

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**



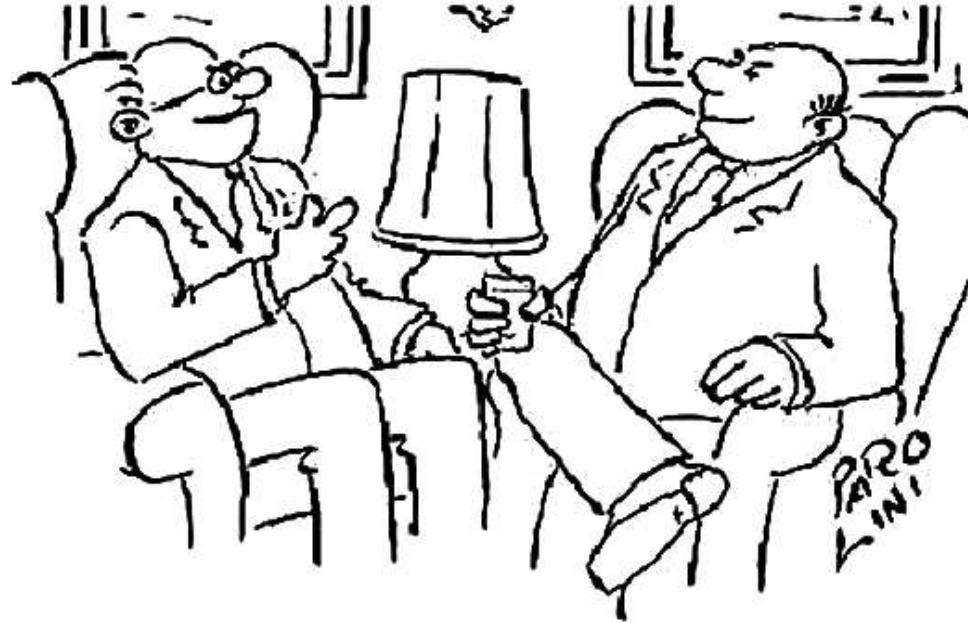
And a new culture was formed called:

Hellenism

Alexander the Great and the Spread of Hellenistic Culture



One of the central themes of Greek culture was that of Humanism. This is the belief that humans are at the centre of things.

