

Hanukkah Conference 2019 – Why The Maccabees Failed + The Oil of Anointing

Matthew Vander Els • 2019-12-28 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

[Proverbs 4:1](#) • [Revelation 22:2](#) • [Ezekiel 47:12](#) • [1 Maccabees 2:48](#) • [2 Maccabees 10:5](#) • [1 Kings 8](#) • [1 Kings 8:65](#)
• [Ezra 3](#) • [2 Maccabees 1:18](#) • [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#) • [Hebrews 12:1-2](#) • [Matthew 24](#)

The Blessing of the Next Generation

But what a blessing to see the next generation coming up. I've got grandkids, so I just love seeing them hanging out for Hanukkah. I just realized today that this is my 67th Hanukkah, and I'm pretty sure no one in here can beat that.

Before I get started, I really want to say thanks to Founded in Truth Ministry and Jenny, Karen, and whoever else is part of this. They've really organized a fabulous conference. I have organized a lot of conferences in my life, and I know how difficult it is, and I know what's going on behind the scenes, and I think this has run very smoothly. The food has been great. They didn't have too much teaching. Good fellowship. Kids were taken care of. I don't find any complaint here, so... they better invite me back next year. Please just tell them thank you, because this really is hard work to do.

Dennis Prager and the Fear of the Lord

So one of my favorite cultural icons is Dennis Prager. You guys know who Dennis is? Come on, Shirley. I had the great pleasure of meeting Dennis. I was invited to speak at an event at Mar-a-Lago last May, which was quite an honor — that would be an understatement. And Dennis was the keynote speaker, so I actually had my five minutes to talk to him. And I got one of those, you know, they do the picture thing. Dennis is about 6'8". So that was really a nice picture. But I love this guy because he seems to encapsulate things in short sentences that really speak to me about what's going on in our culture.

One second here, because this is a great quote — all right, you'll get the clicker, I'll get to it in just a second. Where we have arrived in our nation is a place in which we have absolutely no wisdom and no common sense. Would you agree? There's a scripture in Proverbs that says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And one of the problems is we have people who have absolutely no fear of God. He doesn't factor into anything. When you have people running your country that do not fear God, you can pretty much take it to the bank that there is not going to be any wisdom or common sense running, correct?

The Oil of Anointing

And I'm really — this oil of anointing thing got me kind of thinking, because with Hanukkah there's two tracks going on here. We've got the oil, the story of the oil, the cruse, the eight days, and we have the military campaign. They're kind of different, and they're in different locations. So I thought today I would focus in on the oil, the oil of anointing. And you know, I'm sure we've heard lots of different stories about the oil — the oil of gladness, the oil of joy, all those sort of things. But there's a whole lot more here about oil than you can imagine.

So one of the places that we get the oil from is trees that produce fruit, in particular olive, the pressing of the olives to bring forth the fruit. And of course, for the menorah that was in the holy place in the temple, they used the first pressing of the olives as the oil. Now that oil was used to service the menorah, the lamps of the menorah, but it was also the same oil that they used for the anointing of the king.

Now the menorah is an interesting symbol, and actually will take us back to the Garden in Eden — it's not the Garden of Eden, it's the Garden in Eden. And that's because in the ancient world, every single complex, temple complex, palace complex, had a garden. And I shared earlier this morning, every king in the ancient world was called a gardener. And that's because not everyone had gardens in the ancient world. We do today — you buy a house, you build, you dig a garden, you put it next to your house, you grow food. But in the ancient world that wasn't the case. And so the king was the one that was responsible for providing food for his subjects, and so the king owned the royal gardens. And if you've seen some of the gardens in Europe — good, that was all just Phil's, we're good, hallelujah, I'll get back to my garden story.

Wisdom Is in Very Short Supply

This is what Dennis Prager had to say: religious conviction does not guarantee moral clarity nor common sense. How many of you know people, religious people, they've got religious

conviction on steroids and seemingly moral clarity on steroids, and they don't have a wit of common sense? Okay, it is no guarantee. And I've seen plenty of that in this movement — people just bank on their clarity of how they understand the scriptures and they lord it over others, and sometimes to the point of no wisdom and no common sense. And as I mentioned earlier, this is the key to understanding that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is in very short supply.

I believe it is the foundation for our lives. I, personally — this is my opinion, but I believe that the Holy Spirit and wisdom are synonymous terms. That the Spirit isn't some alien life force that determines to take up residence in you and leads you and guides you in places that you don't know where you're going, but that the Holy Spirit is the exercise of wisdom. And because, folks, our life is day to day about making choices — making good decisions for building up or tearing down, your call. But wisdom comes forth in order to make good choices so that we live long, prosperous lives, and that we raise up a generation behind us that exercises the same kind of thing. We are in desperate need of wisdom.

Wisdom and Craftsmanship

Now in the ancient world, wisdom was associated with the created order. In Genesis chapter 1, although we don't see the word used, the idea of God bringing forth creation was that, in essence, he was bringing forth his wisdom into the earth, into the world. Remember, everything came forth by what he spoke — that speaking is what is associated with wisdom coming forth into the world.

Wisdom, incidentally, was related to something called craftsmanship. I know that doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but those scholars and those analyzing the scriptures have associated building a house, as we have in [Genesis 1](#), with building a place for wisdom to operate from. And so wisdom was associated — we see the language in Proverbs, right? Wisdom, the woman personified who builds her house, who carves her seven pillars. House building and wisdom go hand in hand. And house building goes hand in hand with the king and his dynasty, because the one thing the king needed to operate his kingdom more than anything else was wisdom.

The pure sense of wisdom comes from the Torah. Remember what it's called — the etz chayim, the tree of life, which we'll get to in just a second. So wisdom came to be associated with light — you guys remember what the Hebrew word for light is — and out of that which we get order. So wisdom produces order, folly produces chaos. That is true in how nations are governed and how kings and rulers operate. And again, I say this is where we find ourselves in our nation —

our nation will be restored in part when his people exercise wisdom in the marketplace and aren't afraid to speak out and speak up against those things that are insane.

Where We've Arrived

Okay, we live in a time I think is complete insanity now. Sorry if I go off script here, but this for me was the best example of how nuts we are. Okay, recently there was an article in — I don't know, one of the many news sites — in which a guy, you know, and granted he was stupid, what could I say, but he stole a flag off of a church. And the flag that he stole off the church was an LGBTQ-whatever flag. And then he proceeded to burn the flag. And then he got 15 years in prison. And what happens if you burn our flag, Old Glory? Well, you're hailed as a hero, aren't you? For me, that is the sum total of where we have arrived in insanity.

So wisdom creates order, folly produces chaos in the environment, and wisdom brings forth life. She is personified again as a woman. Folly brings forth death. This is the contrast we see in the book of Proverbs, right? The bride and the harlot — the harlot producing death, the bride producing life. And this contrast actually goes all through the scriptures. And so we don't want to be a part of the harlot system, do we, producing death?

Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding

Again, I mentioned wisdom was associated with craftsmanship and building. So for example, when we get to the tabernacle, it makes a little more sense. Do you remember the guys that built the tabernacle? We had Oholiab and we had Betzalel — his name means "in the image of El." They were filled with three attributes in order to build. Do you remember what they were? Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. That's what it requires to build a house. That's what it requires to build a dynasty. That's what it requires to build a family, a community, and a nation — wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

We get to the story of King Solomon building his house. Do you remember who his foreman was? A guy named Hiram. And it tells us the same thing — to be the foreman of the house, he needed wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. And then when we jump ahead to the New Testament, to the Gospels, it tells us that Yeshua was filled with wisdom and stature and favor with man and God.

Interestingly enough, wisdom and this craftsmanship concept — God himself was called the master craftsman, or the master carpenter, because ultimately he built the entire cosmos, which was a building, a house. And so although Yeshua may well have been the son of a carpenter,

isn't it interesting that he was the son of the master carpenter too, who was going to rebuild, restore, and renew the cosmos? Yeshua didn't come just to save me so I could go to heaven. Yeshua came to restore the cosmos. He came to restore the ordered universe. He came to restore everything.

Restoration and God's House

That begins with the smallest thing you could think of all the way to the magnificence of the cosmos that I can't even describe because it's too big. When he hung on the tree and heaven and earth joined together in that place, the unity of heaven and earth came together. He restored all things. That was his purpose. And he came in wisdom and knowledge and understanding to be able to build the house for God. What's that house? That's us. With wisdom and knowledge and understanding, he is in the process of building this house. And we have our work to do as we contribute to that craftsmanship.

The Art of Wisdom

Wisdom is the art to achieve a successful life through problem solving. I would venture to say that every single day, practically every hour of your life is dealing with solving a problem. Anybody own a business? That's all we ever did in our business. Every morning I woke up, something was wrong. And we had to solve problems all day long to run the business. And you have to solve problems all day long in your families and in your communities. How on earth are you going to make decisions about what to do? And this is of course we seek the counsel of God in his word, but we understand that the Spirit—wisdom will give us guidance and direct us on what choices to make.

A Life of Choices

Our lives are nothing but years and years of choices. Some good, some not so good. The great thing with God is when we got the not so good choices, he can restore the years the locusts have eaten. How many of you have made bad choices? Listen, I was a hippie for 25 years or whatever seemed like it. I made some really bad choices. It's just the graciousness of the Father when you repent, when you return to him, that he can restore everything back.

Listen, my husband and I were a little more than a year ago—I say this kind of in jest, but we were homeless and we were living in the living room of friends. We are not spring chickens, okay? I did not think at this time in my life that I would find myself living in my friend's living

room. Some of it was things that happened not of our own choosing. Some of it was our own stupid choices that we were reaping the consequences of. But the Father turned everything around with blessing after blessing after blessing because he knew I couldn't handle it. I love my friend, but there's a limit. And a year later, we have a beautiful home on five acres of land with trees and no neighbors. What could be better?

I'm saying our life, everything is about making choices day by day by day, and we need the wisdom of God, don't we, to make those decisions? And we want to have a successful life by making good decisions and solving problems. Wisdom tells us there's a constant connection between what we do and the consequences. It sounds kind of like covenant language. But whatever we do has consequences, good or bad.

Wisdom and Governance

And the same is true for governments and nations. Listen, most of the stuff that's going on in our nation is because we have rulers that make bad decisions and bad policy. And then we all have to live under it. So it behooves us to get out there and do our bit to make sure that people who are ruling over us represent us.

Now I also have a political bent to me and I personally do not see a whole lot of difference in the Bible between the two, because the Bible I would suggest is a very political book. In fact, almost every chapter in the Bible has the Israelites dealing with some political entity, some political enemy, does it not? It matters who's ruling over you. It matters in your individual life. Either Yeshua is on the throne of your heart ruling and reigning or he's not. And certainly in our nations, we want to see the same thing. We want to see wise people serving us and making good policy. It's not just for our benefit, it's for the benefit of those who have no voice and who cannot speak. The most innocent among us need a voice and people who have concern and care for them. That's the kind of environment we want to live in because everything has a consequence.

Wisdom Through Experience

Wisdom is acquired through life experience, and folks, it's a long and painful process. I could write a book and I might. It's a process of suffering in the crucible of challenges and changes and difficulties. And there's a lot of young people at this conference, a lot of kids, and we just need to be honest and have a talk here because sometimes in Christianity we have this feeling that God is just going to make everything perfect. We're just gonna wait it out, right? But you

have that responsibility in your own family. And times will be tough and times will be challenging. But if the King is on the throne—if the anointed King is on the throne in your home and in your family and in your community—he provides you with that covenant protection that no matter what the consequences are, he is with you in those deep, dark times that will surely come. No one skates through this life without him.

Leaving a Legacy

And I kind of talk like this now because I don't know personally how many years I have left to keep doing this. And my goal is to impart into the next generation and leave a legacy behind of all that I have learned over 40 years in this walk. And unfortunately, we live in a time where the elderly and those with wisdom have been thrown out. We don't see them as having any value. We don't live in a lifestyle anymore where many generations are in a home. And the elderly, the older, the wise, are not seen as being relevant or valuable to the community. A healthy community has all of it. It has the wise, the elderly, those who've been walking in this a long time, all the way down to the newborn babe. And I would maintain that communities without all of those generations suffer from it.

And so we need to turn to those who know better, who've walked it, who've walked ahead of you, and who have lived through things that can help. I really appreciated Matt sharing this morning. People don't talk about stuff like that. And it needs to be talked about in our communities. We just sort of—Christians have a tendency to suck it up and don't complain. And we don't want to be complainers, but folks, we need one another. And in those areas, as things grow dark and cold, we need people who will step forward and help lead the way so that those who've walked in your shoes can be a minister to you.

The Tree of Life and Wisdom

Wisdom is how a good life can be achieved. So let's talk about wisdom for a sec. We get the concept from the tree of life, which represents the menorah. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, right? And on the tree was fruit. Fruit that we call everlasting, eternal fruit. Fruit that gives eternal wisdom. Its leaves, you remember we have it in Revelation and in Ezekiel, are for the healing of the nations. The oil from the pressed fruit was for anointing—for the anointing of the king and for the anointing of blind eyes to see.

We have a lot of language in Scripture talking about blindness—spiritual blindness. We say those eyes are opened with the oil of wisdom, with the oil of anointing that comes from the

King who's on our throne ruling and reigning. So you guys are all familiar—I mean, this is where we get the Hanukkiah.

The Menorah and Hanukkiah

You understand this? It came from the menorah. It's not some brand new thing you light—they were replicating the menorah that was in the holy place. And we think that if the menorah represented the tree of life and it was in the garden, it was probably in the inner sanctum originally. But it looks like a tree, does it not? It's supposed to look like a tree with branches and leaves and petals, etc. And of course it has the almond-like blossoms that extend from a central shaft.

