

# Reclaiming the Original Faith

## Part 2- Against All Odds

### Slide A1

#### Introduction:

We saw in our last teaching how upon the captivity of the people of Yahudah (Judah) that the Babylonian empire employed some very successful strategies in the hope of totalling changing the faith and thinking of those they had removed from their own Nations. However we experienced the dynamic strength that Daniel and his friends had which can only be attributed to their powerful Torah based upbringing and their love for YHWH which enabled them to withstand all these highly skilled strategies. The rather amazing final result we read in the Book of Daniel is that these young men through their great faith and determination to remain faithful to the Torah changed this mighty King who finally esteemed the Elohim of these young men rather than them in any way being conformed. These epic tales became a great inspiration for many Yisraelites and for us it has revealed how the true Original faith as delivered to the Forefathers was able to be carried by the remanent that survived the onslaught of this Pagan Empire. It was my hope that through these epic stories we gain a greater appreciation for the Torah and the unique path that Yahweh's truth has taken in order to be fulfilled in the later days. I hope also that from a personal point of view that the stories inspire all of us to renew our dedication to do all that YHWH has spoken to his people. Today however we will continue on this great journey of the faith, to see what further assaults the Torah of YHWH would need to endure & how the love of YHWH and his Torah could endure and by what means it would endure.

#### The Unveiling of a Hidden Truth:

The process of being uncompromising as we saw in the life of Daniel, ChananYah, Mishael & AzarYah was truly an inspiration because this Empire utilized a more Passive or subtle approach to compromise the lives of its Captives whom it removed from the lands they dwelt, in order for them to be assimilated into a New culture.

### Slide B 2

In the Book of Ezra it is noted that only a small remnant of 42,360 Yisraelites had in fact returned to Yerushalayim indicating how efficiently the Pagan Empire of Babylon had employed its strategies causing many to desire to retain their wealth and prestige that Babylon had afforded them. This is the same challenge that we all face when the World offers us much comfort, wealth & pleasure because the ways of YHWH can be very costly as we noted with Daniel but also so gratifying. Yahweh through the hand of Ezra was once again able to establish the Torah which by then was waning, as well as re-establishing the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) so that it would once again be central to the life of Yisrael & could be used after being rebuilt to perform the prescribed Feasts and sacrifices under the Cohen Ha Gadol (the High Priest) Ezra.

There is however in most scriptures a large vacuum covering more than 400 years that is conveniently absence being a period that traces a time of unprecedented affliction for the

land of Yisrael and especially the Torah and the faith of the Forefathers. This period becomes our focus today to reveal its importance in maintaining the Original faith which was greatly tested and we will see what it took to see the faith established that was evident in the time of Yahshua as verified throughout the Brit Chadashah (the New Testament).

### Slide C 3

Much of the Book of Daniel revolves around prophecy like the following:

**Daniel 9:25 Know then and understand; from the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until Moshiach (Messiah) the prince is seven weeks and sixty two weeks.**

Knowing that this prophecy determines the time of the first coming of Moshiach (Messiah) it is in no way strange that the ferocity of the assault upon the faith is intensified through a period preceding his first coming just as we can expect before his second coming. Prophecy always has multiple applications so it is to that which we are drawn since the verses relate to the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes the son of one of the generals following the breakup of Alexandria's kingdom and also to the coming of the Anti- Messiah in the end times according to Eschatological thinking.

### The Coming of Gross Compromise:

Our Journey to highlight the need for an increase in Zeal for the things of YHWH comes when Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) came under the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes when lawless Yisraelite men came to the King to make a compromising Covenant with the Goyim (the Gentiles).

### Slide D 4

The Book of the Maccabees speaks of Antiochus in the year 143 of the Kingdom of the Greeks (169BC) taking Yerushalayim and arrogantly carrying off the Golden Altar, the Lamp stands, the Table for the bread of the presence, the sacred cups, the golden censers, the curtains & the crowns etc.