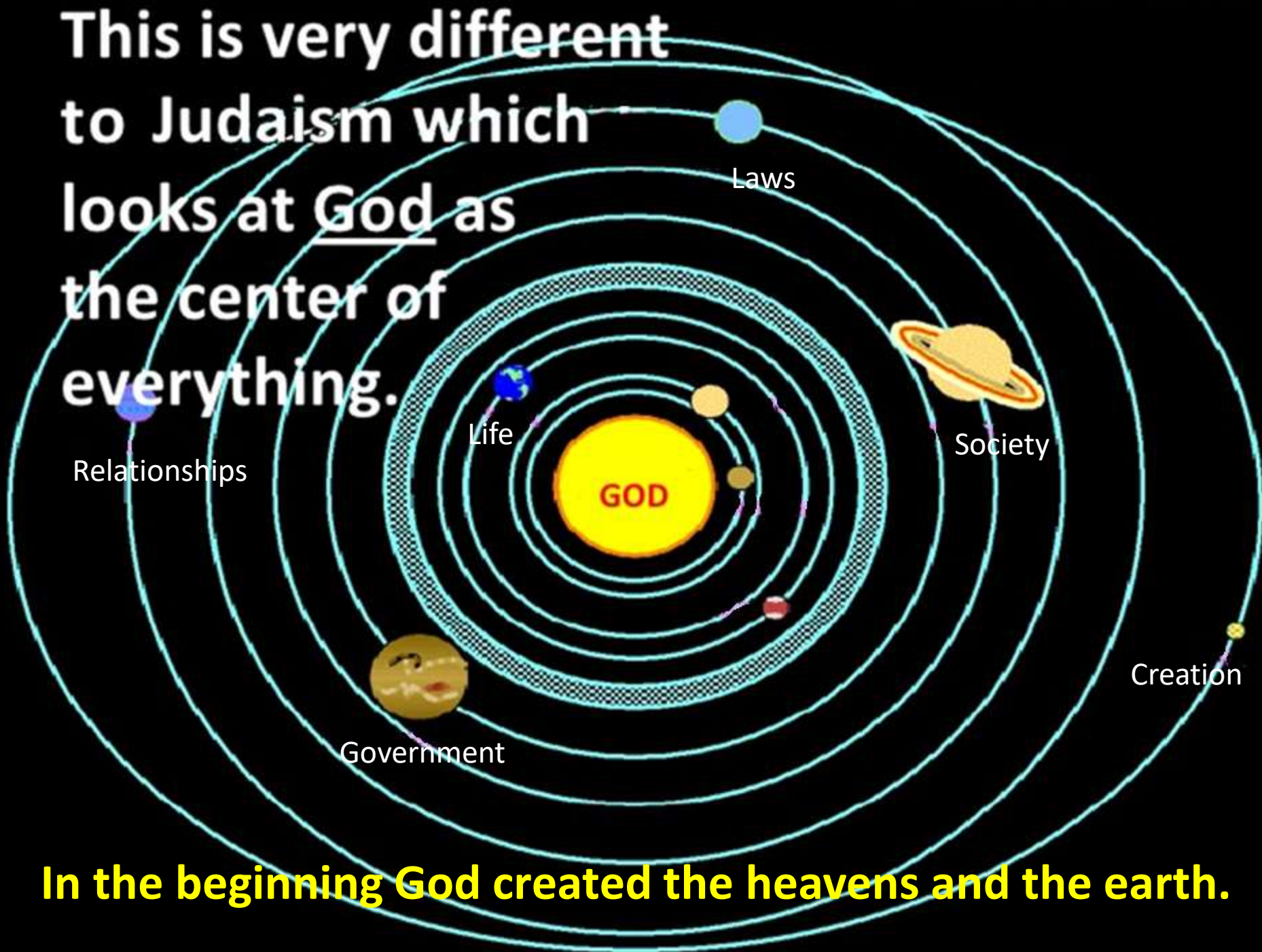


"Then I came to the conclusion that the greatest cause for humanity was me."