And the menorah is very interesting. It resembles the tree of life. It's meant to resemble a tree of light and a tree of fire. Because where the menorah stood in the ancient world, it was a place where God spoke.

Trees, Kings, and Dynasties

So trees in the ancient world were actually kings, and we read a lot about trees in Scripture, don't we? King David, for example, was an olive tree—he represented the olive tree. The fig tree was represented by the kings of Judah. That's why, remember, Yeshua cursed the tree, and that tree was reduced to nothing, because that dynasty was not the dynasty that was going to be the eternal dynasty of the kings of Judah. The eternal dynasty was going to come from the olive tree, from King David, a return to the Son of David—the eternal dynasty of King David. Yeshua, that was his line, was it not? And he would be raised up as the Son of David, the King.

Clement of Alexandria said the Messiah was the menorah linked to the royal tree. So we've got trees and kings and shafts, the trunk of the tree representing the king. This is how they thought in the ancient world. This is not how we think now.

The Torah Linked to Wisdom

The Targum tells us that the tree of life, the Etz Chaim, was the Torah linked to wisdom. So that kind of implies that the king was the one with wisdom, does it not? This was the attribute that all kings received from their gods in the ancient world. And this is the attribute, remember, that Solomon asked for. Why did he want wisdom? He needed wisdom to be able to govern his kingdom.

That was the purpose of the Torah. The Torah was given to the king—if you will, we call it the tablets of destiny—given to the king so he would be able to govern. That's the key—to be able to govern wisely and bring benefits, blessing, and prosperity to the kingdom. That is what Yeshua is doing now.

He is bringing blessing, prosperity, and fullness to who you are when He sits on the throne. And out of that comes the oil. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. So now, when you're reading this, kind of read it as a picture of the lampstand lit in the holy place. Yeshua represented the shaft of the menorah—the lampstand—and the lights on the menorah were seen as the seven eyes.

Do you remember where that came from? Do you remember in the book of Revelation? He was walking amongst the lampstands. The lampstands signified kings, and He walked as king of kings among the lampstands. The seven eyes are the lights of the menorah that would give light and take away and remove blindness. And the blindness He was addressing was the blindness of the ones that were in charge of the temple. In the second temple period in the first century, it was being run by the political elites of the day, the ruling class, who he clashed with quite a bit. And they were blind guides leading blind people. They were men running the temple community without wisdom.

One of the things that went on in the temple community is that the high priest at the time, Annas, who was a bad guy, would put in whoever he wanted—his family—to run things and become high priest. And it went on from there. And it was a time where they lorded it over the people. They charged interest on debt to the people. Do you remember that? They extorted the people. These people didn't have a whole lot to begin with, but they enslaved the people the same way foreign empires enslaved Israel. It wasn't a whole lot different.

Leaders Without Wisdom

And so Yeshua, every time he went up to the temple, was basically railing against these guys because they weren't operating in the spirit. They weren't operating with wisdom to govern the people. They were extorting the people and taking their money. I say, what's new, right? And so again, we want leaders and rulers who will be a blessing and a benefit to the folks, to those who have no voice, to those who have no influence. That's us, folks. We have no influence, basically, and no voice in the culture.

But when God pours out his spirit, when God pours his wisdom into you to make decisions, you'll be able to stand in front of people and declare the gospel. You'll be able to go out in the

marketplace and say, "That's wrong, and I'm not going to support it." I'm starting to see some things happen in our country in which parents are fed up and maybe have had enough. Have we had enough?

I'm sorry, but this is the country God stuck me in. Actually, I grew up in Canada. Prefer it down here. This is where he's placed me. Okay. He's placed me in this nation at a particular time in history, and it matters. And so I want to encourage you—as God pours out His wisdom and His spirit in you—to exercise that and move out in those places that maybe you're afraid to go.

Wisdom and Light

John bears witness to the true light. The true light that gives light—or order—to every man. Order comes from wisdom. Light is associated with wisdom. Darkness is associated with folly, foolishness, and chaos.

And so the light of God comes to every man. Yeshua said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light which gives life." That you will have the wisdom that it takes to live your life out to the finish line. That you will raise your families—and that includes your grandkids or whatever—with the same kind of wisdom. Again, I say, wisdom is in huge short supply, and common sense that goes with wisdom.

The Menorah and Fire

The menorah, the tree of life, the oracle of God—oracles in the ancient world always had something associated with them, and that was fire. So one of the names for the Holy of Holies was actually the house of the tongues of fire. That might click with you. You remember in the book of Acts? Okay, when the fire came on and tongues of fire were on the people, this was the spirit being poured out. This was wisdom being poured out and exercised in their community.

It must have been remarkable because God dwelt in His throne room where fire was, and yet that fire came out from His throne room symbolically and alighted on those people so that they could go out to the four corners of the world with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding to build a house for the presence of God. Amen.

Trees as Structure

That's what it's all about—trees. They were the raw materials, if you will, to build a house. I always think it's interesting that the Hebrew word for trees, *at sem*, is the exact same word for

bones. Because the structure of a human being—we have a skeletal structure of bones—and trees were seen as people, and specifically kings. And that was their structure. That's how they look.

You think about King Nebuchadnezzar. Remember, it talked about him being a tree, didn't it? The tree grew up and large, and it was huge, and it spread all over the earth so that its canopy provided shade to the whole earth. This is very metaphorical language of what a king looked like, and all those who served him—the birds, and whatever—would come under the shelter or shade of his canopy.

We have the messianic kingdoms—those sitting under their vine and fig tree is the same kind of image of sitting under the shade, the canopy, or the sovereignty of the king. That's the allusion being made there.

The Tree of Life

This is Geo Widigran. He is a scholar from back in the '50s who has done great work on the tree of life. What he said was that it was a mythical ritual symbol of both the God and the King. It's a symbol of God Himself and a symbol of the King whom He installed in His sacred space to rule and reign.

The presence of trees symbolized life, the life essence of the world. I mean, it makes sense. Trees breathe, right, and provide air for us. Trees were the biggest thing, next to mountains. And so trees would grow tall and connect to heaven. And so there was this connection point between heaven and earth, which is actually where the temple was located. Again, it's very interesting to me that Yeshua hung on a tree. Yes? Yes, He was crucified. Yeah, that was the way they did it back then. Everybody was hung on a tree.

But how interesting that He rested, that He hung on a tree that connected those two spheres—those two realms—bringing everything together in one big... I don't know, I can't even think of the word. I don't have much more time here.

The Mount of Olives

I do want to mention something for those who were in my class this morning—something very significant. We talked quite a bit about mountains and how they're related to temples. And I'm not going to go into it now, but just believe me when I tell you: in the ancient world, anytime you have mentions of mountains, it's really speaking of a temple because they used to stick

their temples on top of the mountain. The god would give the king the design. He'd build the temple, and it always went on top of mountains.