### Slide E 5

More than this he made a decree that all his subjects were to abandon their own Laws and Religion. Rather than the subtle re-education technique that Babylon employed we find that Antiochus Epiphanes took an extreme direct frontal attack in his desire to ruthlessly establish the Greek Religion in the entire domain under his control.

Today as we see the World employing many subtle ways to entice people away from the faith which also includes that of Christianity and Judaism we must realize

that we are still balancing on the tip of the ice berg. There is far more to come before the coming of that great day as we will see happened before the coming of Yahshua. Under Antiochus escalation of the confrontation began with the purpose of destroying everything that was of YHWH and even all memory of him and his Torah which Antiochus wished to totally erase.

Today we should be aware that the same is awaiting us but we are to not loose heart and that is what this entire story is all about.

### *The Strategies that Antiochus employed:*

#### **1. Defilement of the Temple of YHWH:**

Sadly upon the Decree of Antiochus Epiphanes threatening the people with violence, many people of Yisrael conformed to all his desires and all looked extremely grim for the Torah.

The first strategy that Antiochus employed was to attack the Kadosh (Holy) place, revered by the people of Yisrael the second Temple built under Zerubbabel and His ultimate insult finally came as we read in the following:

#### **Slide F 6**

**1 Maccabees 1:54 On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month Kislev (Hebrew 9<sup>th</sup> Month) in the year 145 (167 BC) “the abomination of desolation” was set up on the Altar of burnt offering and they built altars in the surrounding cities of Yahudah (Judah).**

What is most significant, is that this defilement was purposefully planned to coincide with the leading up to the winter solstice or the birth of the Pagan Sun Elohim to further bring insult and make the Temple a place of Pagan worship. It is believed that a statue of Zeus was erected and dedicated which is referred to as the “abomination of desolation” referred to in Dan 11:31 & 12:11.

In the days of Yahshua we discover that the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) was so vital to the honouring of Yahweh and we see the response of Yahshua in the following verses to the actions of those in the outer Court of the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple)in:

#### **Slide G 7**

**Yochanan (John) 2:17 And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. <sup>15</sup> When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. <sup>16</sup> And He said to those who sold doves,**

**“Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”  
17 Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”[ quoted from Tehillah (Psalm) 69:9]**

What we see of Yahshua is how passionately zealous he was for the House of YHWH to the point that his passion so consumed him that he had to release his righteous anger on the Merchants. Is it any wonder that the agent of Ha Satan being Antiochus in the time of the Maccabees would do his utmost to defile the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) and fill it with an image of Zeus and so desecrate the Temple since the Yahudim prized it and considered the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) as the most Kadosh (Holy) place and the place of YHWH’s presence!

Even today we find the same since that most Kadosh place is occupied and houses a Foreign place of worship right on the Temple Mount and we should therefore be like Yahshua & be greatly grieved. However Yahshua also reveals a further truth about the Kadosh place when he answers the Religious leaders:

### **Slide H 8**

**Yochanan (John) 2:18-20 So the Yahudim (Jews) answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”**

**19 Yahshua answered and said to them, “Destroy this Beyth Ha Mikdash (temple), and in three days I will raise it up.”**

**20 Then the Yahudim (Jews) said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this Beyth Ha Mikdash (temple), and will You raise it up in three days?”**

**21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body.**

Since his body is the true Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) then we come to understand that he is our meeting point with Yahweh the Elohim of all Creation and that believers are referred to as the Body of Moshiach (Messiah) which then lends so much more weight to the verses of Shaul (Paul) when he says:

**Qorint’Yah Aleph (1 Corinthians) 6:19 Do you not know that your body is the Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (the Holy spirit) which is in you, which you have from Elohim and you are not your own? 20 for you were bought with a price: therefore esteem YHWH in your body.**

By allowing the Worldly thinking & the desires of the flesh over YHWH it is equivalent to putting false Elohim in his Temple which we are. If we have the same Zeal not to defile his Temple then we should do our utmost to keep ourselves from all forms of defilement and remember how passionately Yahshua was and how he wants us to be. This means to honour our personal bodies as well as the fellowship of believers which he calls his body. This in no way removes the importance of the place that Yahweh deemed to honour as his resting place which is the Sanctuary or the Temple Mount in Yerushalayim.