The Big Lie

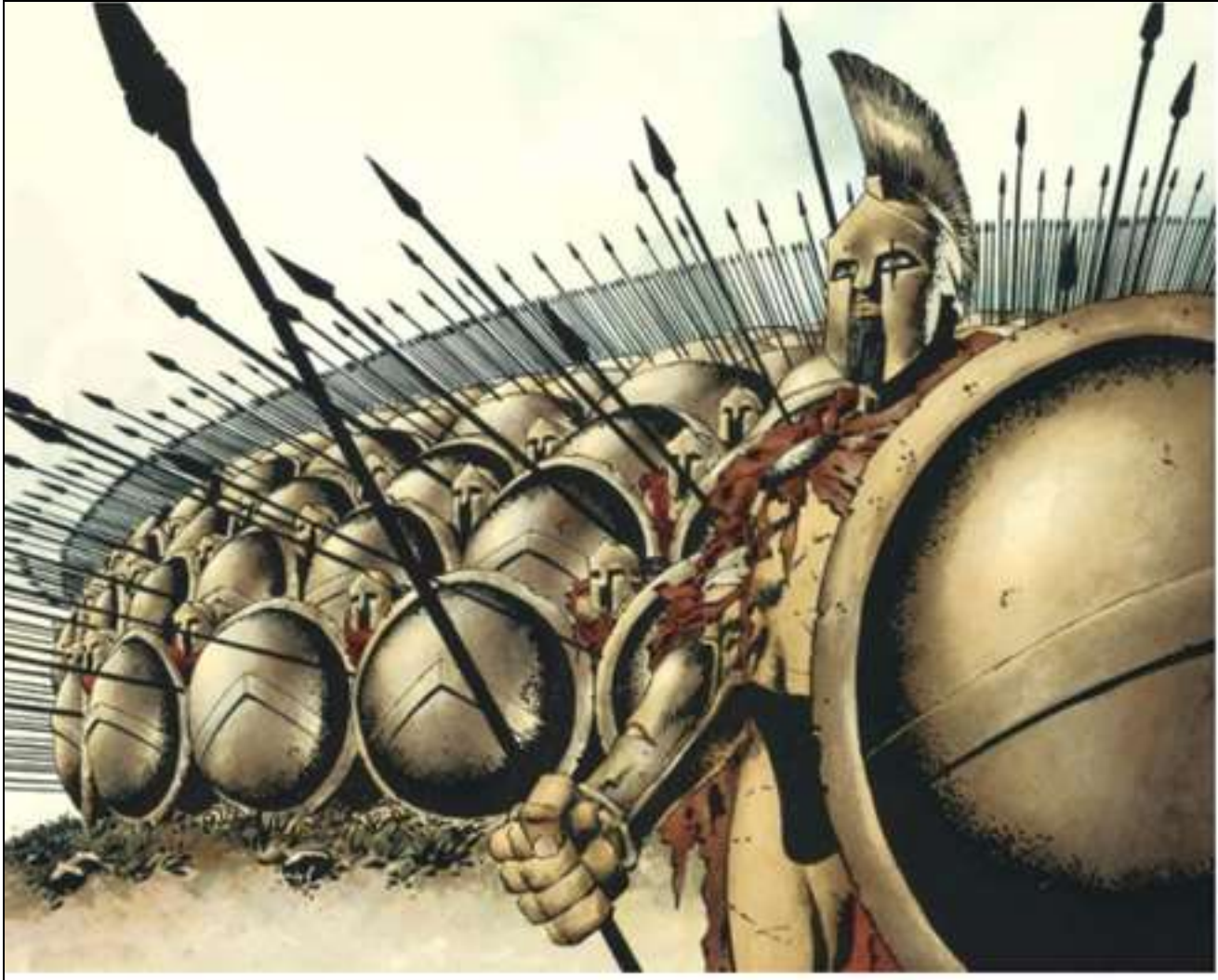
Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

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



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The Greeks believed that their culture was superior to all others, so they wanted to impose it upon every one else.



Many Jews became attracted to this powerful culture and began to “assimilate”.

They established the ...



Ezekiel 20:32 "You say, "We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone." But what you have in mind will never happen.

The group was small, but very vocal and very powerful

And they became just as Greek as the Greeks. They began to have their children educated at the “gymnasium”.



The men even went through painful surgeries to hide their Jewishness.