So if you were to cross the Kidron Valley from the temple, what mountain would you arrive at? You remember? On the opposite side? The Mount of Olives. Interesting. Olives. That's where the fruit came. The olives were taken. They were pressed and used for the anointing of the king. And they were used to bless the people, to provide for them. And we talked about blind eyes being able to see, about blind guides and opening their eyes. But the anointing of the king was key, and so was lighting the lamps in the holy place. And so one of the names for the Mount of Olives was the Mount of Anointing. The Mount of the Anointing of the King.

And do you remember where Yeshua spent a whole lot of time? In a garden on that mountain. The place where the olive oil used for the Kings, the Roche of the mountain, was a very special place where they did the ashes of the red heifer. Do you remember in [Matthew 24](#)? Do you remember where they were all sitting when He's going to tell them about what's going to happen to the temple? Do you remember that? Well, they went up to the Mount of Olives, and they were sitting and looking back at the temple. Do you remember that? They were sitting in the spot where, probably, the red heifer was offered—the location for the anointing of the Kings. And they were looking back, and He was going to let them know that not one stone of that temple would be left on top of another. But it was from that mountain that He was going to be raised up, crowned—coronated as King. This was the site of the red heifer. And what's really significant is: this is the place from which the exiles would return from Babylon.

When they returned, they came from the east, right? And in order to enter into the city, they came to the top of the Mount of Olives. They came up and went down into the city. This is exactly the same route that Yeshua took. And He spent a lot of time on the Mount of Olives—almost as much time in the temple and the Sea of Galilee as He did on the Mount of Olives. Going up and coming down, there was something called the Ascent of the Olives. Do you remember? He went to Bethany—bait anya. He was there quite a bit. You got Lazarus and all that stuff going on. Interesting. I don't have time to go into it, but it's interesting that this is all taking place on the Mount of Olives.

The first time that the Mount of Olives is mentioned—not by name—is with Abraham. From there, he moved to the mountain to the east of Bethel and pitched his tent. And of course, the rabbis recognized that Bethel was actually the location of the temple—the temple mount. So if he moved to the mountain east of the temple mount and pitched his tent, where did he pitch his tent? He pitched his tent on the Mount of Olives. There's something very significant there.

And I don't have time to go into Abraham and the kingship. Trust me. From Adam, the 1st Adam to the 2nd Adam, we see the line of the kings goes right through Abraham. Out of his loins would come kings, and out of Sarah's womb would come kings. And so the Mount of Olives has always been associated with kingship and coronation.

The Mount of Olives: Kingship and Anointing

The glory of Adonai went from within the city. Then stood still on the mountain that's to the east of the city. The Ruach lifted me up and brought me in, and by the Ruach Elohim took al dia to the exiles. This is where—the map. Remember when the spirit, or the essence of God, moved from the temple? It located itself on the Mount of Olives. Do you remember that in Ezekiel? A lot of you will have these lost looks on your faces. Okay, these little pieces of information are important. We need to think about this geographically—what's going on? The Mount of Olives is a very significant place in the Bible. This is the place where they lit the signal fires to let them know when the festivals were starting. You remember that? They go up to the mountain, they light a signal fire, and then down the road, the next mountain peak—they'd be looking for the fire. They light the signal fire apparently all the way back to Babylon. So there's a fire on the mountain to let them know the appointed times in which they're going to meet with their God.

Then David continued to go up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he ascended. He had his head veiled and was walking barefoot, like a priest, because the priest did not wear shoes in the temple area. Then David went on until he reached the summit where God was worshipped. It was on the summit of the Mount of Olives where God was worshipped. The Mount of Olives, where the oil came from to anoint the king. I'm gonna skip ahead because I'm running out of time. Acts chapter 1: "After saying all this, while they were watching, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. This Yeshua, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

This is taking place on the Mount of Olives. This is the place where Yeshua was raised up to become king—king of kings and lord of lords—on the Mount of Olives, the place of the anointing, the mountain that was called the Mount of Anointing. And he left behind for us his spirit, the spirit of anointing, the oil, in which to give us wisdom and knowledge and understanding to be able to navigate through our lives. "The people walking in darkness will see a great light. For to us a child is born, a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders." And so it kind of goes back full circle. This king is not just functioning in the spiritual realm. This king is operating physically in our lives. Everything is about good

governance, whether you're operating in your own home or whether you're operating in a community setting. Good governance matters, folks. It matters who's running the show. And so I would just encourage you this day: Make sure Yeshua the Messiah is the king, seated on the throne of your heart. And as you go out, make sure to expand the kingdom of heaven, doing good works, exercising your faith, expanding the kingdom, being image bearers for his kingdom, and blessing those who come in contact with you. Because you may be the only wisdom they ever run into. Amen.

Thank you, Dina, so much. Tell you what—I did not realize, I did never put together the return of exile through the Mount of Olives. That's potent.

All right, everybody, let me check and see if we have any announcements. I think we do. Miss Karen? Mom? Do we have a break? Do we have a 10-minute break? Ladies and gentlemen, we have a five-minute break. So go ahead and stretch your legs, use the restroom, come on back. I will be starting promptly at 2:57. So we'll see you back here then. Thank you.

All right, everybody, it is now 2:59. I'm glad you made two copies. Thank you so much. No announcements yet. Very good. Hey, everybody, how you doing? I'm doing great. Thank you for asking. It's wonderful, having a great day. You guys enjoying it so far? Nice to relax, Shabbat, hang out, learn. Awesome.

So I just love controversial titles. My message today is intentionally titled, "Why the Maccabees Failed." We are celebrating a day that, because of the Maccabees' success, that's what Hanukkah is about. The audacity to have a message titled "Why the Maccabees Failed." We'll go into that in a minute.

Why the Maccabees Failed

So, here's the thing: I have type 1 diabetes. It's just a fact, just a fact. I was diagnosed when I was 21 years old. And so, here's the thing about anyone else—here's the thing about the D-word. And others who also have the D-word may be able to relate: it attracts all kinds of unsolicited solutions. Yes, please—please do not approach me and ask me to snort cinnamon. You think, you think I'm making that up? I promise you, it does not work like you think it works, and it can actually be very dangerous. You should YouTube the cinnamon challenge, and that's what would have happened. Yeah. So I'm not joking. Like, "Oh, you have diabetes?" "I do." "Ooh. How about this? I have an oil for that." I'm allowed to pick on oily people. We have our own doTERRA shrine in the pantry, so I'm allowed. Hey, I got—no, put some cinnamon oil on your feet. It'll heal your pancreas. Or what? No, no, no.

Do we have any essential oil fans in here? Fantastic. You guys, watch this. Who's over here on team doTERRA? Okay, who's on team Young Living? One's quieter than the other. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you start a civil war on Shabbat, right?

