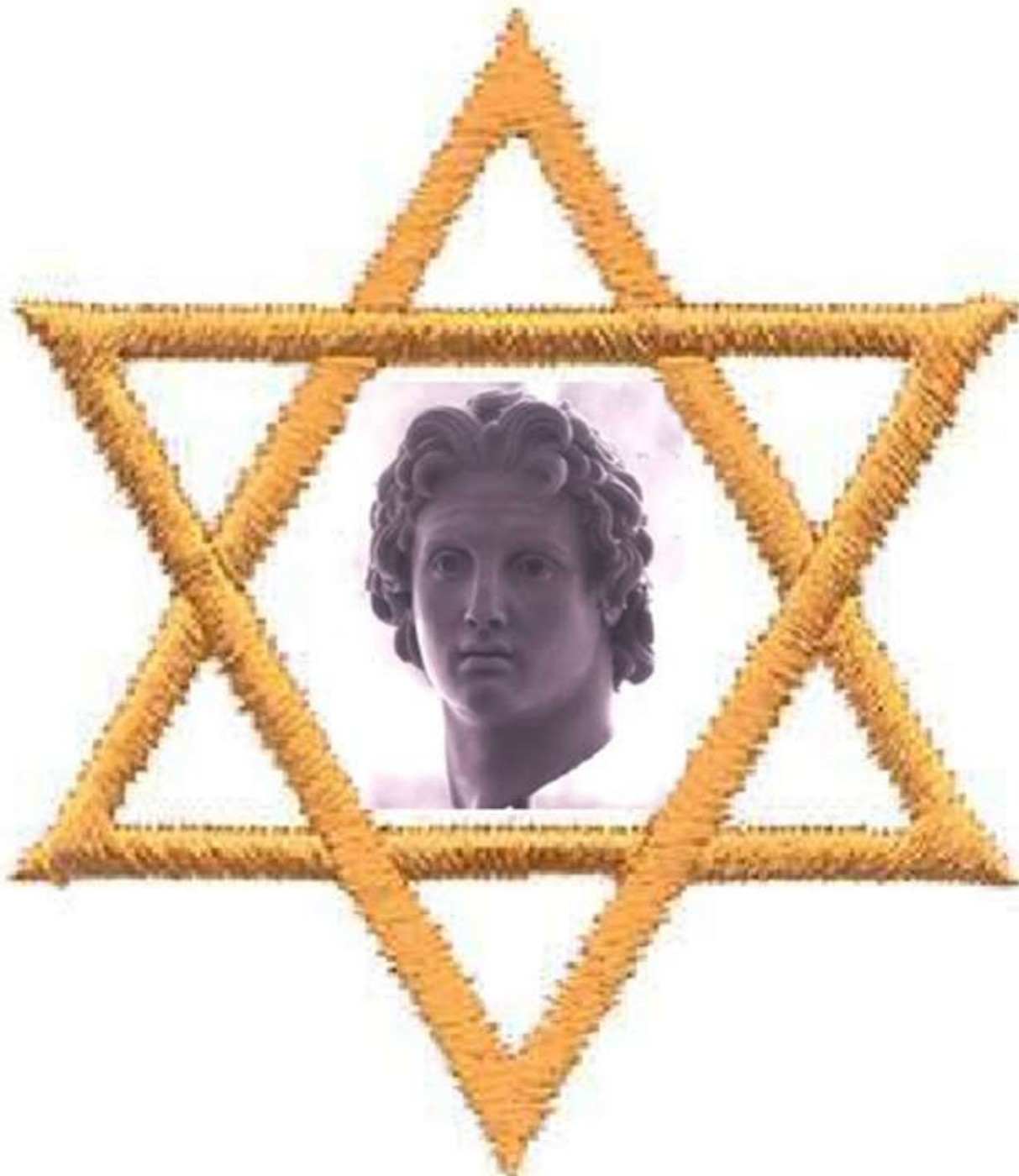


They even went through painful
surgeries so they wouldn't stand
out as being Jewish.



