



REMEMBERING HANUKKAH

A HOMESCHOOLING TORAH UNIT STUDY

A Great Miracle Happened There



Introduction

This homeschooling unit study is for all ages. Some assignments will be too easy for your children, and some will be too difficult. Adapt all our ideas for use in your home, allowing the Holy Spirit to prompt you and teach you.

About the Books of the Maccabees:

Many people think that the first book of the Maccabees is part one of the story of Hanukkah, while the second book is the continuation, but this is actually not how it works.

According to Wikipedia,

The books of the First and Second Maccabees offer similar accounts. The authors display notably different literary styles, though the narratives are similar. In First Maccabees, the author offers a sober historical account of the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus IV. In contrast, the author of the Second Book presents a heavily dramatic and theologically dense account of a shorter but overlapping time period (180-161 BC)

The second author depicts martyrs alongside Judas Maccabaeus as champions; earning divine favor as a result. The author of First Maccabees presents an objective and sober account, taking influence from the authors of the Hebrew Bible. Second Maccabees is notably dramatic and emotional. First Maccabees begins with the rise and legitimacy of the Hasmonean dynasty, originating with a narrative of the Jewish priest Mattathias, a forefather to the Maccabean revolt. Second Maccabees begins with two letters, Epistle I and Epistle II.¹

The Maccabees were Jewish leaders who took part in a revolt against the Greek Seleucids between 175 and 134 BC. First Maccabees covers the efforts of the Jewish people to regain their freedom following the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Second Maccabees includes a different edition of the first seven chapters of 1 Maccabees and was written at a later date, likely in Alexandria, Egypt. The author is unknown. He claims to provide a shortened version of a five-volume history by Jason of Cyrene.²

One theory is that 1 Maccabees is written from the perspective of the Sadducees, while 2 Maccabees is written from the perspective of the Pharisees, although this is a difficult theory to prove. Teenagers and adults might enjoy reading more about this debate at <https://www.thetorah.com/article/judea-versus-judaism-between-1-and-2-maccabees>.

How to Read the Books of the Maccabees:

The World English Bible is in the public domain, with free PDF versions available here:

- 1 Maccabees - https://ebible.org/pdf/eng-web/eng-web_1MA.pdf
- 2 Maccabees - https://ebible.org/pdf/eng-web/eng-web_2MA.pdf

The Common English Bible is a newer version (2011) which is easier to read but not freely available. However, you may be able to access it on popular Bible apps (such as YouVersion or Bible Gateway).

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Maccabees+1&version=CEB>

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Maccabees

² <https://www.compellingtruth.org/first-second-Maccabees.html>

DAY 1—DEFENDING THE TORAH

On the first night of Hanukkah, we'll be going over the first few chapters of the books of the Maccabees and explaining all the events and persecution that led up to the dedication of the Temple. We'll talk about the sacrifices faithful Israelites made, what it means to defend the Torah even with our lives if necessary, and then talk about the resurrection and how this life is not all there is! We will include ideas for decorating for Hanukkah, plus other resources like recipes.

PREPARATION

Books Needed Today:

- Bible
- 1 and 2 Maccabees

Supplies:

- Twine, blue ribbon, or winter string lights
- Clothespins
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Ingredients for recipes you would like to make throughout the week

HIGH SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT

- In 2 Maccabees 7, what were the reasons for obedience given by each of the seven brothers and their mother?

Let's Learn

Hear:

- Read and discuss 1 Maccabees 1:1-2:26.
 - Who was Alexander the Great? (the Macedonian king who conquered the entire known world for Greece, bringing in the Empire of Greece)¹
 - What is a gymnasium? (a place of learning, to raise children in the culture and language of the Greeks. See Helpful Sources.)
 - What is the Beautiful Land? (Israel) What is David's City? (Jerusalem)
 - On what date did Antiochus Euphianes set up an abominable thing on the altar in the sanctuary? (See 1 Macc. 1:54.)
 - Note: *Kislev* is the 9th month on the biblical calendar (Leviticus 23).
 - In what ways were the people of Israel required to disobey the Law of God?
 - In 1 Maccabees 2:4, what does the surname *Maccabeus* mean? (See Helpful Sources.)

Learn:

- Using the maps on the next page, find these locations:

○ Macedonia	○ Alexandria
○ Greece	○ Jerusalem
○ Ptolemais	○ Modein

¹ Learn more about the history of this time period in *Daniel's Statue: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (World History Year 2)* by Foundations Press, at <https://foundationspress.com>.



The Map of the Greek World (310 BC)



1. Judas and his army encamp south of Emmaus.
2. Gorgias takes 6,000 troops to sneak up on Judas at night.
3. At daybreak, Judas attacks the enemy forces encamped at Emmaus. Gorgias is still searching for Judas.
4. Unprepared for attack, Judas' troops rout the Seleucids.
5. Defeated, they flee to Gazara .
6. Fleeing across the plains of Idumea, they arrive at Azotus.
7. The Seleucids are finally defeated at Jamnia. 3,000 enemy troops die.
8. When Gorgias' troops see the rest of the force has been defeated at Jamnia, they retreat.