## **2. The Total Annihilation of the Covenants of YHWH:**

This has to be one of the greatest attacks on the Original Faith in that the next Strategy that Antiochus employed was to deprive the entire land of every aspect of the knowledge of YHWH and all participation in the Covenants which surely the people of Yisrael were not deprived of under Babylon which used much more subtle approach:

### Slide I 9

#### **1 Maccabees 1:56-60**

All Scrolls of the Torah (The Law) which were found were torn to pieces & burnt with fire. Anyone discovered in possession of a book of the Covenant, or conforming to the Torah (the Law), was put to death by the King's sentence.

59 On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the month they offered sacrifice on the pagan altar which was on top of the Altar of burnt offering. In accordance to the decree they put to death women who had their children circumcised, their babies, their families and those who had circumcised them they hanged by the neck. Yet many in Yisrael (Israel) found strength to resist taking a determined stand against eating any unclean food. They welcomed death rather than defile themselves and profane the Kadosh(Holy) Covenant and so they died.

As horrific as all this may seem it is important for us to see how relentless Antiochus Epiphanes was, to totally destroy all the evidence of the Original faith of the Fathers and supplant it with the Greek faith. We also see again the reference of an offering which was a swine offering, about 25<sup>th</sup> of December or the birth of the sun a High Pagan feast, the winter solstice.

Though many resisted and paid severely he did gain success because many in the Kingdom did compromise.

When we look at these stories it should not surprise us that these books have been deemed unacceptable and are not in most translations of Scripture but what they should do, is make us consider the importance of all these aspects of the Covenant of YHWH that these faithful people suffered so much to preserve.

## *The Turning of the Tide*

In this sad tale however comes new hope when finally the King's representatives came to the town of Modin:

### Slide J 10

**1 Maccabees 2:17-18** The Kings officers spoke to Mattathias: you are a leader here, they said, a man of mark and influence in this town, with your sons and brothers at your back. All the Nations have done so, as well as the leading men of Yahudah (Judea) and the people left in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). Then you and your sons will be enrolled among the King's friends; you will all receive high honours, rich rewards of Silver & Gold and many further benefits.

This is always the way that the World will entice the People of Elohim to be drawn to compromise. What we find in this story is the desire of the enemy or Ha Satan for the Yahudim (Jews) to break the most Kadosh (Holy) Covenants of the Almighty by:

1. The eating & sacrificing of unclean animals breaking the Adamic/ Noahide Covenant.
2. The banning on penalty of death the act of circumcising children breaking the Abrahamic Covenant.
3. The banning of the keeping of the Shabbat, the Torah & the Moedim (Appointed times -the Feasts) of YHWH which again violated the Mosaic Covenant.

The response however that they received from Mattathias was truly inspired by a love for YHWH and his Torah:

#### **Slide K 11**

**1 Maccabees 2:19-28** To this Mattathias replied in a ringing voice: though all the nations within the King's dominion obey him and forsake their ancestral worship, though they have chosen to submit to his commands, yet I and my sons and brothers will follow the covenant of our fathers. Heaven forbid we should ever abandon the Torah (Law) and its statutes. We will not obey the command of the King, nor will we deviate one step from our forms of Worship.

As soon as he had finished a Yahudi (Jew) stepped forward in full view of all to offer sacrifice on the Pagan altar at Modin, in obedience to the Royal Command. The sight stirred Mattathias to indignation; he shook with passion, and in a fury of righteous anger rushed forward and slaughtered the traitor on the very altar. At the same time he killed the officer sent by the King to enforce sacrifice and pulled the altar down. Thus Mattathias showed his fervent zeal for the Torah (Law) just as Phineas had done by killing Zimri son of Salu (during the rebellion in Mosheh's day). "Follow me" he shouted through the town, every one of you who is zealous for the Torah (Law) and strives to maintain the Covenant. He & his sons took to the hills, leaving all their belongings behind in the town.

