From Adam to Jesus

Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

Remembering God's Faithfulness.
Celebrating Jesus, the Light of the World.



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Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

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How to Use This Guide

This guide helps your family celebrate Hanukkah with a biblical and Messianic focus. Each of the eight nights includes Scripture, historical background, and a Messiah connection, along with family discussion, a short prayer, and a simple activity to help you remember that Jesus is the Light of the World!



Light – Add the night's candles to your hanukkiah (see "The Hanukkiah" page for details).



Read – A short Bible passage connected to the night's theme.



Learn the Story – A kid-friendly explanation of the historical events and key truths.



Discover Jesus – How the night's theme points to Jesus, the promised Messiah.



Talk About It – Simple questions to spark meaningful family conversation.



Pray Together – A short family prayer to thank God and ask for His help.



Family Activity – A hands-on way to apply what you learned and celebrate together.



Parent's Corner – A deeper look for parents—cuightl, and biblical insights, Scripture connections, and answers to questıns that often come up.

Our Nightly Rhythm

1. Gather as a family.
2. Light the candles for that night.
3. Read the Bible passage.
4. Explore the story and key truth.
5. Talk, pray, and do the family activity.

Tips for Families

- ✓ Keep it simple and consistent.
- ✓ Use the guide in any order that works for your family.
- ✓ Include older and younger children with age-appropriate discussion.
- ✓ Revisit the "Dreidel Game," timeline, and memory cards throughout the week.



The Big Picture

Hanukkah reminds us that God is faithful, that His light never goes out, and that He keeps His promises. As you go through each night, look for how the story points to Jesus—the true Light, the Good Shepherd, and the promised Messian for all people.

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What Is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah (HAH-noo-kah) is a Jewish holiday that lasts eight nights. Its name means "dedication." It remembers a time when God's people stood for His Word, fought for the freedom to worship Him, cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem, and rededicated it to God in 164 BC.



The Big Idea

Hanukkah celebrates God's faithfulness, His provision, and the victory of light over darkness—and it points us to Jesus, the true Light of the World.

A Look at the History



A Time of Challenge

More than 2,000 years ago, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes tried to force the Jewish people to give up their faith and worship Greek gods.



A Time of Courage

A priestly family, led by Mattathias and his sons (the Maccabees), refused to obey. They gathered a faithful remnant and fought for the right to worship God according to His Word.



A Time of Rededication

God gave victory to the Jewish people, and the Temple in Jerusalem was cleaned and rededicated in 164 BC. The earliest surviving accounts record that the rededication was celebrated for eight days (2 Maccabees 10:6–8; 1 Maccabees 4:52–59).



The Oil Tradition

A later Jewish tradition tells of a small amount of consecrated oil that miraculously burned for eight days, which is often remembered and celebrated during Hanukkah. The earliest historical accounts, however, focus on the Temple's cleansing and rededication.



A Connection to Jesus

Hundreds of years later, Jesus was in Jerusalem during Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22–30). There He taught about His sheep, His relationship with the Father, and the eternal life He gives.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ ***Remember*** — God is faithful to His people and keeps His promises.
- ✓ ***Reflect*** — Faithfulness to God's Word matters, even when it's difficult.
- ✓ ***Rejoice*** — God provides and gives victory, often in ways we don't expect.
- ✓ ***Look Ahead*** — Hanukkah points us to Jesus, the promised Messiah, who brings the true and lasting light.



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Hanukkah History Timeline

From Persecution to Rededication

175 BC

Antiochus IV Epiphanes Becomes King

A Greek ruler of the Seleucid Empire who tried to force Greek culture and the worship of Greek gods on the Jewish people in Judea.



167 BC

Persecution and the "Abomination"

Antiochus banned the Law, circumcision, and worship of the God of Israel. He desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem by setting up a pagan altar and introducing pagan sacrifices (1 Macc. 1:41–54; Dan. 11:31).



167–166 BC

The Maccabean Revolt Begins

A priest named Mattathias, from the town of Modein, refused to obey the king's orders and called the people to stand for God's Law. His son Judas, called Maccabeus ("the Hammer"), led the fight for religious freedom (1 Macc. 2:1–28).



165–164 BC

Recapturing Jerusalem

Judas and his followers defeated the Seleucid forces and reclaimed Jerusalem. They cleansed the Temple, removed the pagan altar, and built a new altar for the LORD (1 Macc. 4:36–49).



164 BC (Kislev 25)

The Temple Is Rededicated

The Temple was rededicated to the LORD with worship, sacrifices, and great celebration. This is the origin of Hanukkah, also called the Feast of Dedication (1 Macc. 4:52–59).



Later Jewish Tradition

The Oil That Lasted Eight Days

A later Jewish tradition tells that only a small amount of consecrated oil for the Temple lamp was found—enough for one day—but it miraculously burned for eight days, giving time to prepare more (Talmud, Shabbat 21b).



Centuries Later

Jesus at the Feast of Dedication

Centuries later, Jesus was in Jerusalem during Hanukkah. He walked in the Temple and declared, **"I and the Father are one"** (John 10:22–30). His presence at Hanukkah reminds us that He is the true Light who brings lasting freedom.



The Big Picture

Hanukkah celebrates God's faithfulness, the courage to stand for His Word, and the rededication of worship to the true God—setting the stage for the One who is the Light of the world (John 8:12).