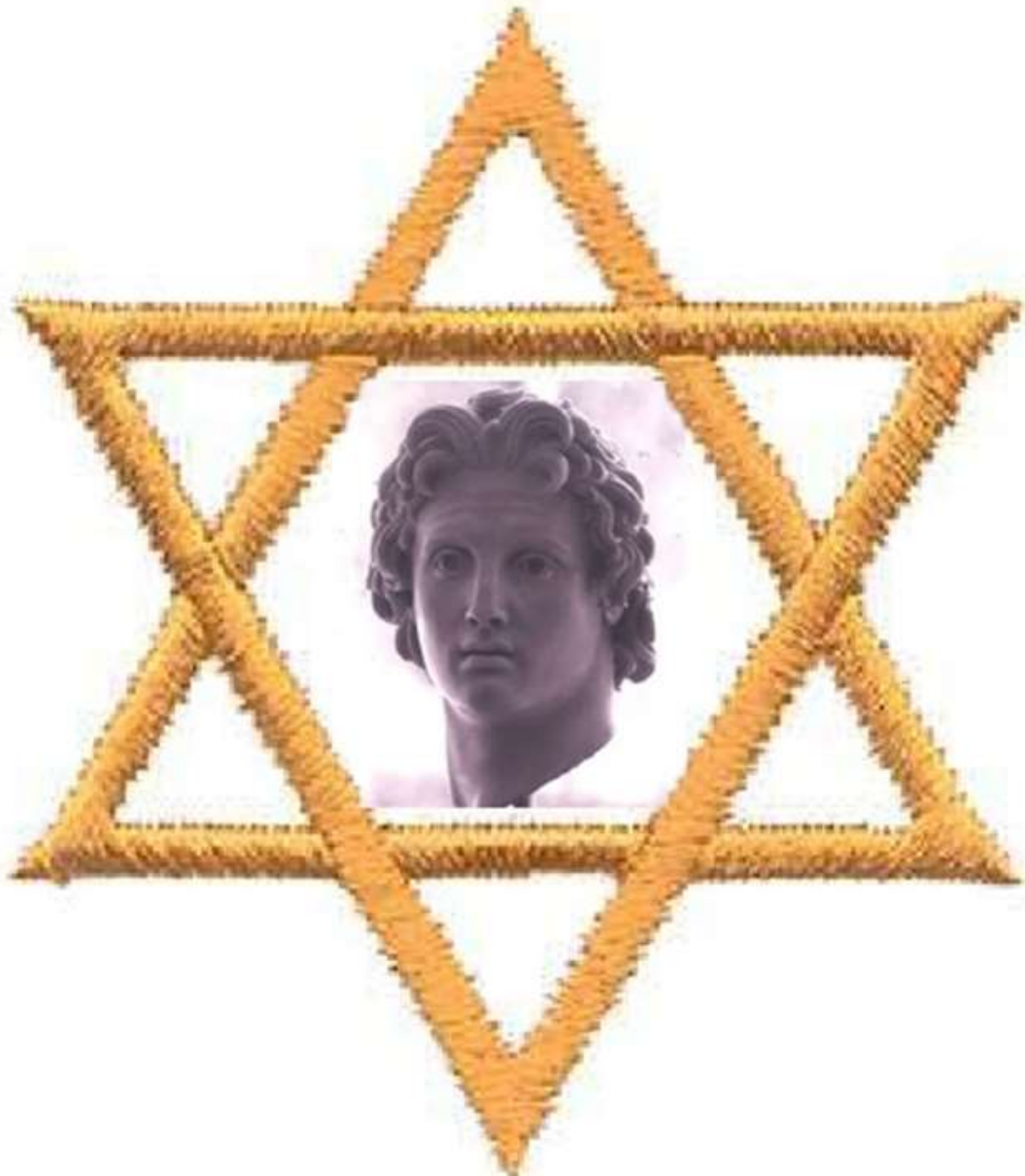


In many ways the main conflict was between the mainstream Jews and the “Hellenized” Jews.



Ezekiel 20:32 "You say, "We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone." But what you have in mind will never happen.

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



But then the Greeks started to look at the “bizarre” practices of the Jews as a challenge to their “world supremacy”.



You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy,
and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

Leviticus 20:26

And more and more Greeks became hostile to the Jews.



The world hasn't changed.

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire eventually split into three distinct empires:

- Seleucid - eastern
- Macedonian - western
- Ptolemaic - south

**And Israel lay
in the centre
of them !**



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



But things got much worse when the region was taken over by the Seleucids, especially under king Antiochus IV.





Antiochus Epiphanes
known to the Jews as
“epimanes”
the madman

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

Daniel 8:23 - 25

Antiochus came to the conclusion that his weakest link in defence against the Ptolemies was ... the Jews (again) !



Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. "

