



JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK MONDAY - 12/3/2007

← U.S. stamp honoring Hanukkah and showing a Menorah

HOW DID THE TERM “*HANUKKAH*” ORIGINATE?

2007: Hanukkah begins at sunset on Dec 4th (25th day of Kislev) and is celebrated in a series of rituals; the primary one is to light one candle each night until all are lit on the 8th night. The extra 9th light is called a “*shamash*,” meaning *guard* or *servant* is also lit each night, and is given a distinct location (higher or lower) on the Menorah.

Definition: An 8-day Jewish festival (Festival of Lights) marking the rededication to Judaism of the Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C.

Origin: Term originated in 1890–95; from Hebrew **הַנּוּכָה** (ḥānukkâ) “dedication, consecration” from **הָנַךְ** (ḥānak) “to train or dedicate.”

History: Around 168 B.C. the Greek-Syrian ruler Antiochus IV outlawed Judaism and forced Greek culture/worship (Zeus) upon all peoples in the territory. Although vastly outnumbered, Jews in the region took up arms to protect their religion and temples. Led by Mattathias the Hasmonean, and later his son Judah the Maccabee, the rebel armies became known as the Maccabees.

After three years of fighting (circa 165 B.C.), the Maccabees victoriously reclaimed the temple on Jerusalem's Mount Moriah. According to legend, there was only enough purified oil for the rededication to kindle the temple light for a single day. However, the temple light miraculously continued to burn for eight days.