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A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

The Hanukkiah

The Hanukkiah (hah-noo-kee-ah) is a special lamp used during Hanukkah. It has nine holders—eight for the Hanukkah candles and one for the shamash (shah-MASH), the "helper candle," which is used to light the others.



The Meaning

The Hanukkiah reminds us of God's provision, His faithfulness, and the light He brings into the world through Jesus.

Menorah or Hanukkiah?



The Menorah

- Seven holders
- Used in the Temple
- A symbol of God's presence and light (Exodus 25:31–40)



The Hanukkiah

- Nine holders
- Used for Hanukkah
- Remembers God's faithfulness and the rededication of the Temple

The Shamash



The shamash is the "helper candle." It is set apart—often in the center and a little higher—so it can be used to lighe the other candles. Its higher position reminds us that God's light helps us shine His light in the world.

Placing the Candles



Place the eight Hanukkah candles in the Hanukkiah from right to left, starting in the far-right holder (1). Add one new candle on the left each night.

How to Light the Candles

1. At sunset, gather your family and set the Hanukkiah in a safe place.
2. Light the shamash (helper candle) first.
3. Use the shamash to light the Hanukkah candles, beginning with the newest candle on the left.
4. Each night, add one more candle on the left, then light the candles from left to right (newest first).
5. Enjoy the time together—read the devotional, talk about the story, pray, and do the activity!

Lighting the Candles

Use the shamash to light the Hanukkah candles from left to right, beginning with the newest candle.



Each night, light only that night's number of Hanukkah candles, plus the shamash.

✡ A Family Tradition with a Lasting Message ✡



Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

Night 1

A Light in the Darkness

Read Together

John 10:22–23 and Psalm 119:105

The Story

Hanukkah begins with a time of great darkness for the Jewish people. A foreign ruler, Antiochus IV, tried to stop them from worshiping the God of Israel. He desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem and forbade Jewish practices, But a faithful priest named Mattathias, along with his sons, stood up for God. Their courage sparked a resistance that eventually led to the Temple's rededication.

The Light

The first night of Hanukkah reminds us that even in dark and difficult times, God's people can shine with faithfulness and courage. The light we begin tonight is a symbol of God's faithfulness, which never goes out.

The Messiah Connection

Hundreds of years later, Jesus was in Jerusalem during Hanukkah, also called the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). This shows that Hanukkah was still an important celebration in His day, and it gives us an opportunity to remember hew Jesus is the true Light who came into the world.

Talk About It

1. What do you think it was like for the Jewish people when they could not worship God at the Temple?
2. Why do you think the Maccabees were willing to take a risk?
3. How can we be a light for God today, even in small ways?

Pray Together

Lord, thank You for being our light, even in dark times. Help us to be faithful and courageous, like the Maccabees, and to shine for You in our homes, our school, and our community. Amen.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



For Night 1:

- Place 1 Hanukkah candle in the rightmost holder.
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use it to light the Hanukkah candle.

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

The History Between the Testaments

Hanukkah takes place during the intertestamental period (about 400 years between the Old and New Testaments). In 167 BC, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruler of the Seleucid Empire, desecrated the Temple and tried to force the Jewish people to abandon their faith. This led to the Maccabean Revolt.

The Maccabees and Faithfulness

Mattathias, a priest, and his sons—especially Judah Maccabee—led a resistance to defend the worship of God. Their story reminds us that faithfulness to God sometimes requires courage, sacrifice, and perseverance.

Dig Deeper: Read Daniel 11:21–35. Many interpreters understand part of this passage as describing Antiochus IV and his persecution of the Jewish people.

Family Activity: *Light Your Own Lamp*

Talk about ways your family can bring light to others this week—maybe by encouraging a friend, serving a neighbor, or showing kindness at home. Then make a simple craft, like a paper lamp or lantern to remind you to be a light for God.



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Night 2

Courage to Stand Firm!

Read Together

Daniel 3:16–18; 27–28

The Story

Our Bible reading today takes us to Daniel 3, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were ordered to bow before King Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. They refused, choosing to obey God rather than worship another god. They knew God could rescue them from the fiery furnace, but they also declared, "Even if He does not, we will not serve your gods" (Daniel 3:17–18).

Centuries later, the Maccabees faced a similar choice. King Antiochus IV tried to force the Jewish people to abandon God's commands and worship in a pagan way. Like those three men, the Maccabees chose faithfulness, even when it meant great risk.

Courage isn't knowing everything will turn out the way we want. Courage is choosing to remain faithful, whatever happens.

The Light

The second candle reminds us that God gives us courage to stand for what is right, even when we are pressured to do otherwise.

The Messiah Connection

The courage we see in Daniel and in the Maccabees points to Jesus, who also faced pressure to turn from His Father's will. In the wilderness, He refused to bow to temptation (Matthew 4:1–11), and throughout His life He remained faithful, even when it led to the cross. Jesus shows us that true courage is found in trusting and obeying God.

Talk About It

1. What did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego have in common with the Maccabees?
2. What does it look like to stand firm for what is right today?
3. How can knowing that God is with us give us courage?

Pray Together

Lord, give us courage to be faithful to You, even when it is difficult. Help us to trust that You are with us, no matter what happens. Amen.