In many ways the main conflict was between the mainstream Jews and these “Hellenized” Jews.





At first
there was
harmony
between
the Jews
and the
Greeks.

But then the Greeks started looking at the "bizarre" practices of the Jews and started thinking of the Jews as a challenge to their "world supremacy".

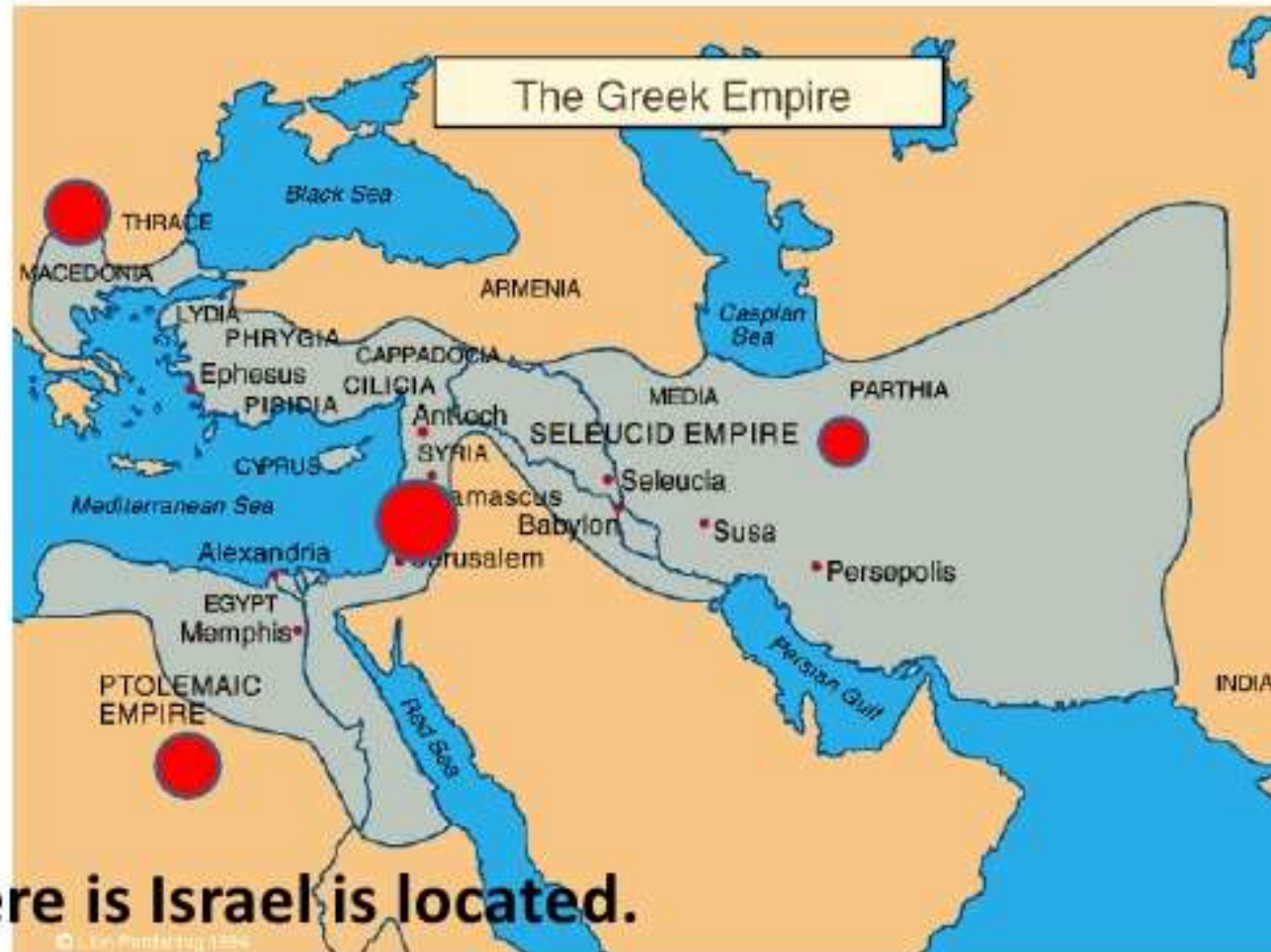


And more and more Greeks became hostile to the Jews.