Living with Type 1 Diabetes

So, let's see here. The thing about type 1 diabetes is... it comes with a lot of potential complications. Hypertension, heart disease, kind of go hand in hand, possible kidney issues long term, all kinds of good stuff. And so you have to get your blood taken every few months to check your A1C, make sure your numbers are doing good, check all your liver, cholesterol, everything.

Another thing about type 1s—type 1 diabetics—is we have the unique ability to meet our maximum out-of-pocket by spring every year. Oh, it's a gift. It is a gift. So I became used to going to my doctor's office about every three months to get my A1C checked. And the first thing—what is the first thing they make you do every time when you go to the doctor's office? Yeah, everybody's self-conscious, just like I am. Stupendous, right? And they say, "Okay, come over here and step on this nice scale in front of me." And so, yeah, exactly. And you're over here like a sane person: "Okay, where's the changing area? Like, at least a hook to hang my jacket, right?" No, no one wants to get on a scale and look at numbers fully clothed. I'm just saying. Like, that's just not—it's not fair. It's not fair. I freak out. The nurse checks out, texts out. I go in there: "Please step on the scale." Start taking off my jacket. Boots are coming off. Wallet, phone—every ounce counts, right?

And appointment after appointment, the doctor would just kind of look at me, unimpressed, when he read my results. "I'm doing a good job. Your numbers are within range." I mean, generally you'd like your doctor to be more enthusiastic when he's telling you about your health. "Your numbers are in range. It's good. Good. You know?" And it's always, it's really like: "Okay, well, you won't die tomorrow, so you're good."

The Cholesterol Reality

So I've been on a low-dose statin for high cholesterol for a few years now. It's just a little 10-milligram thing. Runs in my family. I know it's there. Didn't really bother me too much. That is, until earlier this year, my doctor told me: as a type 1 diabetic, my cholesterol numbers need to be like 20% less than the ideal range of a normal person. Mine aren't even close to the ideal numbers for a normal person. So I have a bigger goal. That's right. Yay. But at this appointment,

he also checked my numbers, and he said that your numbers have increased. So I am going to quadruple your statin. That's a fun thing for a 30-something-year-old to hear, right? So, not outrageous, but it goes from 10 to 40 milligrams, which still isn't significantly a lot, but it kind of stinks. Anybody else? Heart disease, yeah. It stinks because I've seen how heart disease, stroke, and cancer have affected my immediate family. And so at that doctor's appointment, I made a decision that I was going to do better, and I needed to do better or I would die. I had to embrace this vision of who I needed to become or I would die. Now, of course, I wasn't going to die tomorrow, but it would be sooner than later with heart disease and just the predictors.

Running Toward a New Vision

So I began to wean off red meat, acquired a taste for grass and such, and I started to run. Started to run. It was good. It was horrible. First day of running, I couldn't make it to the stop sign at the end of my little street over here. It's horrible. But slowly I started to make distance and get faster. And so I started running for two minutes and then walking for two minutes. And sometimes that run was a slower run than other two minutes. Walk, run, walk, run. It was pretty easy. Increasing distance slowly. And it was the beginning of something kind of neat—a new chapter in my life where I actually embraced this journey of trying to fill the vision of who I needed to become. And the real moment of change actually took place when I decided it would be a great idea to go running with an Army drill sergeant.

And he's actually here today, Matt Knapper. It's him. Both of our families were in New Orleans this past summer. He was like, "Hey, let's go run through the streets of New Orleans." It just sounds so poetic and picturesque, like the urban runner you see on TV.

I told him, "Hey, I've been running two minutes on and two minutes off, walking and jogging." I know he can run. I looked at him and said, "Man, I'd really love to come to a point where I push past that." I told him I wanted to push myself.

Guys, some wisdom only comes with experience. So on that day, it wasn't anything super impressive. We ran about two to two and a quarter miles without stopping. It was a big day for me. I'd never run that far in my life without stopping.

Pushing Past Limits

Sometimes there comes a time in our life when we need to make a decision. It's not because we're better than other people. It's not because we have super abilities or talents. It's not because we're more blessed than other people around us. Sometimes we just have to make a

change for ourselves because something deep inside of us is yearning to be brought to the surface. Something is there and it needs to be brought to the surface. Sometimes there is a yearning inside of you to be more, to do more, to reach a bigger goal in your life, to maybe achieve the level of a commitment that you need to be at in your life in certain areas.

And sometimes we don't recognize that calling until there's a diagnosis from a doctor. Sometimes we don't recognize it until a family member has a sit-down conversation and says you have a problem. Maybe it's in relationships. Maybe it's in your health. Maybe it's your job. Maybe it's a crisis in your family that you have to stop everything to bear the weight of. It comes in so many different forms and circumstances, but the fact is, nothing changes unless you decide to get up, grab your sling, and walk out to meet Goliath. Nothing changes.

The Pressure to Conform

And so in 1 Maccabees, things were changing, as the world does, and the Greeks wanted to introduce the Judean world to all of the wonderful things that Greeks did. Some Judeans were really, really excited about this. Some Jews were awesomely excited about it, man. They started to be ashamed of their circumcision because they wanted to be cool like the Greeks, and the Greeks looked down on circumcision. Many of you are like, "Well, put some pants on." But the thing is, the Greeks built this thing called a gymnasium in Jerusalem. I know what a gym is. No, this is like a gym, but you go naked.

And so some of the Judeans didn't want to show off that they had this sign of the covenant. They wanted to be cool like the Greeks, right? But there was also resistance to this pressure to conform to these new ideas and reject the old ways and faith of the covenant.

Standing Firm

And there was a man by the name of Mattathias. And in chapter 2 of 1 Maccabees, it tells us about him. It says this:

"In those days, Mattathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Uriah, left Jerusalem and settled in Modin. He had five sons: John, who was called Gadi. Simon, who was called Thassi. Judas, who was called Maccabeus. Eleazar, who was called Al. No, it is."

Hey, see, I saw some of y'all falling asleep. We're not going to let that happen again, are we?

Mattathias, he looked up and he lamented, "Woe is me! Why was I born to see the ruin of my people, the ruin of my holy city, to dwell there as it was the enemies, the sanctuary into the

hand of strangers?"

So we have this priestly family who is zealous and passionate for God's people, for the Torah, and for the temple. The same temple that was desecrated by the Greeks, pillaged—and here Mattathias becomes distressed, lamenting. And the story goes that he mourned and tore his clothes.

A bunch of guys came to his town, wanted everyone to make a sacrifice to a pagan god. They were coming to the town to invite the Jews to go ahead and convert. "Go ahead and get your shot. Let's go. Come on. Reject your faith by showing us that you're committed to this new way by sacrificing on this altar."

