

The story of Hannukah

The Jews lived in Israel but their land had been invaded by the Syrians. During the Syrian occupation an emperor called Antiochus came to power. He worshipped Greek gods and wanted to impose his beliefs on all the Jews in his empire. He built statues of the Greek gods and tried to make the Jews worship them. He even tried to make them worship him. Pigs were sacrificed in the Jewish temple and statues erected in the holiest part of the temple.

The Jews could stand it no longer. A Jewish revolt broke out. Some Jews, led by a man called Mattathias and later his son, Judah the Maccabee, escaped into the hills and started to fight back against the Syrians. They persisted in their fighting for a long time until eventually the Syrian army retreated. The Jews were able to enter their temple once more. They tore down the offending statues and scrubbed the temple clean, and rededicated it once more to God.

They needed to light the oil lamp to show God's blessing of the temple, but only a small amount of oil could be found. It would only last for one day – but a great miracle happened. God made the oil last, not for one day, but for eight whole days until more oil had been found and prepared.