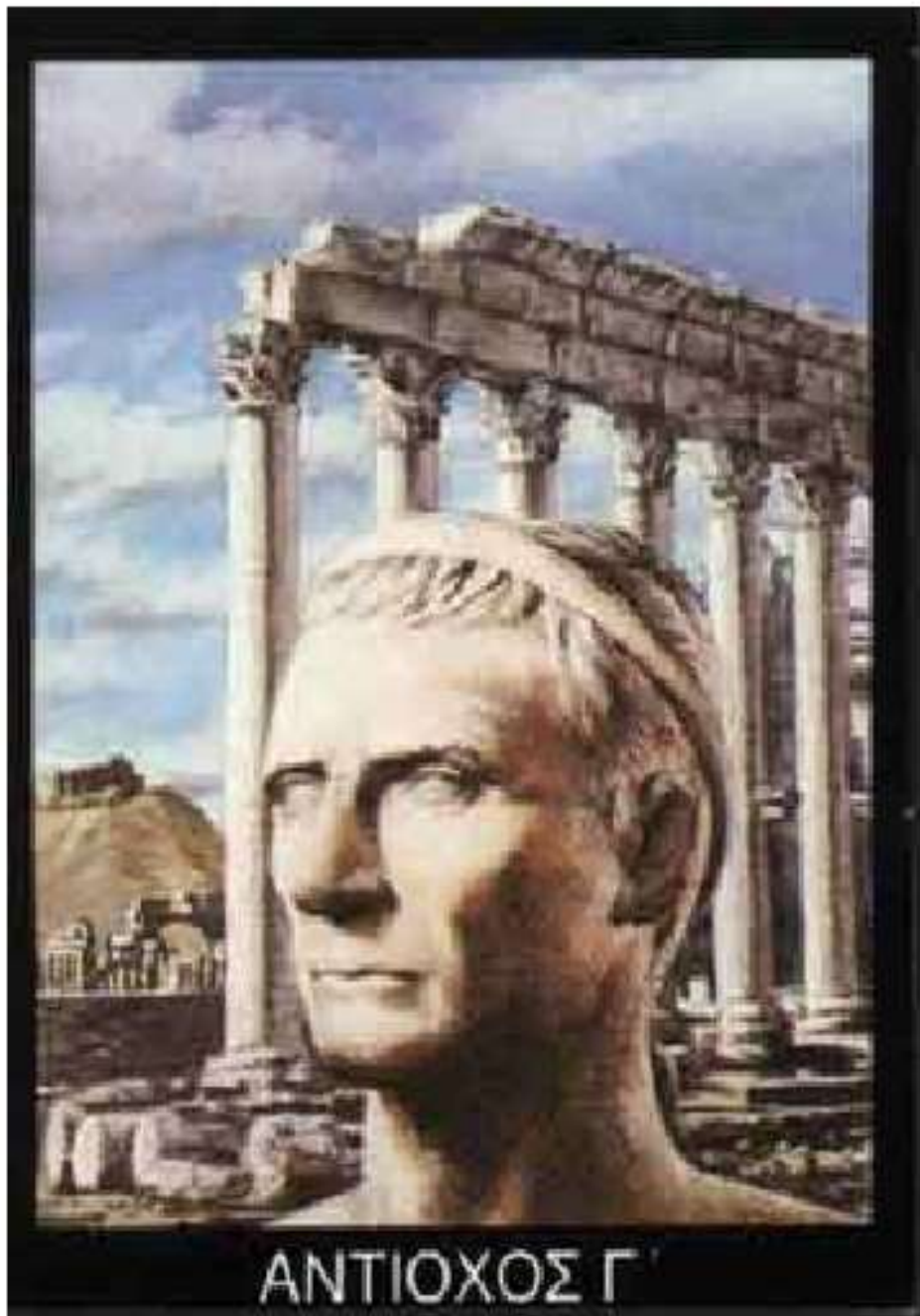
The Greek Empire split into three distinct empires:

