

חנוכה וחג התקופה

Hanukkah and the Season

1) Josephus: Antiquities XII Ch. 7

Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs, when, after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days.

And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. (Φωτα)

I suppose the reason was because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival. Judas also rebuilt the walls around about the city, and reared towers of great height against the incursions of enemies and set guards therein. He also fortified the city Bethsura, that it might serve as a citadel against any distresses that might come from our enemies.

Timeline: (all dates BCE)

597: Exile of Yehoyachin (Bavel)	c. 460: End of Prophetic Era (Malakhi)
586: Exile of Tzidkiyah, destruction of the Mikdash (Bavel)	c. 450: Ezra
539: Conquest of Bavel by Cyrus, leader of Persians and Medes	332: Conquest of Persian Empire by Alexander the Great
537-6: Beginning of restoration of Mikdash	167: Defilement of the Mikdash
536-518: Suspension of rebuilding	164: Ouster of Greeks, rededication
518: Rebuilding commences, completed in 515 BCE	

2) מגילת תענית (ליכטנשטיין) המגילה ד"ה אלן יומיא דילא בעשרין ותלתא למרחשון אסתתר סוריגא מן עזרתא. בתלתא בכסלו אתנטילו סימואתא מן דרתא.

On the 23rd day of Marheshvan the Soreg was torn down from the courtyard (of the Temple compound).
On the 3rd day of Kislew the idols were removed from the (court?)

3) עזרא ה, א-ב

(א) והתנב'י חגי נביאה נביא וזכריה ברעדוא נביאא נבייא עליהודיא די ביהוד ובירושלם בשם אלה ישראל עליהון
(ב) באדון קמו זרבבל ברשאלתאאל וישוע בריוצוק ושריו למבנא בית אלהא די בירושלם ועמהון נביאא דיאלהא מסעדן להון:

1. Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even to them. 2. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

4) חגי ב

(י) בעשרים וארבעה לתשיעי בשנת שתים לדריוש היה דברה' אלחגי הנביא לאמר... (ט) ועתה שימורנא לבבלם מןהיום הזה ומעלה מטרם שוסאבון אלאבון בהיכל ה'... (יח) שימורנא לבבלם מןהיום הזה ומעלה מיום עשרים וארבעה לתשיעי למןהיום אשר יסד היכלה' שימו לבבלם: (יט) העוד הזרע במגודה ועדהגפן והתאנה והרמון ועץ הזית לא נשא מןהיום הזה אברך:
(כ) ויהי דברה'ו שנית אלחגי בעשרים וארבעה לחדש לאמר: (כא) אמר אלזרבבל פחתיהודה לאמר אני מרעיש אתהשמים ואתהארץ: (כב) והפכתי כסא ממלכות והשמדתי חוק ממלכות הגוים והפכתי מרפבה ורכביה וירדו סוסים ורכביהם איש בחרב אחיו: (כג) ביום ההוא נאסד'ו עבאות אקחד זרבבל ברשאלתאאל עבדי נאסד'ו ושמתין בחותם פיבך בחרתי נאם ה' עבאות:

(5) עבודה זרה ח.

מתני'. ואלו אידיהן של עובדי כוכבים: קלנדא, וסטרנורא...

גמ'. אמר רב חנן בר רבא: קלנדא - ח' ימים אחר תקופה, סטרנורא ח' ימים לפני תקופה, וסימנך: אחור וקדם צרתני וגו'. ת"ר: לפי שראה אדם הראשון יום שמתמעט והולך, אמר: אוי לי, שמא בשביל שסרחתי עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו, וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים, עמד וישב ח' ימים בתענית [ובתפלה], כיון שראה תקופת טבת וראה יום שמאריך והולך, אמר: מנהגו של עולם הוא, הלך ועשה שמונה ימים טובים, לשנה האחרת עשאן לאלו ולאלו ימים טובים, הוא קבעם לשם שמים, והם קבעום לשם עבודת כוכבים

MISHNAH. THESE ARE THE FESTIVITIES OF THE IDOLATERS: KALENDA, SATURNALIA...
GEMARA. Said R. Hanan b. Raba: KALENDA is kept on the eight days following the [winter] solstice. SATURNALIA on the eight days preceding the solstice. Our Rabbis taught: When primitive Adam saw the day getting gradually shorter, he said, 'Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the world around me is being darkened and returning to its state of chaos and confusion; this then is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from Heaven!' So he began keeping an eight days' fast. But as he observed the winter solstice and noted the day getting increasingly longer, he said, 'This is the world's course', and he set forth to keep an eight days' festivity. In the following year he appointed both as festivals. Now, he fixed them for the sake of Heaven, but the [heathens] appointed them for the sake of idolatry.

6) 2 Maccabees 10:1-8

Now Maccabeus and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city;²they tore down the altars that had been built in the public square by the foreigners, and also destroyed the sacred precincts.³They purified the sanctuary, and made another altar of sacrifice; then, striking fire out of flint, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they offered incense and lighted lamps and set out the bread of the Presence.⁴When they had done this, they fell prostrate and implored the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by him with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations.⁵It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev.⁶They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the festival of booths, remembering how not long before, during the festival of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals.⁷Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place.⁸They decreed by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year.