Esther 3:8

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

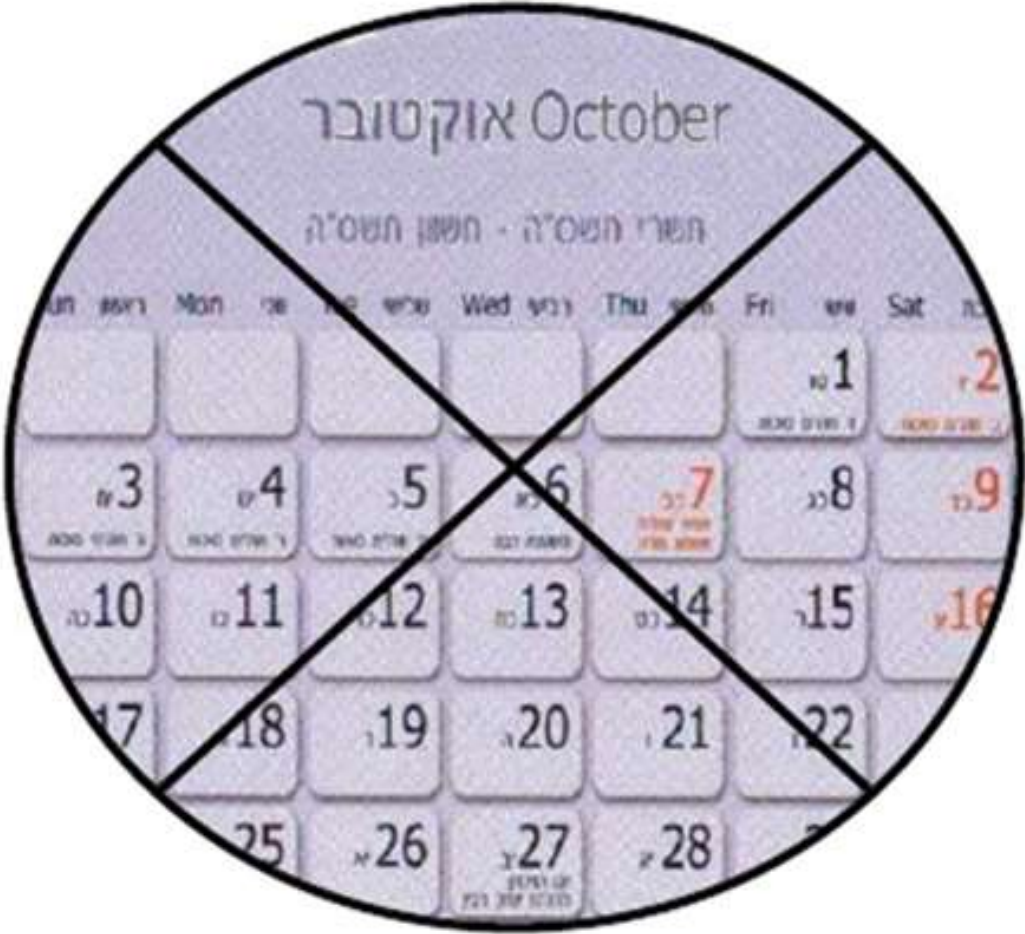


“Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and that each should give up his customs. All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath. And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, ”

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



He banned the use of the Jewish calendar, knowing how much the Jews focused on the various festivals at the appointed times.



