

Light UPON Light

*Devotional Reflections for
Each Night of Hanukkah*

The Historical Background of the Maccabean Revolt and the Rededication of the Temple

The story of Hanukkah is rooted in a turbulent period of Jewish history, beginning around 175 BCE when **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, ruler of the Seleucid Empire, rose to power. Determined to unify his kingdom under Greek culture and religious practice, he launched a deliberate campaign to **erase Jewish identity**. Hebrew Scriptures were outlawed, circumcision was forbidden, Shabbat observance was banned, and the Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated—its holy vessels defiled and an altar to Zeus erected within its courts. Sacrifices forbidden by Torah were offered on the altar, turning the sacred space into a symbol of oppression.

This sparked deep grief and righteous anger among the Jewish people. In the small village of Modi'in, a priest named **Mattathias** refused to offer a pagan sacrifice and instead rallied his five sons to resist. When Mattathias died, his third son—**Judah Maccabee**, known for his courage—became the leader of what would become a guerrilla uprising. Though vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped, the Maccabees fought with determination, local knowledge, and unwavering faith. Their struggle was not just political; it was a battle to preserve the covenant, the Torah, and the worship of the God of Israel.

After three years of conflict, the Maccabees achieved a stunning victory. In 164 BCE, they reclaimed Jerusalem and ascended the Temple Mount. What they found broke their hearts—altars defiled, gates burned, weeds growing in the courts. But they immediately set to work cleansing, repairing, and restoring every part of the sanctuary. Their goal was not merely to win a war, but to **restore worship**.

On the 25th of Kislev, they rededicated the Temple—*chanukkah* in Hebrew. According to Jewish tradition, when the priests went to relight the **menorah**, they found only one sealed jar of pure oil—enough for just one night. Yet they lit it in faith, and miraculously it burned for **eight full days**, the exact time needed to prepare new, consecrated oil.

This moment marked not only the defeat of tyranny but the rebirth of Jewish worship in the land. The Maccabean Revolt became a lasting testimony to God's faithfulness and the resilience of His people.

Rooted in this historical moment of national and religious restoration is the modern celebration of the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah. The annual lighting

of the hanukkiah (the 9 branched menorah) commemorates both the Maccabean victory over the Seleucid forces and the rededication of the Temple in 164 BCE. Lighting candles for eight days reflects the traditional account of the oil that lasted beyond a single day.

Today, when we light the candles of Hanukkah, we step into this same story of courage and rededication. Each flame remembers the faith of those who refused to surrender their identity or their worship. Each night echoes the miracle of light that outlasted its limits. And as we celebrate the Feast of Dedication, we join generations of believers who have looked back on the Maccabean victory not merely as a historical triumph, but as an invitation—a call to cleanse the inner sanctuary of our own lives, to rekindle the flame of devotion, and to dedicate ourselves anew to the God who still works miracles in the midst of darkness.

Shamash Candle

John 1:1–13 NIV: The Word Became Flesh

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was with God in the beginning. **3**Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4**In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8**He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11**He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12**Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13**children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.



Jesus, the Servant Light

Before any flame touches wick, there is the One who lights them all. The Shamash—servant light—reminds us that the story of Hanukkah begins long before the rededication of the Temple. It begins before creation, before breath, before time. *In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was God.* The Light that was with the Father stepped into the darkness of humanity so He could ignite every other light with His own brilliance.

He does not stand aloof. He bends low.
He serves.
He kindles.
He awakens.

This is the beauty of the Servant: He does not merely shine; He shares His flame. He comes near to the cold corners of our lives, the shadowed places we do not easily expose, and He says, *“Let there be light here too.”*

Hanukkah calls us to remember that the Light has come—not only as a revelation of truth, but as a personal visitation of love. Jesus carries the flame of the Father’s heart, and with tender compassion He lights the candles of our spirit—identity, purpose, holiness, courage, hope, and prophetic destiny.

And once His flame touches ours, we are never the same. The darkness does not disappear overnight; yet it loses its mastery. His light grows within us, steady and true, not by our strength but by His sustaining grace.

Tonight, as the Shamash is lifted, imagine Jesus drawing close to you again. Feel His nearness. Hear His whisper:

“I came for you. I come to light you. I come to dwell with you.”

May His servant-light kindle within you a fresh dedication—a re-consecration of the inner temple—so that every hidden place in your heart becomes bright with the radiance of the One who came to bring you home to the Father.

Candle 1 (Night 1)

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- John 8:12 NIV

The Light We Follow

When we light the first candle, we remember that Jesus did not simply declare Himself to be the Light of the world; He invited us to follow Him into the glow of His presence. Light is not something we admire from a distance. It is something we walk toward—step by step, breath by breath, moment by moment.

There are days when His light feels bright and near, when the path is clear and our hearts are steady. But there are also seasons when His light seems distant, as though hidden behind the smoke of our own questions, fatigue, or sorrow. Yet even then, His light never abandons us. It waits for us to turn our face toward it again.