Family Activity: Courage Tag

As a family, take turns sharing a time when someone (showing as a Bible person, a family member, or a friend) showed courage. You can also create a "Courage List" together of ways you can stand for what is right this week.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place two Hanukkah candles in the two **rightmost holders (right to left).**
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the two Hanukkah candles from left to right.

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

A Difficult Decision: The Sabbath and Self-Defense

When the Maccabean resistance began, some Jewish people fled into the wilderness to escape persecution. According to 1 Maccabees 2:29–38, soldiers attacked a group of these refugees on the Sabbath. The people refused to fight back because they did not want to violate the Sabbath, and approximately 1,000 people were killed.

When Mattathias and his followers heard what had happened, they faced a difficult question: Was defending their lives on the Sabbath a violation of God's command to rest? They decided that they would fight in self-defense if attacked on the Sabbath (1 Maccabees 2:39–41). That decision became an important moment in the Maccabean resistance.

Centuries later, Jesus would also challenge interpretations of Sabbath observance that neglected mercy and doing good. In Matthew 12:11–12, He asked whether someone would rescue a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, then declared that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Dig Deeper: Read 1 Maccabees 2:29–41 alongside Matthew 12:9–12. What do these passages teach us about God's heart for life, mercy, and faithfulness?



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Night 3

A Temple Made Ready!

Read Together

1 Corinthians 6:19–20; John 2:13–22

The Story

After three years of fighting, the Maccabees finally retook Jerusalem and went to the Temple, Itt was in ruins. The altar was defiled, the holy items were gone, and the place where God was worshiped had been turned into a pagan shrine.

The Maccabees cleaned and repaired the Temple, made a new altar, and set it apart again for the worship of God. When the Temple was ready, they offered sacrifices, worshiped the Lord, and celebrated with great joy. This rededication, or "reconsecration," is what we remember at Hanukkah.

Hanukkah reminds us that God's house matters and that we can always return to Him and make ourselves ready to worship.

The Light

The third candle reminds us of a restored place of worship—a place set apart for God. It points to the importance of honor, obedience, and a heart that is ready for Him.

The Messiah Connection

The Temple was more than a building; it was where God's presence met with His people. Centuries later, Jesus went to that same Temple and cleared it from misuse (John 2:13–17). He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). He was speaking of His own body.

Jesus shows us that God now dwells with His people in a new way—through Him. And Paul reminds us that our bodies are also a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Talk About It

1. Why was it important for the Maccabees to clean and rededicate the Temple?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"?
3. How can we keep our own hearts and lives ready for God?

Pray Together

Lord, thank You for giving us a way to be close to You. Help us to honor You with our lives and keep our hearts ready to worship You. Amen.

Family Activity: Make It Ready

Choose a small area at home (a table, shelf, or reading corner). Work together to clean it and set it apart as a special place for prayer, reading Scripture, or time with God.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place three Hanukkah candles in the three **rightmost holders (right to left).**
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the three Hanukkah candles from left to right (newest to oldest).

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

The Temple, the Altar, and the Presence of God

When the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple, they faced an important question—what should they do with the altar that had been desecrated? According to 1 Maccabees 4:44–46, they dismantled the defiled altar and placed its stones in a suitable location on the Temple Mount until a prophet could tell them what to do with them.

Think about that! Rather than simply throwing the stones away or deciding for themselves, they waited for God's direction. The Maccabees didn't rebuild the entire Temple, but they purified and restored the existing sanctuary, replacing its furnishings and constructing a new altar (1 Maccabees 4:36–51).

Dig Deeper: Read 1 Maccabees 4:36–51 alongside Exodus 29:36–37. Compare how both passages show the importance of consecrating the altar and preparing a place for God's worship.



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Night 4

Remembering God's Faithfulness!

Read Together

Psalm 100:1–5; Exodus 16:4–5

The Story

The eight-day celebration of Hanukkah reminds us of God's faithfulness in providing for His people.

In the wilderness, God cared for the Israelites by giving them manna. He told them, "I will rain bread from heaven for you" (Exodus 16:4). Day after day, God provided exactly what they needed, a clear reminder that He is a faithful Provider.

Centuries later, the Maccabees experienced God's faithfulness again. After they cleansed and rededicated the Temple, they celebrated for eight days with joy and thanksgiving (1 Maccabees 4:52–59).

Hanukkah invites us to look back with thankfulness and to remember that the same faithful God still provides for His people today.

The Light

The fourth candle helps us remember that God is faithful. He provided for the Israelites with manna in the wilderness, and He was faithful to preserve His people through the Maccabees. His care and provision have never stopped.

The Messiah Connection

Jesus is the ultimate provision from God. Just as God gave manna to meet the physical needs of His people, Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:35). He provides what we need most—eternal life, forgiveness, and a relationship with God.

Talk About It

1. How did God provide for the Israelites in the wilderness?
2. How did God show His faithfulness to the Maccabees?
3. How has God provided for you or your family?

Pray Together

Lord, thank You for always providing for Your people. Help us to remember Your faithfulness and to trust You for what we need today. Amen.

Family Activity: Remember & Give Thanks

Make a "Faithfulness Jar." As a family, write or draw things you are thankful for, or ways you have seen God provide, and place them in the jar. Read a few together each night this week.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place four Hanukkah candles in the four **rightmost holders (right to left).**
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the four Hanukkah candles from left to right.