He prohibited keeping
the kosher food laws



And studying the Torah



They burnt their Bibles



And filled the Temple with idols and sacrificed pigs there



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**

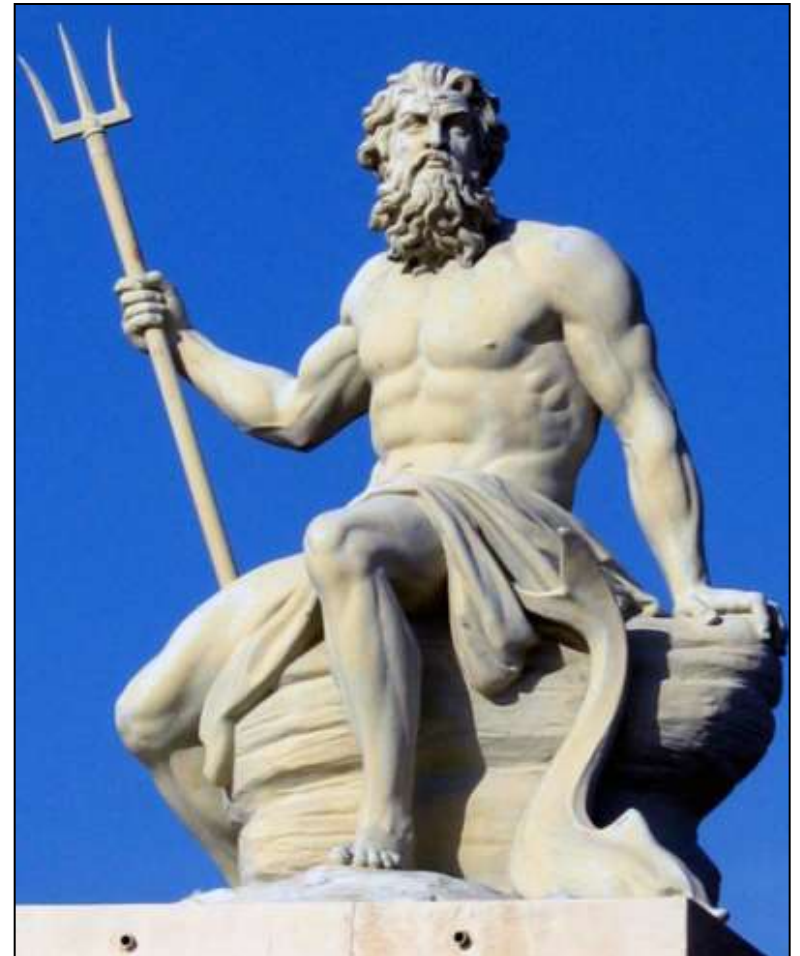


Until one day...

The Greeks marched into the Jewish town of Modi'in



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

It is from his 3rd son, Judas,
that the Maccabees are named.
These events are recorded in the
books 1st and 2nd Maccabees