Following the Light means choosing His voice over the noise of our fears. It means allowing His truth to shape our steps, even when the path winds through uncertainty. It means letting Him illuminate motives, desires, and wounds we would prefer to avoid. Light reveals—but it also heals.

This first candle stands like a gentle reminder that receiving Jesus is only the beginning. We are invited into a living journey—one where His light becomes the guide, not the ornament; the path, not the accessory; the flame that anchors our wandering hearts.

As it burns, ask yourself:

Where do I need to turn my feet toward Him again?

What place in me longs to be warmed and guided by His radiance?

He moves ahead of you with kindness, never rushing you, always drawing you deeper into the freedom of His love. Tonight, as this candle flickers, whisper to Him again:

"Light of the world, I choose to follow You. Lead me through the shadows, and be the flame that steadies my heart."

Candle 2 (Night 2)

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

- Matthew 5:14 NIV

A Light Meant to Be Seen

The second candle reminds us that Jesus does not merely shine upon us—He shines through us. He calls us *the light of the world*, echoing the identity He carries within Himself. In His Kingdom, light is never meant to be hidden, smothered, or buried beneath the weight of fear or the pressure to stay invisible.

But being seen is vulnerable.

Being light in dark places costs something.

And sometimes we would prefer to hide, to shrink, to keep quiet so that we avoid the discomfort of standing out.

Yet Jesus lifts us like a city on a hill—not to spotlight us, but to reveal *Himself* through us. He places His radiance in our words, our actions, our quiet faithfulness, our compassion for those who are weary. He shines in the conversations where we offer hope; in the forgiveness we extend; in the courage to love when it is costly.

This candle whispers:

You were made to shine because you were made to reflect Him.

Not through striving.

Not through performance.

But through abiding.

When we rest in His presence, His light fills the cracks of our humanity, spilling out in ways we can hardly measure. We become living lanterns—ordinary vessels carrying extraordinary fire.

Tonight, as candle two glows, ask:

Where have I hidden the light He placed within me?

Where is He inviting me to shine—not loudly, but faithfully?

May this flame awaken courage within you, a gentle boldness rooted not in your ability, but in the One who called you by name. Let His light rise in you again, transforming your life into a quiet, steady beacon that invites others toward the warmth of His love.

Candle 3 (Night 3)

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, 9for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. 10Test and prove what pleases the Lord. 11Have no fellowship with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that is illuminated becomes a light itself.

– Ephesians 5:8–13 NIV

Walking in the Light

The third candle celebrates a beautiful transformation: *“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”* It is not simply that we have encountered the light—we have been changed by it.

Jesus does not just illuminate our path; He reshapes our very being. He teaches us how to walk in ways that reflect His purity, His compassion, His truth. Walking in the light is not perfection—it is direction. It is the willingness to let His presence confront the shadows that once defined us.

There are places in every heart where darkness still whispers—old wounds, buried habits, silent fears. But the brilliance of Christ is not intimidated by these corners. When we walk with Him, His light gently but steadily exposes what is harmful so He can heal what has been hidden.

This is not shame.
This is love.
This is restoration.

Walking in the light means learning to recognize His voice over the noise of guilt or condemnation. It means allowing His truth to govern our choices, guiding us toward what is good and life-giving. It means becoming people whose lives reflect the character of the One we follow.

As this candle flickers, let it remind you that you are no longer marked by the darkness you once knew. The Light of Jesus shines through you—sometimes softly, sometimes fiercely, always faithfully.

Tonight, pray:

“Lord, teach me to walk in Your light. Shine in the places I have hidden. Let Your truth shape my steps, and let Your radiance flow through my life.”

May this third light lead you deeper into the joy of living openly before Him, confident that His light is your healing, your identity, and your testimony.

Candle 4 (Night 4)

The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

– Psalm 27:1 NIV

The Light That Drives Out Fear

King David wrote Psalm 27 in the midst of danger, betrayal, and uncertainty. And yet his opening declaration is bold: *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”* The fourth candle invites us into that same holy defiance—an unshakable confidence rooted not in our circumstances but in the character of God.

Light drives out fear, not by ignoring the darkness but by overpowering it. David did not pretend his enemies weren’t real. He simply recognized that God’s presence was greater than any threat surrounding him.

This candle glows for those who are weary, those who feel pressed on every side, those who long for a refuge stronger than the storms they face. The Lord is your light—your clarity when confusion rises, your courage when your heart feels faint, your salvation when anxiety tries to steal your peace.

Fear shrinks when we lift our eyes.
When we behold Him, the shadows lose their voice.
When we trust Him, our hearts learn to rest.

Tonight, as candle four burns, let its flame remind you of the God who stands guard over your life. His light does not flicker. His love does not waver. His salvation is not fragile.

Pray this gently, as David might have:
“Lord, You are my light. You are my salvation. You are the strength of my life. Help my heart to trust You again.”

May this candle speak courage into your soul, reminding you that no matter what comes against you, the One who lights your path is the same One who holds you securely in His unfailing love.

