

The Eight Candles of Hanukkah
Adapted from Chosen People Ministries Newsletter

1. The Servant Candle.

A. "...but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant." Matthew 20:26.

B. It is in keeping with the teachings of the Messiah, that the ninth candle -- the Shamash -- should be lit first, with a match, and then used to light all the others. Yeshua (Jesus) repeatedly told His disciples He had come as a servant, and even in the last hours of His life, He took the role of servant to minister to these, His friends and followers (John 13:1-5). He thus fulfilled the prophecies of the Tanakh (Old Testament) (Isaiah 53) and set an example for us that we should follow (John 13:14).

C. Let us commit ourselves, during these holy days, to a new spirit of selfless service ... sharing the light of salvation with each life we touch.

2. The First Candle.

A. The One True G-d. "Hear, O Israel; The L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one!" Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

B. The Shema ("hear") is the most important Scripture in the Tanakh -- the proclamation of the unique Person of G-d. Because He is the only G-d, He wants, requires and deserves the first place in every area of our lives. The singular character and single redemptive purpose of the Holy G-d should bring us to worship Him in all that we do, and to commit our lives to Him.

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for His unique character and commit yourself anew to give Him your first attention and fullest devotion.

3. The Second Candle.

A. Unity. "...that they may be one just as We are one...." John 17:20-26.

B. Yeshua's great prayer in the Garden on the eve of His death was an aching cry of His heart for the unity of G-d and man. The bringing together of a holy G-d and sinful mankind was the redemptive purpose for which the Messiah came ... and for which He died. It is the purpose for which we, too, live and die ... that the Messiah might use us to awaken a lost world -- and especially His chosen people -- to their need to be reconciled with G-d.

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for uniting your spirit with Himself, and ask Him to use you to bring lost souls to Him.

4. The Third Candle.

A. Tri-Unity. "...one G-d and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Matthew 3:13-17. Ephesians 4:1-6.

B. G-d is tri-unity -- three expressions of one unique, dynamic character. He is Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter ... Father, Son and Spirit. The L-rd is one -- and yet, through the great mystery of these three holy expressions, He ministers truth and grace and power to those who have given their lives to Him. He calls us, too, to be holy and complete ... uniting spirit, soul and body to love and serve Him (I Thessalonians 5:23).

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for expressing His love in three separate, yet singular, ways, and ask Him to fire you with the desire to unite your whole self in devotion and service for Him.

5. The Fourth Candle.

A. Judgment. "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory or G-d." Romans 3:21-26.

B. The light of salvation, as seen through Yeshua, the Light of the World, has meaning only for those who realize that they are lost in darkness. Each of us must come to terms with the fact that we have betrayed G-d ... through things we have done but shouldn't have, and through things we should have done, but didn't. Our betrayal of what we know to be right has left us in spiritual darkness ... and yearning for the light that will show us the way back to the "Father of Lights" (James 1:17). The Messiah came to be that light, and He invites us to live in that light, too -- seeing the truth and hope that G-d alone illumines. Those who refuse -- who choose to continue in darkness and confusion -- are doomed to destruction.

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for bringing the light of Truth into your life, and ask Him to help you light the way for people all around you who are still groping in dark, spiritual confusion.

6. The Fifth Candle.

A. The Grace of G-d. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves...." Ephesians 2:8-9.

B. The value of a gift is measured in many ways -- by how much it costs ... by how personal it is ... by how much love went into the giving ... by the feelings that gift stirs in our hearts. By all of these measures, G-d's gift to us is inexpressibly precious. It cost G-d His only Begotten Son ... and it cost Yeshua His life. It offers to each of us a unique and personal relationship with G-d Himself ... a gift offered through His

unimaginable love. Recognizing and accepting that gift is a deeply humbling experience -- one that should bring us to our knees in worship, and then to our feet with an eager desire to share it.

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for His priceless gift of salvation ... and ask Him to give you a sense of wonder as you proclaim His gift to others.

7. The Sixth Candle.

A. Creation. "O L-rd, our L-rd, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!" Psalm 8, Genesis 2.

B. G-d created man on the sixth day, "in His own image." This was the culmination of the fantastic creation of all nature -- plants and animals, mountains and seas, skies and planets and the deep places of the earth. G-d invested this final creation with a semblance of His own nature ... and the unique capacity to relate consciously, deliberately to Him in faith and love. He breathed into us "the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7) -- and the capacity to choose our own eternal destiny.

C. As you pray tonight, praise G-d for the glory of His creation ... for some special aspect of nature that is particularly precious to you. And ask Him to grant you the wisdom to choose wisely as you live for Him.

8. The Seventh Candle.

A. Completion and Rest. "He rested from all His work which G-d had created and made." Genesis 2.

B. In the Bible, seven is a number for completion -- for G-d's finishing touch on His magnificent work of creation. After the work, G-d rested .. and it is good to know that in these days of high stress and seemingly endless activity, that He expects us to rest, too "...for so He gives His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2). In the power of Yeshua, He gives us the strength to accomplish all of the tasks that He sets before us -- and the command, at least one day a week, to take a break.

C. As you pray tonight, thank G-d for providing you with challenges, and with strength to meet them ... and ask Him to give you a special spirit of rest.

9. The Eighth Candle.

A. A New Beginning. "...if anyone is in [Messiah] (Christ), he is a new creation...." 2 Corinthians 5:12-21.

B. Through the grace of G-d, endings are always beginnings for believers. The end of sin is the beginning of righteousness ... the end of guilt is the beginning of freedom ... the end of fear is the beginning of love. Yeshua asks us to let our lives end

-- to lay to rest our will to do what we want, when we want, the way we want -- so that His will can begin anew within us. In exchange, He promises an ultimate end to all that has meant frustration and fear and dissatisfaction ... and a new birth of hope, of faith, of love in our hearts.

C. Tonight, as you pray in the glow of all the candles of the hanukkah, dedicate yourself anew to Yeshua. Place in His scarred hands the joys and troubles and memories of the past -- and let Him give you the promise and the possibilities and the power of His presence in the new days ahead.