Verse 19:

"But Mattathias answered in a loud voice, 'Even although all the Gentiles in the king's realm obey him, so that they forsake the religion of their ancestors and consent to the king's orders—yet I and my sons and my kindred will keep the covenant of our ancestors. Heaven forbid that we should forsake the law and the commandments. We will not obey the words of the king by departing from our religion in the slightest degree.'"

Amen. Amen. Standing up. We're doing it.

So the Greeks were encouraging the Judeans to abandon their faith, to make a sacrifice to basically another god. And here, Mattathias and his family stand firm. Now we will stand for the type of kingdom God wants on earth. We will not be moved. We will maintain our focus. We will stand for what he has commanded. We will not serve other gods.

"As he finished saying these words, a certain Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer the sacrifice on the altar of Modin according to the king's order. When Mattathias saw him, he was filled with zeal. His heart was moved and his just fury was aroused. He sprang forward and killed him on the altar. At the same time, he also killed the messenger of the king who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. Thus he showed his zeal for the law just as Phineas did with Zimri, son of Salu."

Then Mattathias cried out, "Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me!" Men, once again, then he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind the city and all of their possessions.

So at that time, many who sought what—righteousness and justice—went out into the wilderness.

The Unbendable Conviction

So the people wanted a society of righteousness and justice, and they sought after a place where it would be safe. They could live out at least this vision of their community. They could be safe. They wouldn't be pressured by the world. At least they could start their own community out in the wilderness, a place where love and security would thrive and they would be safe, where God's kingdom would hopefully flourish some way or another outside of what the influence of the Greeks was.

And the Greeks found out where they went. So the Greeks came to their spot in the wilderness. They said, "Hey guys, listen—we got you surrounded! Come on out, come on out. Obey the king's orders, and we'll let you live. Convert, and you will live. Your kids, everything will be fine."

They weren't gonna do that. But they could fight—but if they fight, they have this dilemma. Because if they fight in their minds, they'd be breaking Sabbath. And so how is that any different from walking out and obeying the king's orders and breaking Torah and abandoning Torah? And now we have these Greeks. And if they fight them, they felt like they would be doing the same thing—breaking Torah.

So what are we going to do? Are we going to fight and desecrate the Sabbath and still allow the Greeks to win even if we kill them? No. So this community came to the tough decision: we will not let the Greeks win any way, shape, or form. We will not fight, and we will not surrender. And the Greeks went in and they slaughtered everybody, and not one person raised a sword.

Can you imagine making that decision? Where is our line in loyalty to Torah? They chose not to fight. They would rather die than let the Greeks have any satisfaction in breaking their religious conviction.

We Will Fight

So it was here that Mattathias heard about what had happened. And he realized the Greeks were trying to purge their people out of existence. And so what do we do? If we continue to not fight, then they'll succeed. And so he came to the decision: We will fight. We will fight.

And it was tough as a leader. He had to make a decision to either follow the example of those who died or to strengthen the rebellion by allowing war on the Sabbath—something his community obviously wasn't fond of.

Verse 48 says, "They saved the law from the hands of the Gentiles and of the kings and did not let the sinner triumph."

They begin the rebellion against the Greeks. Mattathias then dies in the story and hands over the rebellion to his sons.

Remember Who You Are

Here are his last words:

"When the time came for Mattathias to die, he said to his sons, 'Arrogance and scorn have now grown strong. It is time... of disaster and violent wrath. Therefore, my children, be zealous for the law. Give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors. Remember the deeds that our ancestors did in their times, and you shall win great honor and an everlasting name. Was not Abraham found faithful in trial? And it was accredited him as righteousness. Joseph, when in distress, kept the commandment, and he became a master over Egypt. Phineas, our ancestor, for his burning zeal, received the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. Joshua, for executing his commission, became a judge in Israel. Do not let sin prosper. Remember who you are. Protect, guard, and fuel Israel.'"

The Rededication of the Temple

For God's commandments, this is his message he passed on. He appoints Judas, his son, as the new leader. And Judas walks forward, raising an army. The army continues to thrive until finally they push the Greeks back out of Judea. Men, they won. They've defeated this great army. But they went back to the temple. It was a mess. They cleansed it. They destroyed the altar because of the pig that was sacrificed on it. You can't clean this. They destroyed the altar, stored the stones because they're holy stones. You can't just throw them away—kind of like an old Bible. You don't throw an old Bible away. You got to keep it around. It's all falling apart. It's too holy. The stones of the altar were stored at the temple mount. They rebuilt the altar, cleansed everything, and then they held a mock Sukkot ceremony. This is in 2 Maccabees 10, 5, it says this:

"It happened 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 25th day of the same month, which was Kislev. They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing in the manner or the pattern 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. How appropriate, they thought.

Therefore, carrying ivy, we wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fawns of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place."

Do you know why they chose to replicate the Sukkot ceremonies when they rededicated the altar? Do you know that? It seems like, who loves Sukkot? Who wouldn't want to do it again, right? There's more to it, though. The reason why they chose this pattern, to pattern this feast day, the ceremonies of this feast day again, is because Sukkot is when the temple was originally dedicated in [1 Kings 8](#). That's when it took place. Not only did Solomon choose to dedicate the temple, all of it, during the festival of Sukkot, but at the end of [1 Kings 8](#), he kept the feast for the whole week. And then he's like, we can't stop it now. Let's do it again. So he did another week. It was two weeks long. Look at this. [1 Kings 8.65](#). This is something I geek out on. I love stuff like this:

"So Solomon observed the festival at that time and all of Israel with him, a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the Lord our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. On the following day, he sent the people away. They blessed the king, then went home joyful and glad in heart for all of the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel."

Solomon's Extended Dedication

Man, we have such a problem with traditions. And here, Solomon dedicated the temple of God, the first temple. Big deal. Big deal? Big deal. The holy establishment of God's presence during the festival of Sukkot. And at the end of it, he's like, we're not done. Let's do it again. Two weeks long. But the Bible doesn't command it to be kept for that long, Matt. I know. The Bible doesn't command it to be celebrated at that time, the week after. It's that week only. Apparently, Solomon knew something we didn't. Wisdom. Just like Ryan and Dina said in their presentation yesterday, sometimes we need to maybe look at the Bible as trying to have a conversation instead of as an encyclopedia. Maybe Solomon understood that as a people they needed to grasp the responsibility that they had before them with the temple of God. Dedicating a sanctuary to their heavenly Father. So at the end of the feast, they just kept going. The chapter at the end of the chapter—chapter [1 Kings 8](#)—ends with, "On the following day, He sent the people away. They blessed the king and went home joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done." I love that the festival was extended to make an example, specifically regarding the temple being dedicated.

