

Hanukkah Nightly Readings



Hanukkah is known as the Festival of Lights, and we will celebrate by lighting a new candle on the menorah each night, for the next eight nights. We will light the candles from right to left, leaving the middle candle (called the shamash, which means “helper” or “servant”) lit every night. The menorah is an ancient symbol of the nation of Israel and its mission to be “a light unto the nations” (Isaiah 42:6). God gave the prophet Zechariah a vision of a menorah, and said to him, “Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit” (Zechariah 4:1-6).

Jesus went to the temple during the Hanukkah celebration, which takes place in the winter and is called the Feast of Dedication in the Bible (John 10:22-23). While he was there, some Jews asked him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” (John 10:24) He answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:25-27)

During Hanukkah, we remember God’s miracle of the menorah oil, as well as the miracles that Jesus performed. We are reminded that God is a God of miracles, and Jesus’s miracles point us to the truth that he is the Messiah. To the Jews who asked if he was the Messiah, Jesus said, “...believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” (John 10:38b) It was not long before this Festival of Lights that Jesus brought literal light to the blind when he healed a blind man (John 9:5-7). During Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles/Booths), Jesus declared himself the light of the world; this season we get to celebrate His light!

Night One: The Lord is Our Light!

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.” Isaiah 60:19

“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

Blessing for First Night: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Night Two: The Word is Our Light

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” Psalm 119: 105

“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” Psalm 119: 130

“For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life...” Proverbs 6:23

Night Three: We Should be a Light to Others

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16

“No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.” Luke 11:33

Night Four: The Light of the Body is the Eye

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness.” Luke 11:34

“...to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by me in faith.” Acts 26:18

Night Five: The Messiah is the Light of the World

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:4-5

“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

“Then Jesus told them, ‘You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.’ When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.” John 12:35-36

Night Six: Paul Saw the Light

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’” Acts 26:12-18

Night Seven: If Christ is Your Light, You are No Longer in the Darkness of This World

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”

Ephesians 5:8-11

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 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. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:5-9

Night Eight: We Need to Shine

Blessing over Candles: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Blessing for Hanukkah: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in the days of old, at this season.

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, ‘children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.’ Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.” Philippians 2:14-16