

# EIGHT LIGHTS

*A Hanukkah Devotional for Followers of Yeshua*

DARREN N. HUCKEY



Eight Lights: A Hanukkah Devotional for Followers of Yeshua  
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*“I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.”*

*~ Jesus, John 8:12 ~*



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## CHAPTER THREE

# Reflect

### *Devotionals for Each Night of Hanukkah*



## NIGHT ONE

## AVODAH

Now the days drew near that Mattathias should die, and he said to his sons: “Now has pride and chastisement gotten strength, and the time of destruction, and the wrath of indignation. Now therefore, O my sons, be zealous for the Torah, and give your lives for the covenant of your fathers. And call to remembrance the works of the fathers, which they have done in their generations” (1 Maccabees 2:49-51).

**T**he very first night of Hanukkah! One small candle burns in solitude, a single flame in the darkness. Well, sort of. This is the first night of Hanukkah where we light the first candle! But how many candles do you see? Do you see one, or do you see two?

That second candle that’s hiding in the back (or off to the side, depending on your hanukkiah) is a special candle. It’s called a *shamash*, or servant. Its job is to pass the flame to each of the eight candles of the Hanukkah menorah. Its job is to serve (*avodah*) the other candles by passing its light and heat to them. It doesn’t get counted like the other candles, yet it is always present. Every

night we first light the *shamash* and then use it to light the other candles. It really has a thankless job. The shamash works hard to make the other candles shine brightly, but receives little attention for this important task and is not counted among the special Eight Lights of Hanukkah.

In John 13, Yeshua is with his disciples preparing to eat what would be his last earthly meal before his death, burial and resurrection. In that very last meal Yeshua reveals the most important thing he wants to leave to his disciples. Was it a secret teaching? A precious jewel? A map to buried treasures? No. It was an example of serving others. Just when his disciples thought that one of the servants of the house would come and wash the scum off of their nasty feet, Yeshua took a hold of the water basin, grabbed a towel and bent down to wash their feet.

Peter nearly fainted. As a matter of fact, he refused to have Yeshua wash his feet. He thought it was indignant and unbecoming of his great rabbi—the greatest rabbi to walk the face of the earth!—to wash the nasty feet of others, especially his own. If anything, shouldn't he be the one washing Yeshua's feet, and not the reverse? But Yeshua rebuked Peter for thinking this way. He told him of the absolute necessity of serving them. Yeshua explained to him very clearly the significance of what he was doing:

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:12-16)

He set the model for how to serve others by serving them himself. If we consider the subject, the words Yeshua spoke in John 13 overlap his words in Luke 6 and can be combined to convey a single statement:

Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. (John 13:16; Luke 6:40)

Yeshua expects his followers to imitate him, so serving others should be at the top of our list. These words echoed in Simon Peter's memory, and he carried them with him to his death. You see, a little while earlier, a few of the disciples had argued over who was the greatest. (Surely not Peter, right?) Yeshua responded in much the same way as he did the night he washed their feet. He told them, "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Matthew 20:26b-27). Yeshua placed the utmost importance on serving others. In fact, he concluded his rebuke by saying it was indeed his very mission: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

As disciples of Yeshua, serving others should be in our nature. But we should serve like the shamash, without waiting for a "thank you" or expecting any kind of reward. Our Master taught us in this regard:

Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and recline at table"? Will he not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink"? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." (Luke 17:7-10)

You see, it all begins with the single flame of the Shamash, the Servant. Yeshua lived the life of a servant. He is called the Suffering Servant. He is the Shamash. By serving his disciples, Yeshua lit a flame in them that would burn in their hearts for the rest of their lives, driving them to return that example by serving others. Just as Yeshua was the shamash and served his disciples, so may we also carry the light of our service into the darkness so the light of Yeshua may shine brightly in this world.

## DISCUSSION

1. What's the most important candle of Hanukkah and why?
2. How did Yeshua exemplify the shamash?
3. Why did Peter argue with Yeshua over having his feet washed?
4. How did Peter begin to serve others after Yeshua's example?
5. How have others served you lately?
6. How have you served others lately?
7. What was your attitude in serving others?