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

Why Eight Days? The Celebration and the Tradition

The earliest surviving accounts of Hanukkah do not record the oil lasting eight days. 1 Maccabees 4:52–59 tells us that after the Temple was cleansed and a new altar was dedicated, the people celebrated for eight days with joy, sacrifices, and thanksgiving—modeled after the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), a time when God's presence with His people was remembered (Leviticus 23:33–36).

Later Jewish tradition (recorded in the Talmud) tells how only a small amount of pure oil was found, enough for one day, yet it miraculously lasted eight days. This tradition highlights God's provision and has become a well-loved part of the Hanukkah story, pointing to His ongoing faithfulness.

Dig Deeper: Read Leviticus 23:33–36 and 1 Maccabees 4:52–59. How does the Feast of Tabernacles help us understand why Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days? How do both the biblical account and the later tradition remind us of God's faithfulness?



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Night 5

Jesus, the Light of the World!

Read Together

John 8:12; John 10:22–23

The Story

Before Hanukkah, during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), Jesus stood in the Temple and made a bold declaration: "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Later, at Hanukkah, Jesus was again in Jerusalem (John 10:22–23). There, He spoke as the Good Shepherd, showing that He is the One who knows His people, protects them, and gives them eternal life.

Jesus is the true and lasting Light—the One who brings God's presence, truth, and eternal life to His people.

The Light

The fifth candle reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world. The candles of Hanukkah remember God's faithfulness in a dark time, and Jesus reminds us that God still brings light and hope to His people today.

The Messiah Connection

In John 8, Jesus revealed that He is the Light of the world, the fulfillment of God's promise to bring light to the nations (Isaiah 9:2). In John 10, He showed Himself as the Good Shepherd who leads, protects, and gives eternal life—continuing God's heart for His people.

Talk About It

1. Why do you think people needed light during Jesus' time?
2. What does it mean to follow Jesus, the Light of the world?
3. How can we let Jesus' light shine in our home, school, and community?

Pray Together

Lord Jesus, You are the Light of the world. Thank You for bringing truth, hope, and life. Help us to follow You and to shine Your light to others. Amen.

Family Activity: Let Your Light Shine

As a family, make simple "light jars." Decorate a jar and put a battery tea light inside. Talk about ways your family can let Jesus' light shine this week—at home, at school, and in your community.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place five Hanukkah candles—one in the holder to the left of the shamash and four to the right.
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the five Hanukkah candles **from left to right** (newest to oldest).

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

The Light at Tabernacles and Jesus' Declaration

Jesus' statement, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12), was made during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), not Hanukkah. During Sukkot, huge lampstands were set up in the Temple courts, and their light shone over all Jerusalem. This illumination ceremony celebrated God's presence with His people in the wilderness and His provision through the light and fire (Exodus 13:21–22).

In that setting, Jesus stood before the people and declared that He is the true, lasting Light—God's presence with us in person. His words echo the promise of Isaiah 9:2, that a great light would shine for God's people in darkness.

Later, at Hanukkah (John 10:22–23), Jesus returned to the Temple. While He did not repeat the "Light of the world" statement, He did speak of Himself as the Good Shepherd, reminding the people that He is the One who knows His own, protects them, and gives eternal life.

Dig Deeper: Read John 8:12–20 and Isaiah 9:2. How do the Tabernacles illumination and Jesus' words help us understand what it means for Him to be the Light of the world?



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A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

Night 6

Let Your Light Shine!

Read Together

Matthew 5:14–16;
Ephesians 2:8–10

The Story

Jesus teaches His followers, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). He doesn't say we are the light in place of Him, but that we reflect His light. Just as the small lamps of Hanukkah pushed back the darkness, Jesus calls us to let His light shine through us—in the way we live, treat others, and do what is right.

We don't create the light—
we reflect the Light of Jesus to the world!

The Light

The sixth candle reminds us that God's light is meant to be shared. A single light can make a difference in a dark room, and many lights together can change an entire place. When we follow Jesus, His light shines through our words, actions, and attitudes.

The Messiah Connection

Salvation begins with faith in Jesus—it is a gift of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8–9). But it doesn't end there. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (v. 10). Our good works don't save us; they are the fruit of a life changed by the Light of Jesus.

Talk About It

1. What are some ways we can let Jesus' light shine this week?
2. How is it different to be saved by grace instead of by good works?
3. What good works can we do because of God's grace?

Pray Together

Lord Jesus, thank You for saving us by Your grace. Help us to live in a way that reflects Your light to others. Give us opportunities to be kind, to serve, and to do what is right. Amen.

Family Activity: Shine His Light

As a family, make "Light in Action" cards. Write or draw simple ways you can let Jesus' light shine this week—such as helping a neighbor, encouraging a friend, or showing kindness at home. Choose one or two to do together.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place six Hanukkah candles—two to the left of the shamash and four to the right.
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the six Hanukkah candles from left to right (newest to oldest).

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

A City on a Hill and a Lamp in the House

In Matthew 5:14–16, Jesus uses two everyday images His listeners knew well: a city set on a hill and a lamp in a house.

