

After [Judas Maccabeus and the rebel Jews] had beaten the generals of Antiochus's armies so often, Judas gathered the people together and told them this: because God had given them many victories, they should go to Jerusalem, purify the temple, and offer the required sacrifices. Soon he and all the people came to Jerusalem and found the temple deserted, its gates burned down, and plants growing inside. He and those with him began to cry out in sorrow.... He carefully cleaned out the temple, brought in new dishes, candlestick, table and incense altar, he hung up the veils at the gates and added doors to them. He took down the altar [for burnt offerings] and built a new one... They lighted the candles that were on the candlestick, offered incense on the altar, laid the loaves on the table and offered burnt offerings on the new altar... Now Judas celebrated a festival for restoring the temple sacrifices for eight days and omitted no sort of pleasures. He feasted them on the rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them with hymns and psalms. They were so very glad at the revival of their customs, because after a long time of intermission, they had unexpectedly regained the freedom to worship, that they made it a law for their children and descendants. [The law was] that they should hold a festival for restoration of temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was because this freedom beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that is why this name was given to that festival.

-Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (circa 94 CE) excerpt