

## What Happened when the Temple was Recaptured and Rededicated?

### Book of Maccabees I: Chapter 4

“On the anniversary of the day on which the Gentiles had defiled it, on that very day it was reconsecrated with songs, harps, flutes, and cymbals. They also made new sacred vessels, and they brought the lamp stand ... into the Temple. They burned incense on the altar and lit the lights on the lamp stand, and the Temple was filled with light.... For eight days they celebrated the dedication of the altar. ... Then Judah, his brothers and the entire community of Israel decreed that the days of rededication of the altar should be celebrated with a festival of joy and gladness at this same time every year beginning on the 25th of the month of Kislev and lasting for eight days.” (First Maccabees 4:54-60)

### Book of Maccabees II: Chapter 10

Chapter 10:1-8 of Second Maccabees describes the purification of the Temple, adding significant information that is not found in the First Maccabees.

“Judah the Maccabee and his men, under the Lord’s leadership, recaptured the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. ... After purifying the Temple, they made another altar. Then by striking flint they made a new fire and ... offered sacrifices and incense ... lit the lamps. ... On the anniversary of the very same day on which the Temple had been defiled, the 25th of Kislev, they now purified the Temple. They celebrated joyfully for eight days, just as on Sukkot, knowing that (a few months before) on Sukkot they had (been unable to celebrate at the Temple) and had spent the festival (hiding) like wild animals in the mountains and caves. That is why they came carrying stalks, wreathed with branches—palm fronds—and ripe fruit (the lulav and etrog), and sang hymns of praise (Hallel), to Him Who had given them the victory that had brought about the purification of His Temple. By a vote of the community they decreed that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these festival days every year. (Second Maccabees 10:1-8)”

## The Rabbinic Source of the Story of the Cruise of Oil

### Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 21b (completed about 500 C.E.)

“Why Hanukkah? Our rabbis taught: (in Megillat Ta’anit) On the 25th day of Kislev begin the eight days of Hanukkah on which eulogies (mourning) and fasting are forbidden for when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oil; and when the Hasmoneans prevailed and defeated them, they searched and found only **one jar of oil** with the official seal of the High Priest, but which was only enough for one day’s lighting; yet a miracle occurred, and they lit the lamp with it for eight days. The following year these days were decreed a festival with the recital of Hallel Psalms and thanksgiving.”