In the land of Israel, many cities were built on hills for protection and visibility. At night, the lights of a hilltop city could be seen for miles—a clear picture of a people whose lives pointed others to God.

The lamp in the house would typically be a small oil lamp with a wick, often placed on a lampstand in the center of the room to give light to everyone (Luke 8:16). No one lit a lamp and then hid it under a bowl! The point is simple: the light we receive from Jesus is meant to be seen.

Jesus calls His followers to live in a way that brings glory to God—not to draw attention to ourselves, but to point others to Him by our character, kindness, and obedience.

Dig Deeper: Read Matthew 5:14–16 and Luke 8:16. How do the city and lamp images help us understand what it means to let our light shine?



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Night 7

The Good Shepherd at Hanukkah

Read Together

John 10:22–30

The Story

It was winter, and the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) was taking place in Jerusalem (John 10:22). Jesus was in the Temple courts when the people surrounded Him with a question: "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Messiah, tell us plainly" (v. 24).

Jesus answered by pointing to His work and His people: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand" (vv. 27–28).

Jesus is the Good Shepherd—
He knows His sheep, calls them by name, protects them, and gives them eternal life.

The Light

The seventh candle reminds us that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, brings the light of life and lasting security. He knows His people, leads them, and keeps them safe—no one can take them from His hand.

The Messiah Connection

Centuries earlier, God promised through the prophets that He would shepherd His people Himself (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34). At Hanukkah, Jesus affirmed that promise, showing He is the Shepherd God sent—the true and lasting Shepherd who gives eternal life.

Talk About It

1. What does it mean that Jesus knows His sheep?
2. How can we learn to recognize Jesus' voice?
3. Why is it comforting to know that no one can take us from Jesus' hand?

Pray Together

Lord Jesus, You are our Good Shepherd. Thank You for knowing us, calling us by name, and keeping us safe. Help us to listen to Your voice and follow You each day. Amen.

Family Activity: Shepherd's Care

Choose a simple "sheep and shepherd" activity—such as making paper sheep, a shepherd's staff, or acting out the story. Talk about ways Jesus cares for you and your family.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place seven Hanukkah candles—three to the left of the shamash and four to the right.
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light the seven Hanukkah candles from left to right (newest to oldest).

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

The Shepherd God Promised

Long before Jesus stood in the Temple at Hanukkah, God promised to shepherd His people Himself and to raise up a shepherd from David's line.

- In Ezekiel 34:11–16, God declares that He will personally search for His sheep, rescue them, and care for them.
- In Ezekiel 34:23–24, God promises to set up one shepherd over them—His servant David. This pointed to a coming Messiah, a king from David's line who would shepherd God's people with justice and care.

A Key Clarification in John 10

Jesus first says, "I am the good shepherd" earlier in John 10:11. Then, at Hanukkah (John 10:22–30), He builds on that teaching, showing that He is the Shepherd God promised—the One who knows His people, calls them by name, gives eternal life, and keeps them secure forever.

Dig Deeper: Read Ezekiel 34:11–16, 23–24 and John 10:11, 22–30. How do these passages show that Jesus is the Shepherd God promised?



Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

Night 8

A Light for All People

Read Together

Isaiah 42:6–7; Luke 2:29–32

The Story

The final night of Hanukkah reminds us that God's light was never meant to stay in one place or with one people. Through the prophets, God promised a Servant who would bring His light to the nations (Isaiah 42).

Centuries later, Simeon saw that promise fulfilled when he held the baby Jesus in the Temple. He praised God, saying that Jesus was "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

The light of God's salvation, given through Jesus, is for His people—and for the world.

The Light

The eighth candle reminds us that the light keeps going. God's plan has always been bigger than Israel alone. Jesus is the light who brings salvation to everyone—Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Messiah Connection

Hanukkah began with a rededicated Temple in Jerusalem. One day, that Temple would be the place where the promised Messiah would be revealed to all people. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise—the One who brings His light and salvation to the whole world.

Talk About It

1. What does it mean that Jesus is a light for "all people"?
2. Why do you think God's light was not meant to stay in one place?
3. How can we share the light of Jesus with others this week?

Pray Together

Lord, thank You for sending Jesus, the Light of the World, for our family and for all people. Help us to share Your light in our words, actions, and kindness so others can know You too. Amen.

Family Activity: Share the Light

As a family, choose a way to share God's light with someone else this week—write a kind note, serve a neighbor, bring a treat, or do something to encourage someone who needs a little extra light.

Lighting the Hanukkiah



Candle Placement:

- Place eight Hanukkah candles—four to the left of the shamash and four to the right.
- Place the shamash in the center, higher holder.

Lighting Order:

1. Light the shamash first.
2. Use the shamash candle to light all eight Hanukkah candles (from left to right).

Parent's Corner

A Deeper Look for Parents

From Israel to the Nations: The Light Spreads

The promise of a light for the nations doesn't end at Hanukkah. It continues in both the Old and New Testaments.

- Isaiah 49:6 – God says to His Servant, "I will also make You a light for the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." This expands the promise—not only to Israel, but to every people and place.
- Acts 13:46–47 – Paul and Barnabas apply this promise directly to Jesus, saying to the Gentiles, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; but since you reject it… behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, that You may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

The Big Picture

God's plan has always been to bring His light to all people through Jesus. What began as a promise in the prophets, was recognized by Simeon in the Temple, and then spread through the early church to the nations. The light of Jesus is still shining today, and we are invited to be part of it—sharing His love and good news with the world around us.