Candle 5 (Night 5)

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

– Psalm 119:105 NIV

Light for the Journey

The fifth candle represents the guiding light of God’s Word—His wisdom, His truth, His steady direction. *“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”* In a world filled with shifting voices and uncertain roads, Scripture becomes the steady flame that keeps us walking toward life.

God’s Word does more than inform us—it transforms us. It illuminates the inner world of the heart, revealing motives, hopes, wounds, and desires. It exposes deception and anchors us in truth. It comforts our grief, steadies our anxieties, and renews our strength.

Sometimes we wish for the whole path to be revealed at once. We want clarity for tomorrow, next month, next year. But God gives light for this step, and then the next. His Word becomes a walking companion, not a map we study from a distance.

This candle is for those who need direction, those who feel uncertain, those who long for guidance but do not know where to begin. Let the flame remind you that God’s Word is not heavy or distant—it is a gift of love, a whisper of wisdom, a lamp lifted by the hand of your Shepherd.

Tonight, pray:

“Speak, Lord. Illuminate my steps. Let Your Word guide me into peace, truth, and clarity.”

May this candle awaken in you a deeper hunger for His Word, a joy in His presence, and a confidence that every step guided by Him leads toward life.

Candle 6 (Night 6)

1Therefore, since God in His mercy has given us this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not practice deceit, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by open proclamation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

4The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

– 2 Corinthians 4:1–6 NIV

The Light of the Knowledge of His Glory

The sixth candle burns with a profound truth: the same God who once said, *"Let there be light,"* has now shone that light into our hearts through Jesus Christ. This is not a distant illumination—it is a personal revelation. The knowledge of the glory of God is found in the face of Jesus.

As we behold Him, something miraculous happens. The longer we walk in His light, the more the beauty of God becomes real to us. His nature, His kindness, His holiness, His compassion—all of it begins to reshape how we see the world and ourselves.

This candle flickers with wonder. It invites us to lift our gaze not toward our failures but toward His glory. We do not earn this revelation; He gives it freely. And as His light enters, it dissolves shame, fear, and spiritual blindness. The gospel is not merely information—it is illumination.

There are moments when life feels dim, when the pressure is heavy, when we feel pressed but not crushed. And yet the treasure of His light remains within us, a radiant flame that cannot be extinguished.

Tonight, as candle six shines, pause and pray:

"Lord Jesus, let Your light reveal the beauty of the Father to me again. Open the eyes of my heart to behold Your glory."

May this candle awaken awe within you—an awareness that the God who spoke light into existence now shines within you, revealing His heart, His truth, and His everlasting love.

Candle 7 (Night 7)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

– 1 John 1:7 NIV

Light That Cleanses and Connects

The seventh candle carries a promise and a calling: *If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.*

Light not only exposes darkness—it heals it. It restores relationship, deepens community, and washes away the stains we cannot cleanse on our own. Walking in the light is not merely a moral choice; it is a relational posture. It is the willingness to live honestly before God and others.

When His light shines on our inner world, it reveals what needs healing but also what is beautiful, redeemed, and growing. It exposes both wound and wonder. And in that sacred place of truth-telling, fellowship becomes real. Masks fall. Walls lower. Hearts connect.

This candle is for those longing for authentic connection and the freedom of forgiveness. It is for the ones who carry burdens they have been afraid to speak aloud, the ones who have felt isolated in their struggles.

Tonight, let the flame remind you that you are not alone. The Light walks with you. His presence purifies, restores, and reconciles.

Pray gently:

“Lord, help me walk openly in Your light. Heal my heart. Cleanse my soul. Knit my life to others in grace and authenticity.”

May this candle bring peace to your inner world and draw you deeper into the fellowship of believers who walk beneath the radiance of His cleansing love.

Candle 8 (Night 8)

[16](#)For we did not follow cleverly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. [17](#)For He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” [18](#)And we ourselves heard this voice from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

[19](#)We also have the word of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt. And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. [20](#)Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture comes from one’s own interpretation. [21](#)For no such prophecy was ever brought forth by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

– 2 Peter 1:16–21 NIV

The Prophetic Light in the Darkness

The final candle honors the prophetic word—a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the Morning Star rises in our hearts. This is the candle of hope, of promise, of endurance. It reminds us that we do not walk through the darkness without guidance. God speaks. God reveals. God leads.

Peter saw the glory of Jesus with his own eyes, yet he tells us the prophetic word is even more sure—a steady flame for the nights when we cannot see what is ahead. Prophecy is not meant to confuse or frighten us; it is meant to anchor us. It reminds us that God is writing a story far larger and more beautiful than what we can perceive.

This candle burns for the dreamers, the intercessors, the ones who cling to God’s promises with trembling hands. It is for those who hold on to hope when circumstances shout otherwise. It is for those who wait for fulfillment, trusting that God’s timing is perfect.

Tonight, as the eighth candle shines, speak this prayer:

“Lord, let Your prophetic light steady me. Let Your promises strengthen me. Let the Morning Star rise within me again.”

May this final flame awaken expectation in your heart, reminding you that the God who speaks never forgets His word. His light will lead you until the full dawn of His glory breaks upon your life.