- Seleucid
- Ptolemaic
- Macedonian



At first the Jews were under the rule of the Ptolemians, who were generally liberal and tolerant of other beliefs.





Daniel 8:23 - 25

But things got much worse when the region was taken over by the Seleucids, whose king was named Antiochus.

Antiochus came to the conclusion that his weakest link in defense against the Ptolemies was the Jews.



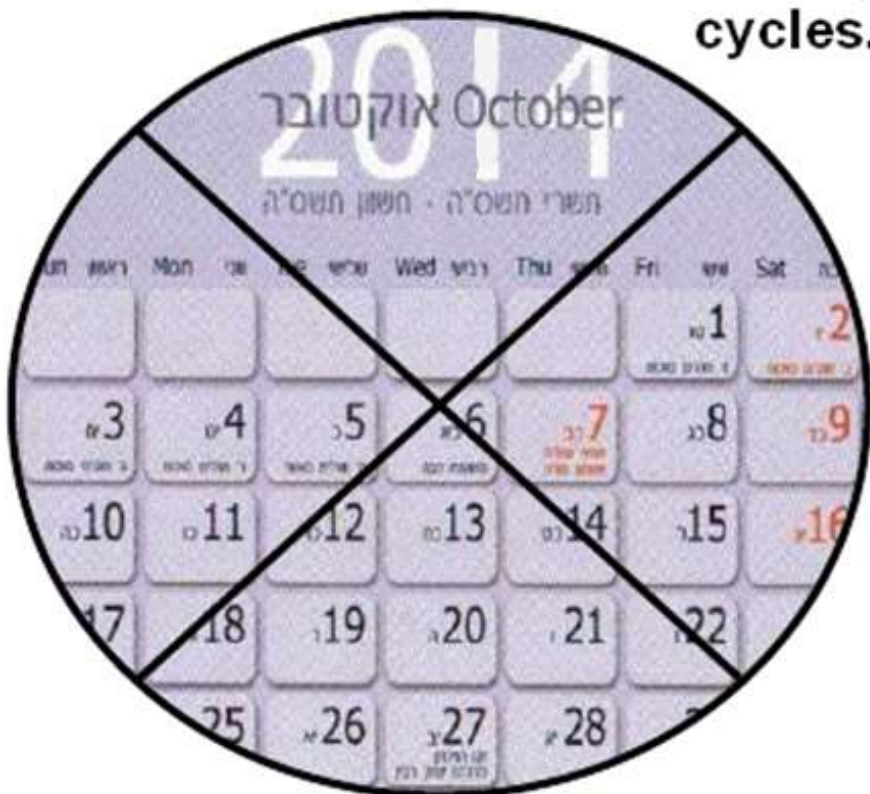
He started taking measures to force the Jews to be more like the Greeks.



He replaced the High Priest with a Jew he controlled, thus completely corrupting the Temple service.



He banned use of the Jewish calendar, knowing full well how focused the Jews were on the various Jewish holiday cycles.



He prohibited keeping kosher.



And Torah study.



The Greeks burnt Torah scrolls.



**And they filled
the Temple with
idols and swine
sacrifices.**



And forbade the practice of circumcision.





Nevertheless,
many Jews
passively
resisted, doing
the practices
despite the
prohibition.

Often paying for their resistance
with their lives.



Until one day...