Dig Deeper: Read Isaiah 49:6 and Acts 13:46–47. How do these passages show that God's light in Jesus is for all nations?



Hanukkah Scripture Memory Cards

Eight Nights ✦ Eight Scriptures ✦ One Big Story

Night 1 — A Light in the Darkness

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 119:105



Night 2 — Courage to Stand Firm

"But even if He does not, let it be known to you... that we will not serve your gods."

Daniel 3:18



Night 3 — A Temple Made Ready

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...? You are not your own,"

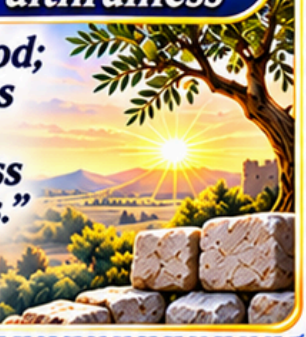
1 Corinthians 6:19–20



Night 4 — Remembering God's Faithfulness

"For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, And His faithfulness extends to all generations."

Psalm 100:5



Night 5 — Jesus, the Light of the World

"I am the light of the world. The one who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12



Night 6 — Let Your Light Shine

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Matthew 5:16



Night 7 — The Good Shepherd at Hanukkah

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

John 10:27



Night 8 — A Light for All People

"A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

Luke 2:32



Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

The Dreidel Game

The dreidel is a traditional Hanukkah game enjoyed by families for generations. According to tradition, Jewish children used dreidels while studying God's Word in secret during the persecution of Antiochus IV.



A Later Tradition

The dreidel game developed later, but it reminds us of the faithfulness of the Jewish people during the time of Antiochus IV and celebrates the miracle of Hanukkah (God's provision and rededication of the Temple).

The Dreidel and Its Letters



- נ Nun – "Nes" (נס) – a miracle
- ג Gimel – "Gadol" (גדול) – great
- ה Hey – "Hayah" (הָיָה) – happened
- ש Shin – "Sham" (שם) – there

Together they say, "Nes Gadol Hayah Shaan" "A great miracle happened there."

In Israel, dreidels often use פ (Pey) instead of ש (Shin), which makes "Nes Gadol Hayah Po." — "A great miracle happened here."

How to Play

1. Give each player an equal number of game pieces (such as gelt, coins, or small counters).
2. Each player puts one game piece into the center pot to start.
3. Take turns spinning the dreidel.
4. Follow the letter you land on (see below).
5. Refill the Pot: When someone wins the whole pot (Gimel) or the pot becomes empty, every player puts one game piece into the center.
6. Keep playing until one player has all the game pieces!

What Each Letter Means

- נ ***Nun*** – Do nothing. Keep your game pieces.
- ג ***Gimel*** – Take everything from the center (the whole pot).
- ה ***Hey*** – Take half of the game pieces from the center (round up if needed).
- ש ***Shin*** – Put one game piece into the center.



A Fun Tradition that Remembers God's Faithfulness

The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

1 Maccabees 1:41–64 — Antiochus Commands Religious Conformity

41 Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people,
42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king.
43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath.
44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land,
45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days:
46 And pollute the sanctuary and holy people:
47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:
48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation:
49 To the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances.
50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die.
51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda to sacrifice, city by city.
52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land;
53 And drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour.
54 Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;
55 And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets.
56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire.
57 And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.
58 Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities.
59 Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God.
60 At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised.
61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.
62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing.
63 Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died.
64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel.

King James Version (Apocrypha, Public Domain)

Dig Deeper: Daniel 11



Many Bible students see Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel 11:21–35. This prophecy describes a ruler who exalts himself, opposes God, and desecrates the sanctuary. Read the passage and compare the details with 1 Maccabees 1:41–64.

Key Connections

- ✓ **A powerful ruler exalts himself (Dan. 11:21).**
- ✓ **He removes the regular sacrifices (Dan. 11:31).**
- ✓ **He sets up an "abomination" that desolates (Dan. 11:31).**
- ✓ **He persecutes the people of God (Dan. 11:33–35).**



Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

1 Maccabees 2:1–28 — Mattathias Takes a Stand

1 In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin.
2 And he had five sons, Joannan, called Caddis:
3 Simon; called Thassi:
4 Judas, who was called Maccabeus:
5 Eleazar, called Avaran: and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus.
6 And when he saw the blasphemies that were committed in Juda and Jerusalem,
7 He said, Woe is me! wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people, and of the holy city, and to dwell there, when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy, and the sanctuary into the hand of strangers?
8 Her temple is become as a man without glory.
9 Her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in the streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy.
10 What nation hath not had a part in her kingdom and gotten of her spoils?
11 All her ornaments are taken away; of a free woman she is become a bondslave.
12 And, behold, our sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory, is laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned it.
13 To what end therefore shall we live any longer?
14 Then Mattathias and his sons rent their clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned very sore.
15 In the mean while the king's officers, such as compelled the people to revolt, came into the city Modin, to make them sacrifice.
16 And when many of Israel came unto them, Mattathias also and his sons came together.
17 Then answered the king's officers, and said to Mattathias on this wise, Thou art a ruler, and an honourable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and brethren:
18 Now therefore come thou first, and fulfil the king's commandment, like as all the heathen have done, yea, and the men of Juda also, and such as remain at Jerusalem: so shalt thou and thy house be in the number of the king's friends, and thou and thy children shall be honoured with silver and gold, and many rewards.
19 Then Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice, Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments:
20 Yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers.
21 God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances.
22 We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand, or the left.
23 Now when he had left speaking these words, there came one of the Jews in the sight of all to sacrifice on the altar which was at Modin, according to the king's commandment.
24 Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment: wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar.
25 Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and the altar he pulled down.
26 Thus dealt he zealously for the law of God like as Phinees did unto Zambri the son of Salom.
27 And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me.
28 So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city.