They went to the hills to fight in a guerrilla war against the Greeks

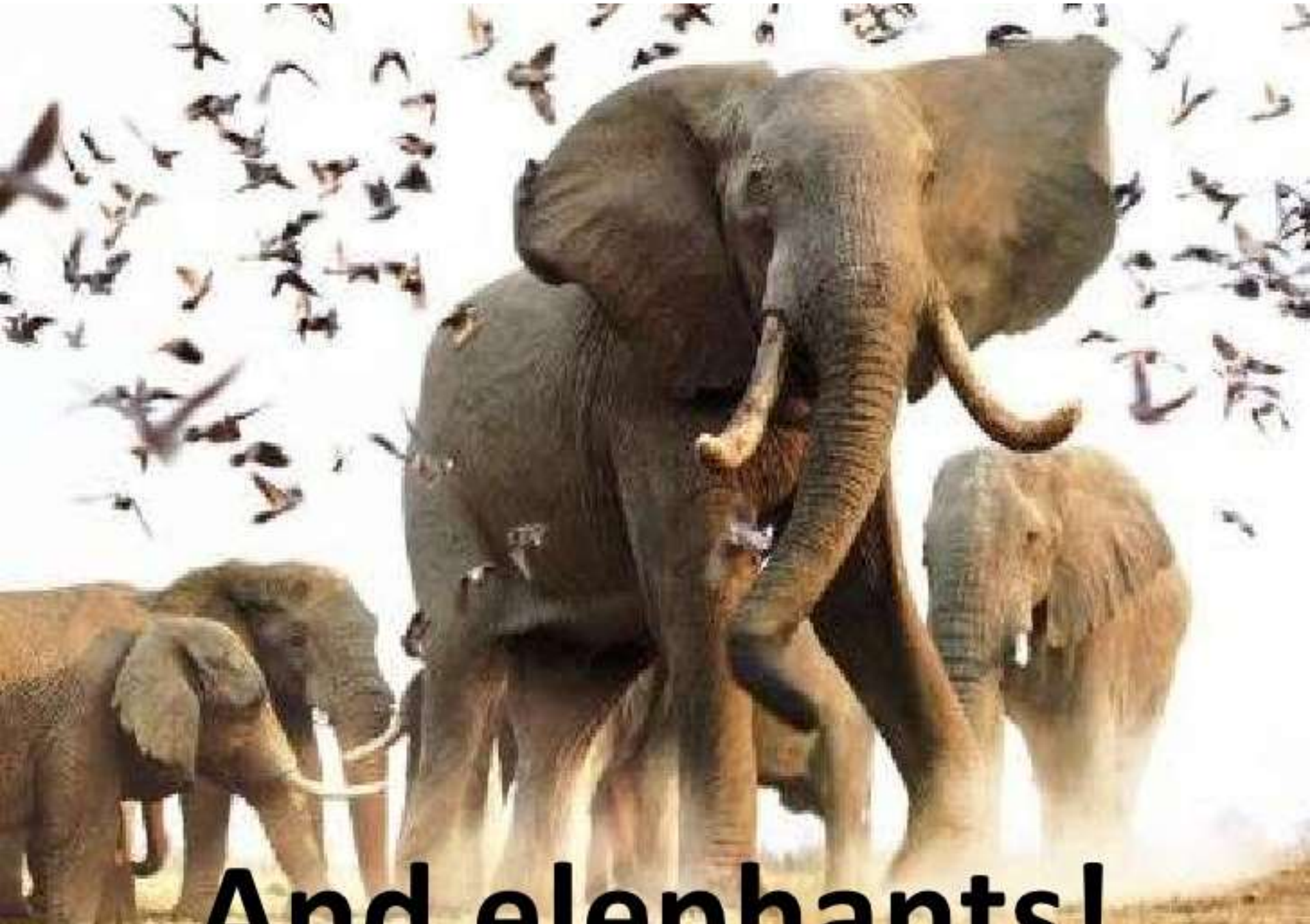


No one knows how many were in the Jewish resistance, but the biggest estimates are 12,000 against much larger Greek army





Also the Greeks were trained soldiers with proper fighting equipment.



And elephants!

The war lasted for 20 years
with many casualties on both sides



Three years into
the war, the
Jews successfully
re-captured
Jerusalem

It wouldn't be until
1967,
2000 years later
that it happened
again!



When they entered the Temple site they found it defiled with idols and pigs.

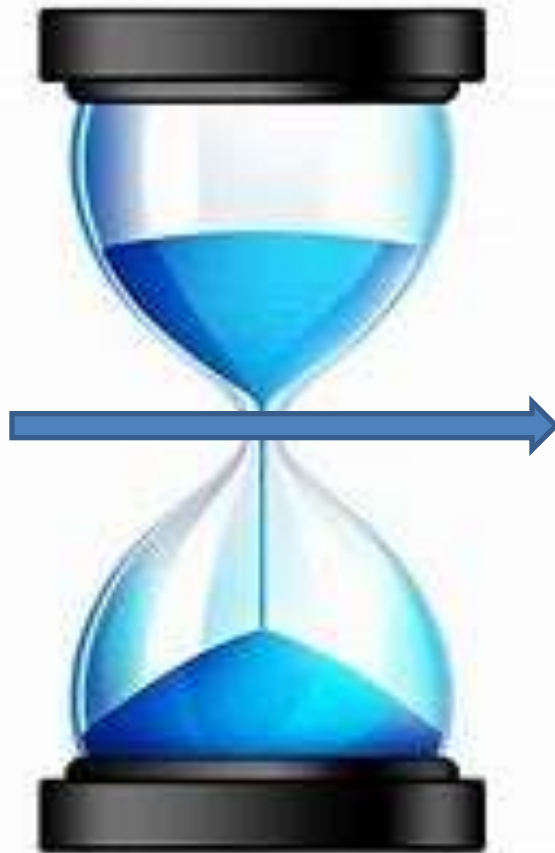


They searched and found only one flask of pure olive oil for the lights of the menorah, the seven-branched lamp in the Temple.



There was only enough to last for one day.
Miraculously it lasted for eight, which gave them
enough time to prepare some more.

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The Festival of Hanukkah

The Temple was re-dedicated on the 25th Kislev. 165/4 BC This event has been celebrated for eight days every year since as the Feast of Hanukkah, or the Feast of Lights.