The Greek Desecration

Fast forward to the time of the Maccabees—paganism, oppression, these Greeks are coming in and have taken over the land. The temple, on the 25th of Kislev, was completely desecrated by the Greeks. A pig was thrown on the altar, right? It wasn't random. The Greeks didn't just come in one day and put a pig on the altar randomly. No, it was likely a special day to them—probably a pagan festival honoring some god, some big deal. It was probably their pagan ooh, yes, today's the day we're going to sacrifice a pig on this altar. And here, the Maccabees stood fast. They were bold. They were focused. They forced the Greeks out of Judea. They tore down the altar, rebuilt it. They built a brand new altar. And just like Solomon, they built an altar for worship.

Dedicating the New Altar

What do they do in order to make sacrifices? They need to dedicate the altar. They can't make any sacrifices on it until it's dedicated. We're talking about daily offerings. We're talking about praise offerings, Thanksgiving offerings, sin offerings for atonement. What needs to take place if it needs to be dedicated? Okay, guys, let's look in the Bible. We've got to dedicate this thing. We've built it up. It looks great. It's pretty. It's totes kosher. Where are the instructions in the Bible of how to dedicate the altar? Let's look in Scripture. When do we dedicate the altar? When does the Bible say we need the commandment to dedicate the altar? There is no commandment of that. But we see that Solomon did it at Sukkot. We missed Sukkot a couple months ago. We can wait a whole other year, no sin offerings, missed Sukkot, no purification offerings. We're going to have to skip Passover next year. We can't do Sukkot, first fruits, Yom Kippur—just ignore it. We'll have to stick a closed sign on the temple for at least a year. But then you have to worry about gathering up the ashes of the red heifer, and that's going to take even longer. I mean, this is a big deal. Okay, guys, what do we do? What do we do? What do we do?

The Pattern Solomon Left Us

Solomon dedicated the altar and the temple during Sukkot. It's a biblical example. Is there anything that says that we can't dedicate an altar at another time of the year? No, there's not. So let's follow the same pattern, the same biblical pattern, and dedicate the altar with an eight-day procession and festival, likened unto Sukkot when Solomon did it. So they did it. 2 Maccabees 1, 18, it says:

"Since we shall be celebrating the purification of the temple on the 25th day of the month of Kislev, we thought it right to inform you that you too may celebrate the Feast of Booths and of

the fire that appeared when Nehemia, the rebuilder of the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices."

So that's what they did. Historically, that's what they did. They weren't trying to replace the Feast of Tabernacles. No, they were trying to rededicate the temple. And because the first dedication of the temple was during Sukkot, they replicated the celebration in Kislev—not to fulfill the commandment of the feast day, but to rededicate the altar, to rededicate God's temple. Following the same pattern that we find in [1 Kings 8](#) and the same pattern that Ezra kept in [Ezra 3](#). Ezra chapter 3. It is the Feast of Tabernacles when Ezra rededicates the altar. We have a pattern. Do we have to do it at the same time of year? Or can we just take the pattern and apply it now? They thought that was okay to do. I agree. I agree. The pattern of dedication happens during Sukkot. So the Judeans didn't move the feast itself. They took the elements of the feast, which were the pattern of dedication, and moved it to a different day. And Maccabees records when it took place. It so happened it was on the same day the Greeks desecrated the temple of their God. It just so happened. I love how that's just in there.

Reclaiming Their Holy Day

So on the same day that the oppressive powers of the world tried to take the central shrine of God from Israel, Israel ended up taking it back. You understand that? On the same day the pig was thrown on the altar, they rededicated the brand new altar. Why is that significant? This day won't be remembered as the day when you celebrated your God in our temple. No. This day will be remembered as the day that we resisted. That's the entire theme of Hanukkah. Get out. You don't belong here. Get out. Man, this is our day. You never had a right to take it from us. From this day forward, parents didn't teach their kids that the 25th day of Kislev was the day that the foreigners took out the temple. No, they taught their kids that this is the day that is dedicated to God. Because it always has been. It wasn't their day to take, and it never will be. It's our day. I love that. Love that. So, man, there's so many misconceptions about Hanukkah that I've walked through in my own life. And when we actually read the story, it's simply amazing. Hanukkah is a season of pushing the world that wants to take your faith away. It's a reminder to stand firm and not let the world seep in.

Standing Firm Against the World

So the Maccabees rededicated the temple on the same day the world tried to take it from them. No, the 25th of Kislev is not yours. So they redid an eight-day feast of dedication for the temple. You know the story. But what we don't realize, that's the story that we celebrate. That's the

story that's edifying. It is a constant reminder that we celebrate and we're reminded of what it looks like when we have a vision of rededication. Historically, though, we don't realize what happened after. What took place after that is something we don't like to talk about. See, I'm still running, by the way. We ran, I think, Lance, we ran four miles the other day. Four and a half, you're right, my GPS is more accurate, four and a half.

When Your Alarm Goes Off

Still running, I try to run four or five days a week. A few months back, I set an alarm for 4 a.m., that's when I typically like to get up, go out in the street, no one else, then run. And the next morning, my alarm went off, so I shut it off. I made a decision, I'm not getting up today. I made a decision when I opened my eyes, I made a conscious decision to forget who I was when I set the alarm the night before. I made a conscious decision to forget the vision that I was dedicated to the night before when I hit that button. I made a decision to forget it so I could go back to sleep. What a haunting feeling when you wake up in the morning. So I woke up, I slept in, got up at like 7.30, 8 o'clock. It was haunting. Goliath was taunting me the whole morning. Couldn't stand it. Got out of bed.

Hate running at 8, 9 in the morning because all the traffic, everyone's leaving the neighborhood. I get dressed and I go for a quick two mile run just to kill the giant. I needed to step out in the field. It was trash day that day. So dump trucks and recycling trucks, that's fine, it was good. And I went around my little route, pushing myself. I finished my two miles at the other end of the neighborhood. I was out of breath. I was trying to do it for speed today, punish myself. And I ran for speed, and I had those cramps. If you know what those cramps are, say amen. I had those cramps, and they were hurting, and I was out of breath, and my heart was just racing. And I was done. I hit it. And I walked back to the end of this little dead-end street, started walking up the street.

Another Goliath at the End of the Road

And the dump truck came around and began picking up trash on the street. It's about a quarter mile road. And one by one, it began to go. And at that moment, I saw a challenge. You may laugh. I had just killed my two-mile giant, but I saw another Goliath at the end of the road. And I was going to kill that giant. I was going to take his head like David did. And I told myself, I'm going to beat this dump truck to the end of the cul-de-sac. You're laughing. I was dead serious. I was sweating. I'm hurting. At that moment, I knew what I was going to do. And he already had a head start on me. And I knew I could do it in the moment. I was so sure of myself. I looked at

the end of the cul-de-sac and I painted the finish line. I need to make it there. So I took off. I was blazing faster and faster and faster and something happened.

I wasn't out of breath anymore. I was steady. I was breathing calmly and slowly. The cramp in my side disappeared. I was flying. It felt incredible. I accepted this challenge. The giant's going down. He's dying now. And I passed this truck like right when he got to the beginning of the cul-de-sac. And I think I startled the driver. And as soon as my foot hit the finish line and hit the curb. As soon as my foot landed there, I knew in my heart—truck behind me—I knew I'd failed. I failed.