King James Version (Apocrypha, Public Domain)

Mattathias Takes a Stand

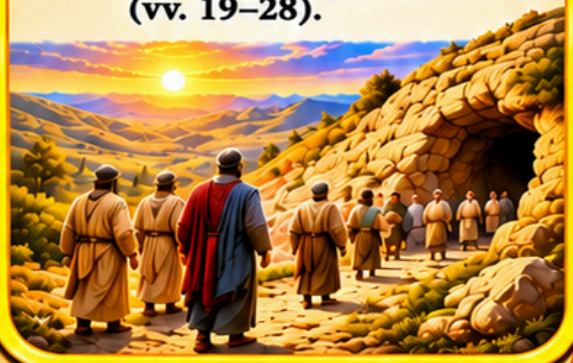


The Phinehas Connection

In 1 Maccabees 2:26, the writer compares Mattathias' action to Phinehas in Numbers 25:7–13, who courageously stopped the spread of idolatry in Israel. Both men acted in a moment of zeal to defend God's holiness and the covenant.

Key Insights

- ✓ **Mattathias refused to abandon the Law (vv. 19–22).**
- ✓ **He acted decisively against open idolatry (vv. 23–26).**
- ✓ **His stand sparked the Maccabean revolt and the fight for religious freedom (vv. 19–28).**



The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

1 Maccabees 3:1–12 — Judas Maccabeus Leads the Resistance

1 Then his son Judas, called Maccabeus, rose up in his stead.

2 And all his brethren helped him, and so did all they that held with his father, and they fought with cheerfulness the battle of Israel.

3 So he gat his people great honour, and put on a breastplate as a giant, and girt his warlike harness about him, and he made battles, protecting the host with his sword.

4 In his acts he was like a lion, and like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey.

5 For he pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and burnt up those that vexed his people.

6 Wherefore the wicked shrunk for fear of him, and all the workers of iniquity were troubled, because salvation prospered in his hand.

7 He grieved also many kings, and made Jacob glad with his acts, and his memorial is blessed for ever.

8 Moreover he went through the cities of Juda, destroying the ungodly out of them, and turning away wrath from Israel:

9 So that he was renowned unto the utmost part of the earth, and he received unto him such as were ready to perish.

10 Then Apollonius gathered the Gentiles together, and a great host out of Samaria, to fight against Israel.

11 Which thing when Judas perceived, he went forth to meet him, and so he smote him, and slew him: many also fell down slain, but the rest fled.

12 Wherefore Judas took their spoils, and Apollonius' sword also, and therewith he fought all his life long.

King James Version (Apocrypha, Public Domain)

Judas Maccabeus Leads the Resistance

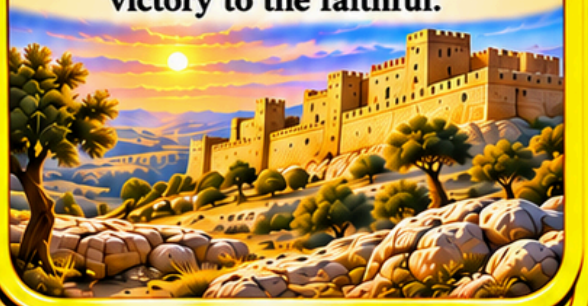


The Lion Connection

Judas was called "Maccabeus" ("the Hammer") for his bold and decisive leadership. Like a lion, he fought with courage, strength, and a passion to defend God's people, His Law, and the worship of the true God.

Key Insights

- ✓ **Judas united a faithful remnant and inspired hope throughout the land (vv. 1–9).**
- ✓ **Judas's victory over Apollonius (vv. 10–12) rallied the people and showed that resistance was possible.**
- ✓ **He defeated a larger enemy with a small, faithful group, showing that God can give victory to the faithful.**



The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

2 Maccabees 10:1–8 — Another Account of the Temple's Rededication

1 Now Maccabeus and his company, the Lord guiding them, recovered the temple and the city:

2 But the altars which the heathen had built in the open street, and also the chapels, they pulled down.

3 And having cleansed the temple they made another altar, and striking stones they took fire out of them, and offered a sacrifice after two years, and set forth incense, and lights, and shewbread.

4 When that was done, they fell flat down, and besought the Lord that they might come no more into such troubles; but if they sinned any more against him, that he himself would chasten them with mercy, and that they might not be delivered unto the blasphemous and barbarous nations.

5 Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu.

6 And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.

7 Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.