Map of the Maccabean Battles

- ❑ Optional: Read 2 Maccabees 3-7.
 - These chapters tell about the struggles the people of Israel went through, simply because they were determined to guard the Law of God. Their firm stand through persecution, and their belief in the Resurrection, are very inspiring! These chapters are much more graphic in their portrayal of persecution, so please use discretion when reading them with your family, and if your children are too young, please don't read them aloud.

Keep:

- ❑ We are going to memorize **Zechariah 4:6** this week.
 - “**Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,**” says יהוה **Tzevaot.**”
 - **יהוה Tzevaot** is usually translated into English as “the LORD of hosts.” A host is an army. This verse is saying that He is the leader of all armies and will be victorious!
 - Make up fun motions to help you remember the words.
 - Recite the verse 3 times. Be sure to repeat the reference, too!

Let's Remember

Keep:

- ❑ To decorate for the week of Hanukkah, we recommend stretching a piece of twine, blue ribbon, or winter string lights across one end of a room. Each day of Hanukkah, use a clothespin to fasten the day's theme to the twine.
- ❑ Enjoy the memory verse coloring pages. Hang the memory verse printable in a prominent location for the week.
- ❑ Every day, make a notebooking page showing what you have learned. At the end of the week, compile all the pages from the week into a folder or binder, to be saved as a memory book for the future.²

Do:

- ❑ Enjoy traditional Hanukkah foods, such as potato pancakes (*latkes*) or doughnuts or cookies.

² What is notebooking? Learn more at <https://homeschoolingtorah.com/category/blog/notebooking>.

Helpful Sources

What is a gymnasium?

Greek colonization, building and Hellenization continued for centuries after Alexander's death. Prosperity produced among the Greeks a middle class of upwardly mobile professionals, craftsmen, merchants and civil servants. Throughout the Greek world these citizens were "bolstered up and justified... by a common form of education, which is one of the most important phenomena of the Hellenistic age. This education... was predominantly rhetorical... Indeed, that had then the main theme of Greek education since the distant past."³

"In most Greek cities the primary, elementary stage of education was left to private enterprise, and paid for by parents' fees, without being in any way subject to public control... Children were usually taught reading, writing, gymnastics and music... in secondary schools... mathematics and science were taught. But literary education played an exceedingly prominent part... Homer, Euripides and other classical authors were studied in minute detail according to a meticulous plan."⁴

"The institution of the gymnasium... established in new cities as well as old, in distant territories of the kingdoms as well as 'barbarian' lands beyond, became the most important single denominator of Hellenization and unity, the factory stimulating the production of Greek-minded citizens, speaking the *koine*, the common dialect."⁵

"In Alexandria there were more Jews than in Jerusalem. Of the estimated eight million Jews of the period, seven million lived in Greek states. During the exile in Babylon they had remade their religion—centering their religious practices around the local synagogue and its *yeshivah* school. These yeshivas were now spread throughout the world and, like the Greek gymnasium, their primary purpose was to educate."⁶

"According to the *aggadah*, the biblical patriarchs and their sons studied in a *yeshivah*. There was one in existence, too, during the Egyptian bondage, as also during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness (Yoma 28b; et al.). But the first reference to 'yeshiva' as a place of study occurs apparently in the appendix to Ecclesiasticus 51:29."⁷

"In Alexandria, the Jews translated the Hebrew Bible into the Greek Septuagint because so many Jews of the diaspora no longer knew enough Hebrew. In some areas of the diaspora the Greek Septuagint was taught in the synagogue. Because of this, in Jerusalem most orthodox Jews believed the Greek

³ Michael Grant, 1982:p. 134, *From Alexander to Cleopatra*.

⁴ Michael Grant, 1982:p. 135, *From Alexander to Cleopatra*.

⁵ Michael Grant, 1982:p. 136-137

, *From Alexander to Cleopatra*.

⁶ Jones, Miles. *Sons of Zion Versus Sons of Greece, Volume One: Survival of the Hebrew Gospels and the Messianic Church*, second edition. Benai Emunah Institute, Kerrville, TX: 2021. Page 106.

⁷ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2008.

translation of Torah to be the single most disastrous event in all of Hebrew history! Throughout the diaspora, however, Hebrew knowledge was kept alive by the synagogues and their yeshivas.”⁸

“Mattathias died that same year. ‘Then his son Judah, who was called Maccabeus, arose in his stead’ (1 Maccabees 3:1)... Judah became *de facto* high priest, disposing of the corrupt Zadokite priesthood who had permitted ‘the abominations of desecration.’ Mattathias was a Hasmonean, the grandson of Hasmon, a Levite in the line of Joarib, a descendant of Phineas the third high priest of Israel.”^{9,10}

What does the surname Maccabeus mean (1 Macc. 2:4)?

