

HOME CHANUKAH CELEBRATION GUIDE

Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, is a wonderful holiday of renewed dedication, faith, and hope. It's a holiday pointing to the Messiah, who is the light of the world.

Chanukah commemorates the victory, through the miracles of God, of a small band of Jews over the pagan Syrian Greek Empire who ruled over Israel around two thousand years ago. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." The evil Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes tried to wipe out faith in the Word of God. He failed and this is what we still celebrate today.

Chanukah means "dedication", because it was on Chanukah that the Temple was purified and rededicated to God, in 165 BCE, after three years of pagan defilement.

Chanukah is a family event with much singing, rejoicing, eating and family fun each night, as well as rich spiritual edification from the word of God. Families gather at nightfall to light candles, rededicate themselves to the Word of God and to share in festive meals.

In the center is the Chanukah menorah, called the Chanukiah, which is lit every night after sundown before the Eternal One, except on the evening on the Sabbath, when it is lit before sundown. Blessings are sung or recited as the candles are lit. Each night the celebration continues with songs or readings, games, and sometimes small gifts.

Below we will give you some practical guidelines for this celebration that you can use as you like for your family. This is a wonderful time to fellowship with your family, as well as inviting people over to join you.

Lighting of the Candles

First, some practical instructions regarding the lighting of the candles. The Chanukiah holds nine candles. There is one higher than the rest, which is called shamash (or shummus), which means the servant, and is used to light all the other candles. This is of course a picture of the righteous servant of the Lord, the Messiah Yeshua, who is the light of the world.

One candle is added to the menorah each night. The first night, you light only the Shamash and one Chanukah candle. By the eighth night you light all of the candles. Place the Chanukiah in the front window of your house or apartment to be seen by as many people as possible, glorifying God for what he did.

Candles are **added** to the menorah **from right to left** (like Hebrew writing). However, you **light** them **from left to right** (the newest light first). The rule to remember is "The first (the furthest to the right that you add first) shall be the last and the last (the furthest to the left that you have added last) shall be first." You light the shamash candle first.

Blessings and Meditations

Blessings are recited each night before lighting the candles. After the candles are lit each night, it is customary to sing a song of praise and take some time for prayer, Scripture reading and meditation. We have given eight reasons why all believers in Yeshua/Jesus should celebrate this feast. Each night you can focus on one specific reason or theme.

FIRST NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light the candle to the furthest right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheni Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-vav-tav Ve-tzi-vanu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheni Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheni Melech Ha-olam She-heche-ya-nu Ve-ki-yi-ma-nu Ve-higi-a-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

Light the Candle

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first Chanukah candle, which is situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Revelation

We have been grafted into God's covenant people. Their history is also our history. Paul calls Israel "our forefathers" in 1 Cor. 10:1. The nations are called to rejoice with God's people Israel. *"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people."* (Rom. 15:10)

"...you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root." (Rom. 11:17)

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household." (Eph. 2:19)

Suggested Activities

- Read the Chanukah story (attached)
- Celebrate a feast with potato latkes and/or other typical Chanukah dishes (recipes attached)
- Play the dreidel game and talk about the miracle in the Temple (instructions attached)

SECOND NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light two candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first two Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: War

Chanukah is the story of war against apostasy and lawlessness that will be repeated again IN the last days. Antiochus Epiphanes is the foremost picture of the coming antichrist. See Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14 and 2 Thess. 2:1-4.

“There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.’ This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.” (Rev. 14:11-12)

- Read Daniel 11:31-36 and Zech. 9:11-17 about the victory of sons of Zion against the sons of Greece.
- Talk about/consider the difference between Hellenism (hedonism, secular humanism, materialism, nudity and sexual lusts, idolatry, etc.) and faithfulness to God’s word and his commandments.
- Talk about/consider the importance to fight against Hellenism today. See John 14:21 and 1 John 2:3-6.

THIRD NIGHT (Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light three candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first three Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Miracles

The miracles that happened during Chanukah made it possible for the Savior of the world to be born. We certainly need to celebrate this.

"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law." (Gal. 4:4)

- Read Luke 2:21-52. The prophet Haggai had prophesied, *"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty.* (Hag. 2:9)
- Yeshua told his parents when they found him in the Temple, *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?'"* (Luke 2:49)
- Read about the Feast of Dedication in John 10:22-39. Read also John 2:13-23. We are also called to do miracles. *"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* (John 14:12)

FOURTH NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light four candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first four Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Purification

We need to pray for a faithful remnant today again in Israel.