The Greeks marched into the Jewish town of Modi'in.



25042

They demanded a volunteer to sacrifice a pig to a Greek idol.





When someone volunteered, Matityahu rose up, killed the volunteer and the Greek general, and called his people to rebel in the name of the Lord.

Matityahu, along with his five sons:

Yochanan

Shimon

Yehuda HaMacabi

Elazar

Yonatan

went to the hills to fight
with guerilla warfare
against the Greeks.

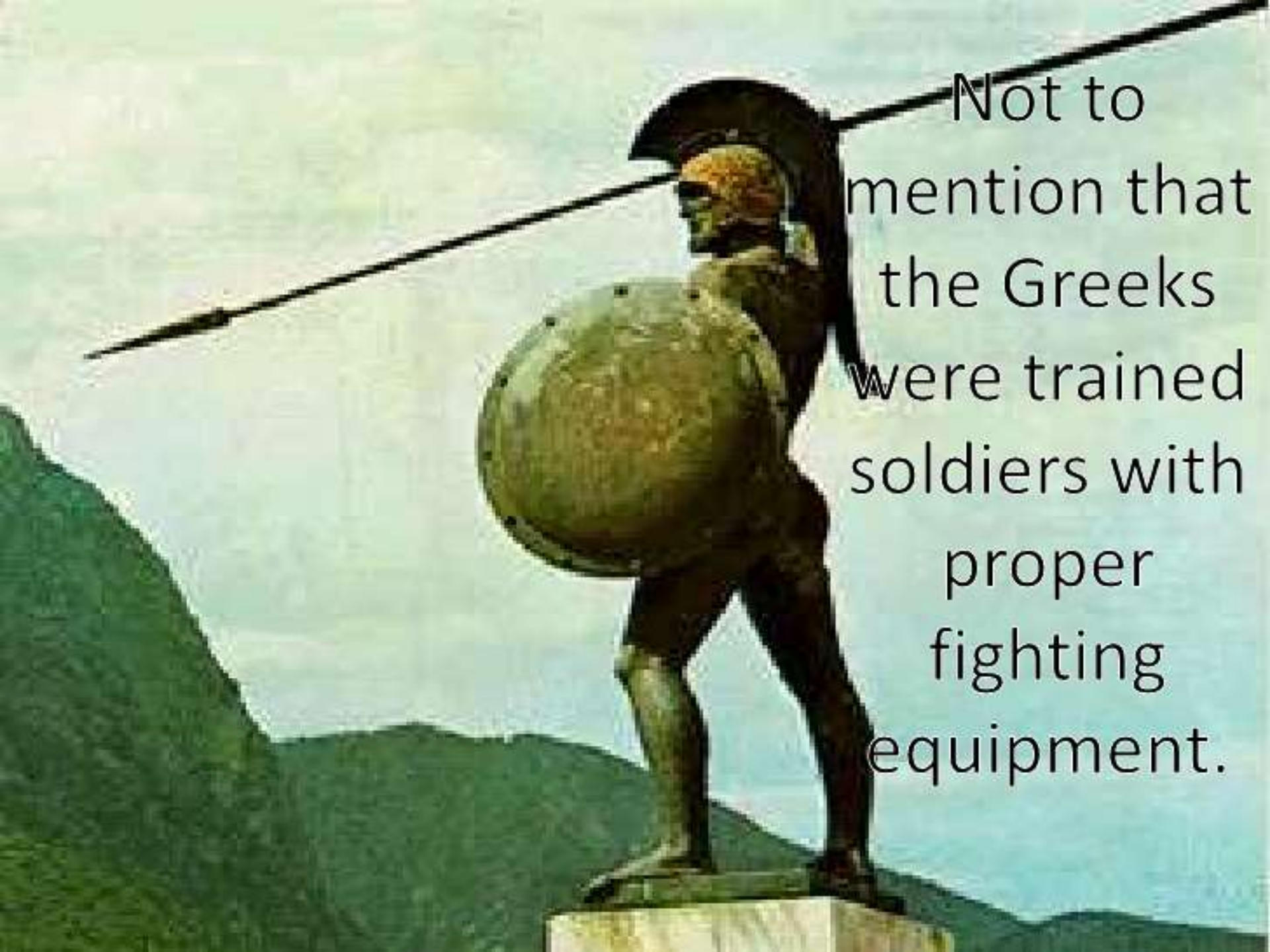


**The Greek army was
40,000 strong.**

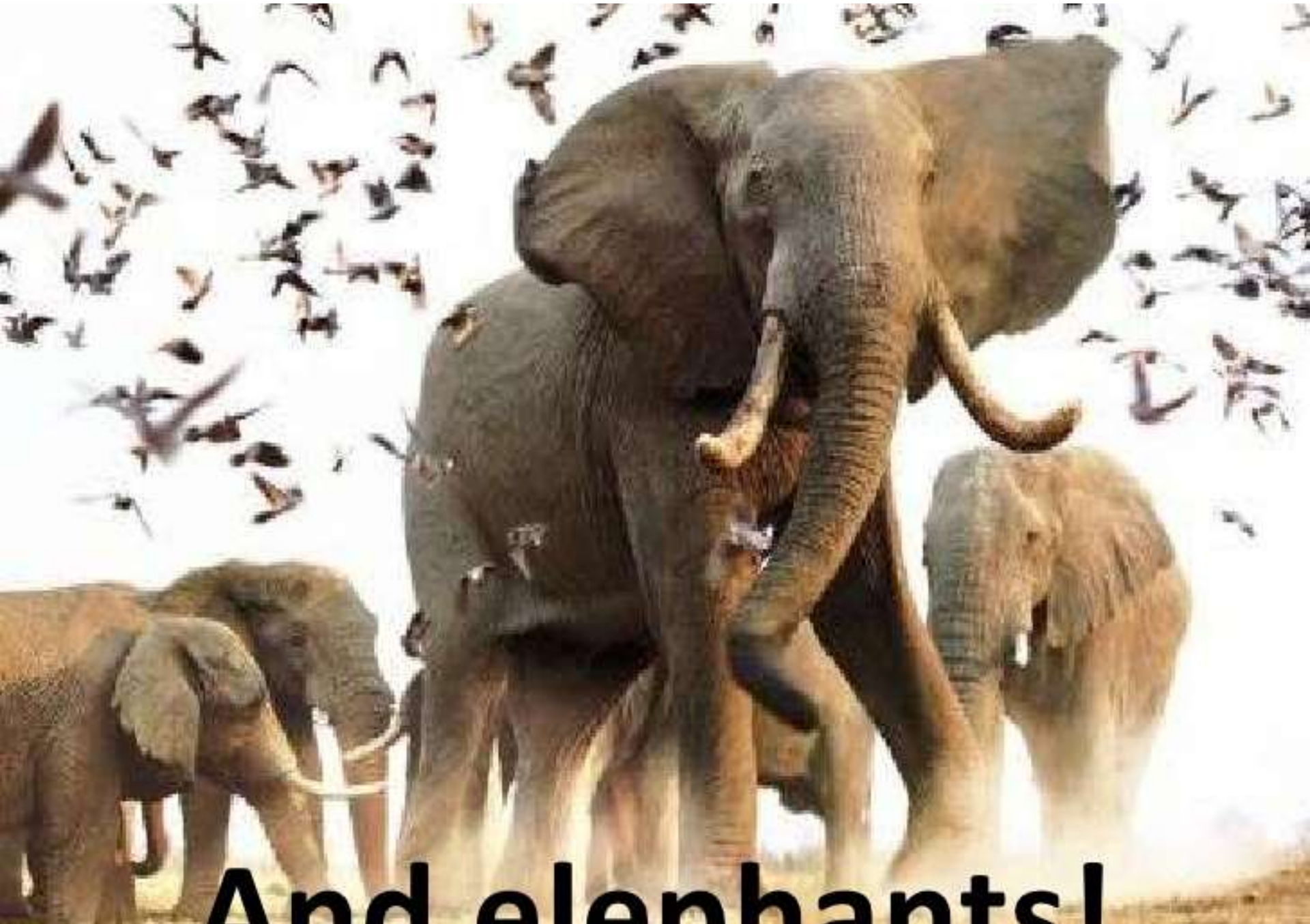


**No one knows exactly
how big the Jewish
army got, but the
biggest estimates are
12,000.**