I Set My Finish Line Too Short

Why'd you fail? I failed because I cut myself short. See, I realized in that moment that I set the finish line in my head. And the moment that my foot touched the finish line, I gave myself permission to give up, to finish. You can stop now. You can stop now. As soon as my foot touched the finish line, my breathing was heavy. The cramps came back double. I was hurting. I was out of breath. That's when I realized it was all in my head. All of it's in my head. I failed because I set the finish line too short. I knew I could have kept going. I knew I could have kept that up. I knew I could have finished harder. I knew I could have run longer, turned around, but I gave myself permission to quit too soon.

The Maccabees Failed Their Vision

Why did the Maccabees fail? Because after they pushed the Greeks back, the Asmonians, the priestly family, set themselves up as kings over Judea and became one of the worst totalitarian regimes Judea had ever seen. They abused and oppressed the people worse than the Greeks did. It seems if the goal of the Maccabees was to create a community of securing justice and righteousness, the Maccabees didn't follow through. They gave up too soon. They sold themselves short. They failed their vision first and became something they were never supposed to be because they gave up. It got so bad that the common people wrote to the Greeks, the Seleucid army, and asked them to come back and rule over them again. Yeah, because it wasn't as bad.

Long story short, there was a big battle, and King Alexander Jannius, I think the Seleucid army had joined the common folks in fighting. But anyway, there was a big battle between the common folks and him, and he brought back about 800 survivors, and he brought them into Jerusalem. And he built crosses for every one of them. And he crucified them one by one in the

square of Jerusalem. But before they died, he brought their kids and their wives before them to lay at their feet to watch their husband die. And as they're dying, they can look down. Here's an illustration. And there's the king up there, King Janus. He's the Hasmonean king. And he's eating grapes. He's hanging out. But here's all of the people that are being crucified under his regime.

Guys, if the Hasmoneans wanted to set up a Torah-based society built on righteousness and justice, they failed. They failed because they quit. They failed because their finish line was only to push the Greeks out. If their vision was to set up a kingdom of God, they lost the vision. They lost focus. They quit too soon. They gave themselves permission to stop and quit.

Get Better or Get Bitter

Guys, if God has called you to be an ambassador of his kingdom, he didn't call you to quit. Now, you may fall down. You may get hurt. You may get some bruises. But in that moment, you have a decision to make when you're on the ground. You can either get better or you can get bitter, and you can become resentful, and you can give yourself an excuse to quit. Or you can get up and keep pushing and finish the race. Keep going. See, we can either choose to get up, learn, move forward, or quit. And that's the only way that you fail in life and everything. By quitting or selling yourself short. Setting your finish line so short that you never really accomplished much anyway.

You Only Fail When You Quit

Now, see, we forget the essence of our character is defined by what we do in the third and fourth attempts, not the first attempt. Keep going. You only fail when you quit. It always seems impossible until it's not, right? The things keep going. Matt, how long do I have to keep trying? Until the Maccabees shortened their vision to kicking the Greeks out, I believe. That's my take on it.

You guys know where Paul says your finish line is? When you die, you keep running. So Paul uses the analogy of running. Love that. Never could relate to these verses. [1 Corinthians 9](#). Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training and discipline. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly. I do not fight like a boxer beating the

air. No, I strike a blow to my body and I make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Your Finish Line Is When You Die

So what he's saying there is I keep going and I don't set a finish line that's too short. [Hebrews 12.1](#), Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that is so easily entangled. Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. See, the journey of a believer is described by Paul and the author of Hebrews as an endurance race, something that takes dedication, something that takes sacrifice, something that takes patience and endurance. The finish line is there. You keep pushing.

Paul's mission wasn't simply to start a single church. He could have done that and quit. No, he had a bigger race. He continued walking through the doors that God opened for him. He continued in the vision that God had given him. He continued running and training and making sure he was focused. And Paul did finish the race. He ultimately finished the race in a city called Rome when he stood before the palace of Caesar and proclaimed, Yeshua is my Kyrios, not you. You are not my king. Paul finished his race at the edge of an axe.

Where Are You in Your Race?

Where are you in your race? Where are you in the race? Maybe your race looks different. I like to run around on my streets. Maybe you're doing cross country. Maybe it looks different uphill, downhill. Are you staying on top of training? See, I have to make decisions. You have to make decisions on your diet and the things that you eat or your alcohol. You have to make all those decisions if you're planning on running 10 miles the next day. You can't eat that pizza and that beer and all that stuff. No, you have to have discipline. You need to make changes. I have to control my impulses. Where are you in the race?

Where's your training at? Are you disciplined? Are you zealous for the walk of faith before you? Or have you forgotten who you were when you committed your life to Christ? I don't know where you're at today. And maybe your walk of faith isn't where you need discipline. Maybe that's not where you need discipline. Maybe you have a diagnosis. Maybe you need to work on character traits. Maybe you're an angry person. Maybe you're a selfish person. Maybe you're an unforgiving person that refuses to let those things go. Maybe you lost focus and find yourself living and accepting an unhealthy lifestyle that's holding you back in all areas of your life as a result.

You don't have to be a failure. You don't have to be a failure. All you have to do is make a decision to step out on the battlefield.

See, David didn't kill Goliath because of some Holy Spirit-guided magical rock. No, he killed Goliath because he made the decision to not take the taunts anymore. He made a decision to stick his foot on the grass of that field that day. He made a decision to go out and meet that giant. David killed Goliath because he chose to walk out there onto the battlefield, to actually do it. And at the end, he cut the giant's head off, carried it back to Jerusalem, and posted it at the front.

What giant do you need to behead in your life? What giant do you need to face? Who is it? What's the voice? What does it say? You have the ability to kill it. You have the ability to grab that prize and carry it home. But you have to make a choice to step out in that battlefield, wherever that is.

Step Out on the Battlefield

Man, get them. Knock them down. That's the first step. And if a giant knocks you down and it hurts, you look up at him and you say, I'm not done yet.

That's the boldness that Paul encourages you as a believer to take, to train, discipline yourself. Make your body a slave to you. Make yourself better through discipline and walking that out.

Never give up. Always get better. Show your strength through discipline and endurance. You do have that power. And that's what I want to encourage you today.

Don't set your finish line too short. Keep running. Keep training. Keep going. Amen?

Keep Running

So, guys, we have some breakout sessions up next.

Watch or listen: foundedintruth.com/bible-teachings/hanukkah-conference-2019-why-the-maccabees-failed-the-oil-of-anointing/
This automated transcript has been lightly edited for readability; scripture quotations appear as spoken. For the authoritative teaching, watch the video. • Founded in Truth Fellowship, Rock Hill SC • Saturdays 11:00 AM • Your giving keeps every teaching free: foundedintruth.com/give