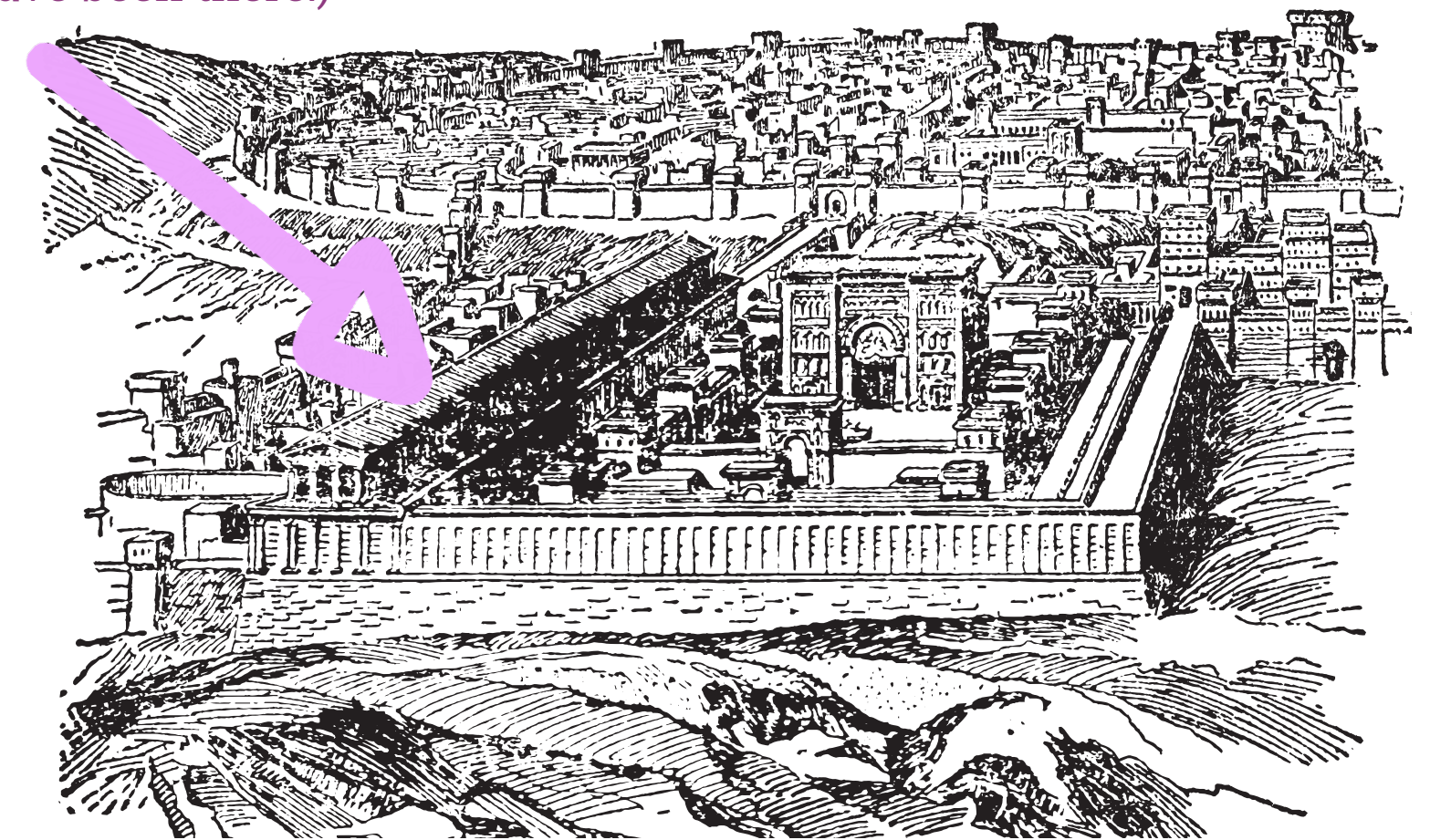


A teal background with a string of warm white lights and starburst ornaments. The lights are arranged in a wavy line across the top and bottom of the image. The starburst ornaments are white with multiple points.

What even IS Hanukkah?

(This is the Kotel/Western Wall
outside of what used to be the Great
Temple! You guys have been there!)



Hellenism rules,
Judaism drools! We
are gonna mess
your sh*t up!

Can you not?



(Greek soldier)



(Jewish Maccabee)

An *EXTREMELY*, over-simplified version of the Hanukkah story:

During the time of the Second Temple, the Holy Land was ruled by the Greek Empire. The Greek's felt threatened by people (i.e. Jews) who didn't practice their religion, Hellenism. In a demonstration of religious domination, the Greek leadership robbed the Jews of their property, made it illegal to practice Jewish rituals, and desecrated the Holy Temple. A band of religious zealots called the Maccabees rose up and drove the Macedonians from the land.

(*Pro tip: Hanukkah is considered a "minor" Jewish holiday, not a "major" one. Unlike the holidays of Yom Kippur or Passover, for example, the celebration of Hanukkah is not ordained by Jewish scripture. Rather, it's a holiday observed out of tradition. Many people mistakenly believe Hanukkah is a MAJOR Jewish holiday, mostly because of its proximity to Christmas.)

What's the deal with oil?

Oil was a big deal in The Temple in Jerusalem because it was used to perform rituals. In an effort to desecrate everything that was important and holy to the Jews, the Greeks poured out all the oil they looted from The Temple.

After the Maccabees miraculously overthrew the Greeks, they found one small jar of oil that wasn't destroyed. But the jar only contained enough oil to light for one day. The Maccabees lit it anyway, and a miracle happened: The oil lasted for 8 days! Just enough time for the Maccabees to get more oil for their rituals. That miracle proved to the Jews that God was behind them, and it restored their faith in a moment when they really needed it.

For each of the 8 nights of Hanukkah, we light candles and eat foods fried in oil to remember the miracle that took place after the Maccabees defeated the Greeks and rededicated The Temple as the center of Jewish life. The name of the holiday Hanukkah literally means "rededication". As we light candles in our homes, the center of our modern Jewish lives, we rededicate ourselves as well. By lighting Hanukkah candles, we fill our homes with light that increases in brightness each of the 8 nights.



The overarching message of Hanukkah:



**If you fight for what you believe in,
you can find strength and light in
miraculous, unexpected places.**

**Even in the darkest moments, there
is always an ability to bring light and
hope into this world.**