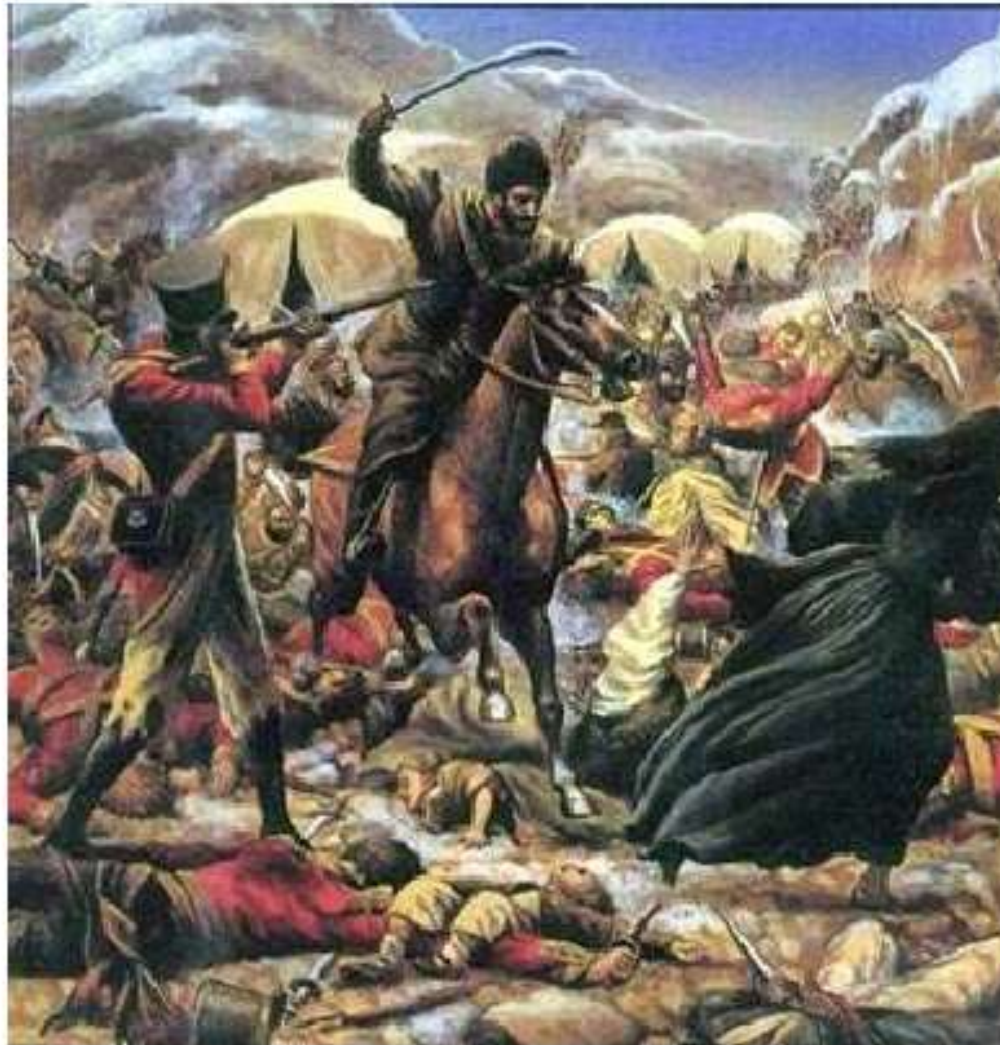


A bronze statue of a Greek hoplite soldier, standing on a stone pedestal. The soldier is depicted in profile, facing left, wearing a helmet with a crest and holding a spear in his right hand and a large, round shield in his left. The background shows a landscape with green hills under a light sky.