"This is what the LORD says: 'Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, "LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel."'" (Jer. 31:7)

- Read Ezekiel 36:24-38.
- Pray for a pure remnant in Israel, Matt. 5:14-16.
- Read about David and Goliath (I Sam. 17) and Gideon and the Philistines (Judges 6:11-8:28).
- Pray for boldness and faith.

FIFTH NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light five candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first five Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Dedication

We are the temple of the Lord and need to dedicate our lives to be ready for the soon coming of the Messiah.

"Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple." (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

- Read 2 Thess. 2
- The Bible commands us to flee from two things:
 1. Fornication and sexual lusts (1 Cor. 6:18-20)
 2. Idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14) Any worship of objects or images or things connected with idol worship. See also Deut. 12:30-31: *"...be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.' You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates."*
- Talk about/consider what it means practically to flee from these things.
- Talk about/consider the importance of loving the truth of God and his Word and obeying it (see Eph. 5:25-27)
- Pray to be ready for the return of the Messiah.

SIXTH NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light six candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first six Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Anointing

We can celebrate that the Word became flesh inside of Miriam (Mary) at this time of the year. Tonight is the New Moon, which is a shadow pointing in a special way to Messiah. *"...regarding a festival or a new moon..., which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Messiah."* (Col. 2:16-17) It was probably this night that Yeshua was conceived in Miriam's womb. (See the article "When Was Messiah Born?" at <http://thewatchman.org/en/2006/11/when-was-messiah-born/>).

"The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'" (Luke 1:35)

"The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." (John 1:9)

- Read John 1:1-14 and Luke 1:26-56.
- Give thanks for the Messiah, the Word becoming flesh.

SEVENTH NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light seven candles to the furthest right, light them from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light the first seven Chanukah candles, which are situated to the furthest right. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Festival of Lights

Chanukah is also called "The Festival of Lights" referring to the lights that are lit on each night. It is also called "The Festival of Lights" because Chanukah is the victory of the forces of "light" – which include faith and loyalty to God and his Word, and the will to fight for these beliefs – over the forces of "darkness," represented by the hedonistic lifestyle of the ancient Syrian-Greeks.

"Yeshua said, 'I am the light of the world.'" (John 8:12)

- Talk about/consider how Yeshua is the light of the world -- source of light. Compare with the "Shamash", the servant candle.

"You are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14)

- Talk about/consider how we can let our light shine.

Read other Scriptures about light in the Scriptures:

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| • Genesis 1:3 – <u>Creation</u> : Light was the first thing God created. All growing things depend on light for life. | • Psalm 89:15 – <u>God's Blessing</u> : The light of God's countenance is an expression of his blessings (Also see Numbers 6:22-27) |
| • Exodus 27:20 – <u>Spiritual Truth</u> : The Menorah in the Temple was the only source of light. God is the only source of spiritual light. | • Psalm 119:105 – <u>God's Word</u> : God's Word provides us with directions in life. |
| • Psalm 78:14 – <u>God's Presence</u> : The light of the pillar of fire represented God's presence with his people. | • Isaiah 49:6 – <u>The Promised Messiah</u> : The Messiah was to be a light to the nations, bringing salvation to them. (Also see Luke 2:32) |

EIGHTH NIGHT

(Begins at sundown)

- Light the shamash candle first.
- Hold the shamash while reading the blessings.
- Light all the candles from left to right.

Blessings

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam Asher Kid-shanu Be-mitz-va-tav Ve-tzi-va-nu Le-had-lik Ner Chanukah.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and allowed us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohenu Melech Ha-olam She-a-sa Ni-sim La-avo-te-nu Ba-ya-mim Ha-hem Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, YHVH our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Light the Candles

After reciting the blessings, use the shamash in your hand to light all the Chanukah candles. They should burn for more than half an hour.

Meditation: Victory

Celebrate with joyful worship songs.

Give thanks for:

- The preservation of the Jewish people and God's Word.
- The coming of the Messiah.

Pray that God will repeat the miracles of Chanukah again in Israel:

"On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves... On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place."
(Zech. 12:3 & 6)

Read Zechariah 12.

Pray for the protection of the Jewish people and victory over her enemies.