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Beckoning Almond Blossoms

A Symbol of Eager Anticipation

November 28, 2021

Dear friends,

The celebration of Hanukkah began last night this year, November 28th, at sunset. It ends at nightfall December 6th. I would like to share with you how I will recognize Hanukkah this year in a new way!

Hanukkah means *Dedication*. It is *The Feast of Dedication* mentioned in John 10:22-23. It is also called *The Festival of Lights*. (For more detail about the history of Hanukkah and the Art Card, please see the other Hanukkah post at Shale Fragments/Art Card Stories/Feasts of Israel)

In a nutshell, Hanukkah is the celebration of Israel's deliverance from their strong, evil enemy. After their deliverance, they rededicated the Temple to God where the oil in the lampstand (the Menorah) burned for eight days when there was only enough oil for one day!

And so, during Hanukkah, a Menorah with nine candlesticks is used rather than the usual seven. The ninth candle is used to light the other eight candles – one for each day the oil miraculously burned in the Temple. Each day, one more candle is lit until on December 5, all the candles are lit.

So, first I would like to share a vivid *dream* I had during the night recently just before a day we needed deliverance. Then, I would like to share with you about the *almond blossoms* on the Menorah and their symbol for us in the battles we face.

The Dream

A large, vicious black bear with snarling sharp teeth was approaching the front door of my home. I quickly locked the deadbolt and pressed my body against the door, but I knew my strength was no match for bear's. I heard his loud heavy breathing and could see the wet particles of his breath flying through the crack in the door. He heaved his body against the door rocking the whole house.

Then, the deadbolt broke, and my body was the only thing keeping him out. I pressed against the door, but I mostly planted my feet firmly and stood as erect as possible. The door opened a few inches and closed, then opened again a bit and closed, and back and forth, like a tug-of-war between me and the bear. Then, suddenly everything stopped. I looked out the window and saw the back of the bear as he plodded away.

Suddenly, a vehicle that looked like a 50s chevy pulled up a few feet from my front door. The man inside had a kind smile and a long face. He got out of the car with some papers. As I warned him about the bear, I could see beyond his car into the cul-de-sac – A large kangaroo was enveloping and devouring the bear.

The Lord has used this dream to make me strong with these verses:

- James 4:7, "Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- Ephesians 6:10, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."

- Ephesians 6:13, “Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”
- Psalm 32:7, “You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah.”

Whatever battle we face, whether financial, occupational, emotional, relational, or physical, it is important to remember –

- “Our struggle is not against human beings [not against any person] but against the rulers, authorities, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm.” (Ephesians 6:12) and
- “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)

The Almond Blossoms

The Hanukkah Menorah has become a symbol of God’s deliverance of His people. The Menorah (or Lampstand) that was first created for the Tabernacle of the Lord is described in Exodus 25. It was created of solid, poured gold with gold almond blossoms for the cups of the candlesticks.

At the time I was designing the Hanukkah Art Card for *The Feasts of Israel Fulfilled* Collection, I had an early-morning vision of a mosaic Menorah just before I got out of bed. I had intended to paint a gold Menorah, but after the vision, I cut squares of paper to resemble small tiles of gold in a mosaic. The red servant candle on the card represents Yeshua the Messiah Who gave His life for us. (See Isaiah 52:13-14)

Then, I painted the almond blossoms to be alive – white with pink hues. The Hebrew word for *almond* means *eager anticipation* or *wakeful hastening*. **The almond blossoms symbolize our hopeful, eager anticipation of God’s sure deliverance. Our wakeful trust in Him hastens His coming.**

As my friend, Ethel, said, “Hanukkah is a season of miracles!” As we light the candles each night of this week, let us listen to the Lord’s message through the almond blossoms that still beckon to us with their fragrant message of encouragement **to be awake as we eagerly anticipate His deliverance in the situations of our lives, as well as from this present darkness. And let us rejoice as we anticipate Yeshua’s return!**

If you would like to celebrate, you can use a Menorah or create a centerpiece with eight candles plus one red one in the middle. Then,

- Light 1 candle Sunday night, November 28
- Light 2 candles Monday night
- Light 3 candles Tuesday night
- Light 4 candles Wednesday night
- Light 5 candles Thursday night
- Light 6 candles Friday night
- Light 7 candles Saturday night
- Light 8 candles Sunday night, December 5

As you sit around the Menorah with family and friends or find yourself alone, tell stories of His deliverance, declare your trust in Him, speak the Scripture verses aloud, and thank Him for His deliverance, protection, salvation, and love!

Blessings, love and shalom at Hanukkah,
Beth Ann