Not to mention that the Greeks were trained soldiers with proper fighting equipment.



And elephants!



The war would last a total of 25 years, with many casualties on both sides.

Three years
into the war
the Jews
successfully
conquered
Jerusalem.



They found the
Temple defiled
with idols and
swine.



164 BC



They searched
and only found
one flask of
pure olive oil
to light
the menorah in
the Temple.

It was enough oil to last for one day. Miraculously it lasted for eight, which gave them enough time to produce more.



The Festival of Lights

The Temple was rededicated on the 25th of Kislev. That time has since been celebrated for eight days every year as the Feast of Hanukkah



And this is to celebrate the two miracles of Chanukah:

Victory over the Greeks



And the miracle of the oil.

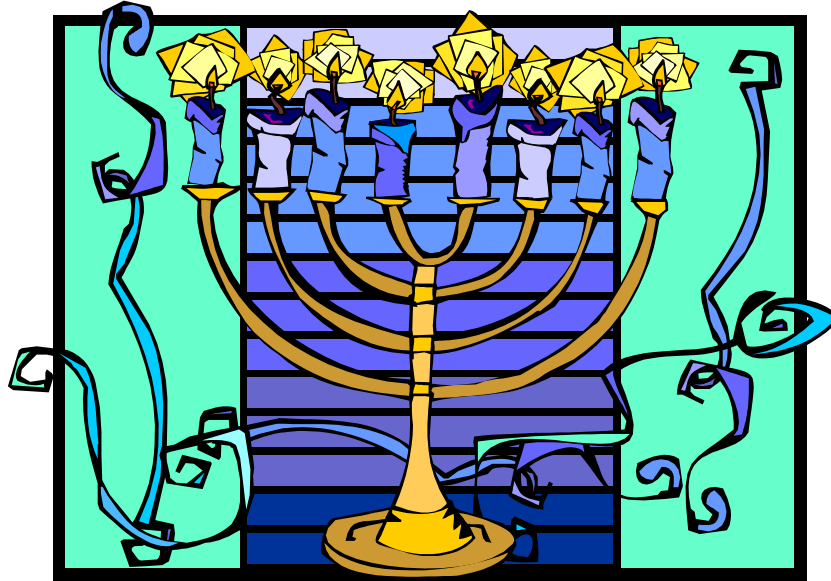


What is a Hanukkah?



It's a special candle holder called a Hanukkah or Menorah.

The Menorah



On each night of Hanukkah, the menorah is lit. The menorah symbolizes the burning light in the temple, as well as marking the eight days of the Hanukkah festival.

There Are Many Different Spellings of Hanukkah



Chanuka Chanukah Chanukkah Channukah
Hanukah Hannukah Hanukkah Hanuka
Hanukka Hanaka Haneka Hanika Khanukkah

Present-Day Hanukkah

December 17 - 24

- Children play a game with a spinning top called a dreidel.
- Families eat special oily food to remind them of the importance of the oil lamp.
- Presents are also given at this time.



Dreidel



It is a four-sided spinning top. Each side is engraved with a different Hebrew letter: **N,G,H,S**
The letters mean **Nes Gadol Haya Sham**
"A great miracle happened there"

Latkes



Many traditional Hanukkah foods are cooked in oil, in remembrance of the oil that burned in the temple. Latkes, or potato pancakes are a favourite food at Hanukkah.



Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

John 10:22 -24



When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

THE END