This was to celebrate the 2 miracles of Hanukkah

Victory over the Greeks



The miracle of the oil



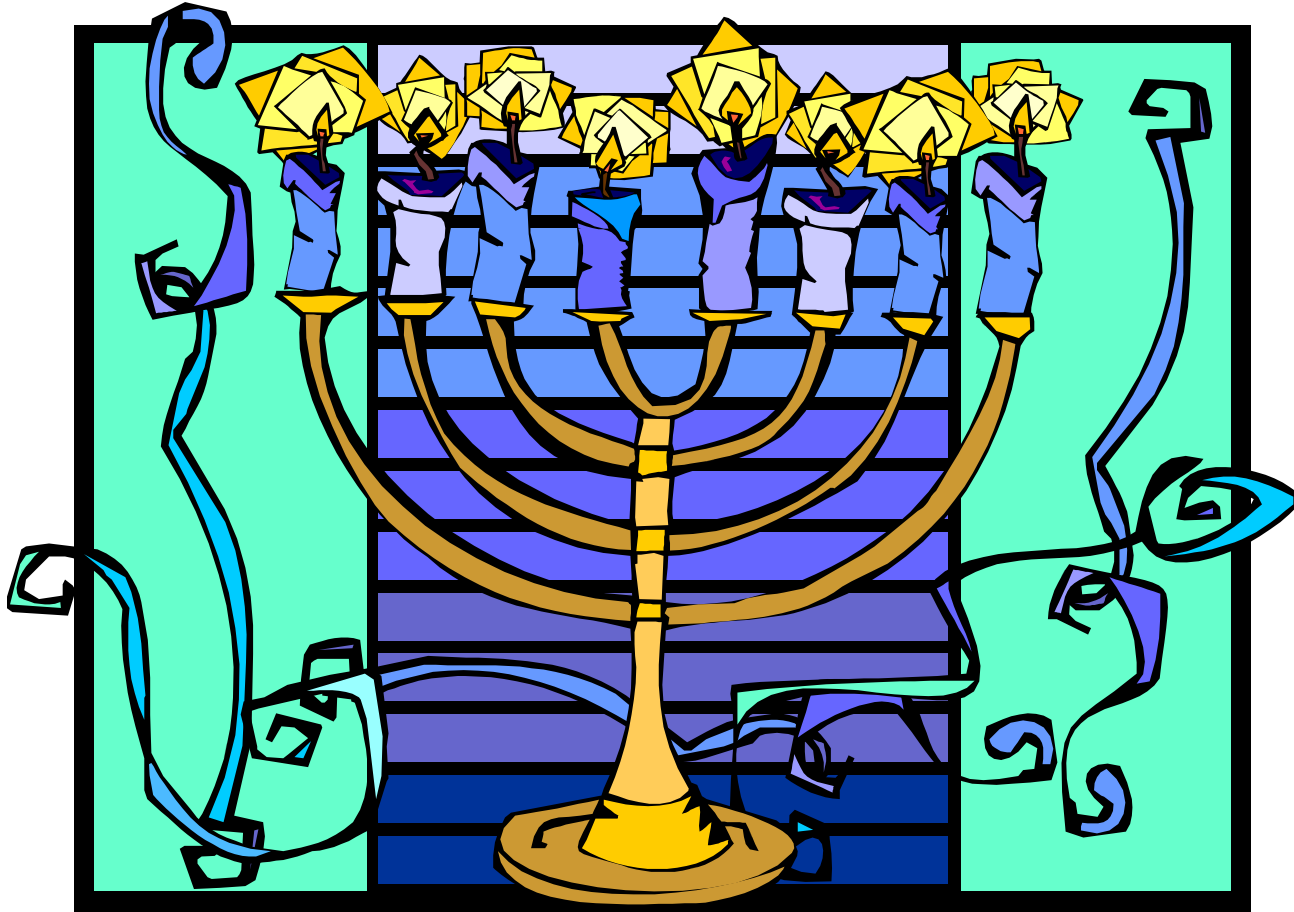
What is a Hanukkah?

The festival is observed by lighting the candles of a candelabrum with nine branches, called a Hanukkah. One branch is typically placed above or below the others and its candle is used to light the other eight candles.

This unique candle is called the shamash, “attendant”. Each night, one additional candle is lit by the shamash until all eight candles are lit together on the final night of the holiday.



This 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**

This may reflect the different traditions that have developed around the feast.

Present-Day Hanukkah

This year: Mon, 3-11 Dec 2018

Next year: Mon, 23-31 Dec 2019

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



The Dreidel

It looked like a game
to the Greeks,
but it was a secret way
of sharing God's word



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.

Of course, Hanukkah was celebrated in New Testament times with special services being held at the Temple in Jerusalem



Jesus at the feast

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