This began the great struggle as further detailed in the Books of the Maccabees that describe supernatural defeats of grossly superior Greek armies that can only be attributed to YHWH. In the following we receive a wonderful example of one of these great victories against insurmountable odds.

#### **Slide L 12**

**1 Maccabees 3:28- 29** The Next year Lysias mustered 60,000 picked infantrymen and 5,000 cavalry to subdue them. 29 They came into Idumea and encamped at Beth-zur and Judas met them with 10,000 men.

The result of the ongoing war would finally see Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) & the Beyth Ha Mikdash (the Temple) restored & Yisrael (Israel) freed. The day we remember as Chanukah (Hanukah) or the rededication of the Temple commemorates this as the following text reveals:

### **Slide M 13**

**2 Maccabees 10:5** The sanctuary was purified on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Kislev, the same day of the same month as that on which foreigners had profaned it.

This celebration also reminds us how much blood was shed to restore the Faith of Yahweh and his Kadosh (Holy) Covenants preparing it for the coming of Moshiach (Messiah).

The question that should come to our minds through all this, is how passionate are we for the ways of Elohim and what would we do or give up to see him Esteemed and to maintain all that he has decreed. Without these heroes of the faith how would the Faith survive and we know that YHWH in every time is always seeking those of a pure heart as he spoke to YeshiYahu (Isaiah) in:

**YeshiYahu (Isaiah) 6:8** And I heard the voice of YHWH saying “whom shall I send and who will go for Us.”

The Kingdom is surely under affliction and the Master is challenging us to take a Pro-active part in seeing his Kingdom prevail as we read in the following:

### **Slide N 14**

**MatithYahu (Matthew) 11:12** And from the days of Yochanan Ha Matbil (John the Immerser) until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

### Slide N 14 Click again

Luke 16:16 “The Torah (law) and the prophets *were* until Yochanan (John). Since that time the Reign of Elohim is being announced, and everyone is doing violence upon it.

Since we know this is no easy road we need to understand that to stand for YHWH is not a passive stand but requires a heart Zealous for him and all that he has revealed as Shaul (Paul) writes in:

### Slide N 14 click 2<sup>nd</sup> time

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already received, or already been perfected, but I press on to lay hold of that for which Messiah Yahshua has also laid hold of me.

### Slide O 15

## *The Unveiled Truth*

Through this study we come to some most profound truths:

1. The journey the Torah has taken to come to us has been filled with extreme violence since the world system is under the sway of the Devil but YHWH is his power and compassion has prevailed.
2. In every time YHWH has his Zealous people that he has anointed to carry the torch to victory and we now have been given his light and are challenged to become his dedicated torch bearers in a difficult generation. We therefore have a great challenge to be like those men of faith who prevailed against all the odds to bring the Torah of truth to us today.
3. If the Torah, the Covenant & the love of YHWH has undergone such assaults should we not hold dear all that YHWH has given us and not grieve him by compromising his truth.

### Slide P 16

#### The Final Most significant Question:

Though the most powerful & violent Empires of the World were not able to destroy or even change any aspects of the Torah like the keeping of the appointed times, the Shabbat, the Dietary requirements etc. this begs the Question:

What force in all of history was able to change all the fundamental foundations of the Faith as delivered to the Forefathers? Surely the manifestation of Compromise became ingrained with Emperor Constantine and we need therefore to take a closer look at the early Assemblies (the Kehilot) and be willing to make the necessary changes that would see us reclaim the Original Faith devoid of the Pagan trappings that we have inherited.

May this teaching prevail upon us to read some of these often unknown books commonly known as the Apocrypha to enhance our love and commitment to all the wonderful instructions of Yahweh as revealed through the Torah & the Prophets?

Amein.