8 They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.

King James Version (Apocrypha, Public Domain)

The Hanukkah–Tabernacles Connection



A Key Detail in 2 Maccabees 10:6, 8

The people celebrated the rededication for eight days "*even as the days of the feast of tabernacles*," remembering that not long before they had kept Tabernacles while hiding in the mountains and caves.

Let's Connect the Accounts

- ✓ **1 Maccabees (4:52–59): records the temple's cleansing, rededication, and an eight-day celebration.**
- ✓ **2 Maccabees (10:1–8): adds that the celebration resembled Tabernacles and was set as an annual observance.**

A Note About the Oil



Neither 1 nor 2 Maccabees mentions a miracle of oil. The later tradition of a single cruse of oil lasting eight days appears in later Jewish sources and became a central part of Hanukkah observance.

Eight Nights of Light

A Messianic Family Guide to Hanukkah

The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b — The Miracle of the Oil

THE TALMUDIC ACCOUNT

What is 'Hanukah? The rabbis taught: “On the twenty-fifth day of Kislev 'Hanukah commences and lasts eight days, on which lamenting (in commemoration of the dead) and fasting are prohibited. When the Hellenists entered the sanctuary, they defiled all the oil that was found there. When the government of the House of Asmoneans prevailed and conquered them, oil was sought (to feed the holy lamp in the sanctuary) and only one vial was found with the seal of the high priest intact. The vial contained sufficient oil for one day only, but a miracle occurred, and it fed the holy lamp eight days in succession. These eight days were the following year established as days of good cheer, on which psalms of praise and acknowledgment (of God's wonders) were to be recited.”

Source: Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b

Translated by Michael L. Rodkinson (1903). Public-domain English translation; historical spelling retained.

READING NOTE

This is a later rabbinic account of the oil miracle, not a passage from 1 or 2 Maccabees. The rededication itself is described in the earlier Maccabean writings.

The Later Oil Tradition



When Was It Recorded?

✓ The Babylonian Talmud was compiled centuries after the Maccabean revolt.

What Do the Accounts Say?

✓ 1 and 2 Maccabees describe the eight-day dedication but do not tell the oil miracle.

Why Light Candles?

✓ The later rabbinic tradition tells of one day’s oil burning for eight days.

The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b–22a — The Hanukkah Lights

Selected excerpts from Michael L. Rodkinson's traditional English translation. Omissions between excerpts are indicated by section breaks.

Household Lights and the Two Schools

"The law of 'Hanukah demands that every man should light one lamp for himself and his household. Those who seek to fulfil it well have a lamp lit for every member of the household."

"Those who seek to fulfil the law in the best possible manner should light according to Beth Shamai the first night eight flames, and every following night one flame less. And according to Beth Hillel the reverse—the first night one lamp, and be increased by one on each succeeding night."

Why Increase or Decrease?

"There were two sages in Zidon; one did according to the decision of Shamai's school, and gave the reason that the 'Hanukah lamp is to be lit in the same manner as the sacrifices of the feast were offered, and the other according to the school of Hillel, with the reason that holy actions should show (emblemize) increase and not reduction."

Where to Place the Lights

"It is a merit to put the 'Hanukah lamp on the outside door of the house; and he who lives in an attic puts it in a window that opens into the street. In time of danger, however, it is sufficient if the lights are on the table."

Timing and Practical Light

"The proper ordinance is for (the 'Hanukah light) to last from sunset until footsteps are no longer heard in the street."

"In the latter case another light is required to work by; but if there is a hearth-fire in the house, it is not necessary."

Reverence for the Light

"It is not allowed to count money by the 'Hanukah light."

Source: Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b–22a; M. L. Rodkinson, trans. (public domain).

Key Insights on the Hanukkah Lights



Increasing in Holiness

✓ Hillel's approach follows the principle of *ma'alin bakodesh*—"we increase in holiness." It reflects the idea that God's light and work should grow, not diminish.

The Shamash (Servant Light)

✓ The Talmud requires a separate light for practical use. Over time, this developed into the *shamash*, used to light the other eight candles.

Publicizing the Miracle

✓ The lights were to be placed where others could see them, a practice based on *pirsumei nisa*—"publicizing the miracle." Hanukkah is a testimony to God's deliverance, meant to be seen and remembered.

The Tabernacles Connection

✓ The rabbis link Shammai's decreasing lights to the seven-day decrease in sacrifices at Sukkot (Numbers 29:12–34), a connection that reminds us of the Temple focus and the joy of God's provision.



The Story Behind Hanukkah

Reading the Ancient Accounts

John 10:22–30 – Jesus at the Feast of Dedication

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and my Father are one.

John 10:22–30 • King James Version (Public Domain)

Jesus at the Feast of Dedication



Solomon's Portico

Jesus walked in Solomon's Portico during the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22–23). This covered colonnade was a gathering place within the temple complex. Later, Peter preached there (Acts 3:11–12), and the early believers gathered there (Acts 5:12).



The Good Shepherd

Jesus uses the image of a shepherd and His sheep (vv. 25–28). He is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep, they hear His voice, and they follow Him. He gives them eternal life and keeps them secure in His hand.



I and My Father Are One

Jesus declares, "I and my Father are one" (v. 30), affirming His unity with the Father. The people responded with anger and took up stones to stone Him (v. 31).