According to *The Jewish Encyclopedia*:

Name given to the Hasmonean family. Originally the designation "Maccabeus" (Jerome, "Machabæus") was applied solely to Judas, the third son of Mattathias the Hasmonean (I Macc. 2:4, 3:1, *et passim*), Mattathias' other sons having different surnames; but as Judas became the leader of the party after his father's death, and as he was also the most heroic warrior, his surname was applied not only to all the descendants of Mattathias, but even to others who took part in the revolutionary movement under the leadership of the Hasmoneans. Hence the title "Books of the Maccabees."

The etymology of the name, in spite of the efforts of the scholars, who have advanced various theories on the subject, remains undetermined. According to Jerome ("Prologus Galeatus"), the First Book of the Maccabees was originally written in Hebrew. Origen (in Eusebius, "Hist.

Eccl." book, last chapter) even gives the Hebrew title, **אל שרבת שר בני**; thus the Greek and Latin forms of the name must have been transliterations from the Hebrew.

But the original Hebrew text is lost; and there is no mention of the name either in the Talmud or in the Midrash, where the family is always referred to as "the Hasmoneans." In later Hebrew writings the name occurs in two forms, **מכבי**, transliterated from the Latin, and **מקבי**, according to the Greek spelling. The latter form is generally explained as meaning "the hammer," a surname given to Judas on account of his heroism. Iken ("Symbolæ Litterariæ," 1:184, Bremen, 1744) derives it from the Arabic "manḡab" (= "general"), while, according to others, the name originated in the fact that Modin, where Mattathias dwelt, was in the territory of Gad (Reland, "Palästina," p. 901), the banner of which tribe bore the inscription **מקב**, the final letters of the names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

מכבי is, however, the preferred form; it occurs in "Yosippon," and is explained by Gorionides as meaning "the hero," though it is not known in what way. Others explain it as composed of the initials of **מי כמוך באלים יהוה** (Exodus 15:11), written on the banner of the Hasmoneans,

⁸ Jones, Miles. *Sons of Zion Versus Sons of Greece, Volume One: Survival of the Hebrew Gospels and the Messianic Church*, second edition. Benai Emunah Institute, Kerrville, TX: 2021. Page 107.

⁹ Jones, Miles. *Sons of Zion Versus Sons of Greece, Volume One: Survival of the Hebrew Gospels and the Messianic Church*, second edition. Benai Emunah Institute, Kerrville, TX: 2021. Page 110.

¹⁰ Jones, Miles. *Sons of Zion Versus Sons of Greece, Volume One: Survival of the Hebrew Gospels and the Messianic Church*, second edition. Benai Emunah Institute, Kerrville, TX: 2021. Pages 104-

or as the initials of **מתתיהו כהן בן יוחנן**. But the statement that it was the surname of Judas only is against these interpretations. Curtiss ("The Name Machabee," Leipsic, 1876) derives it from **כבה** = "to extinguish"; thus **מכבי** would mean "the extinguisher," which agrees with the interpretation of Gorionides. Finally, the following two opinions may be added: (1) that the Hebrew read **מחבאי** = "he who hides himself," referring to the fact that the Hasmoneans hid themselves in the mountains (I Macc. 2:28); (2) that of Filosseno Luzzatto that it is a Greek word, an anagram of Βιαιομάχος = "violent warrior."¹¹

¹¹ Singer, Isidore, Ph.D, Projector and Managing Editor. Entry for 'Maccabees, the'. 1901 The Jewish Encyclopedia. <https://www.studylight.org/encyclopedias/eng/tje/m/maccabees-the.html>. 1901.

Hanukkah Recipes

POTATO PANKES (LATKES)

PREP TIME: 15 min. | **TOTAL TIME:** 30 min. | **MAKES** about 24 pancakes

Potato pancakes, or latkes, are a versatile recipe. Crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, they can be used as a side dish for a meal or as the main course. They can be a savory delight or a sweet treat with some syrup, applesauce, or jam like a pancake. Use them as a delicious brunch or a scrumptious dinner.

- 3 large potatoes (about 2 pounds), peeled
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon grated onion
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- peanut oil, coconut oil, or some other oil with a high heat point for frying



1. Grate the peeled potatoes. Place the grated potato in a tea towel and squeeze any excess liquid from the potatoes.
2. In a frying pan, add oil to the depth of 1/8 in.; heat over medium-high (375°).
3. Add eggs, onion, flour, salt, and baking powder to the potatoes and stir together.
4. Drop batter by heaping tablespoonfuls in hot oil. Flatten into patties. Fry until golden brown, turning once. Serve immediately.

- Warm leftover pancakes in the oven and have them with breakfast. Serve as a snack with smoked salmon or applesauce.
- Have these latkes as part of your Hanukkah celebration¹²

¹² <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/country-potato-pancakes/>