

Hanukkah is a celebration of rededicating the Jewish Temple in 164 BC by lighting the golden menorah. It was because of Jewish resistance to the Seleucid forces that the light once again shined brightly. The Seleucids had outlawed the worship of God and silenced the reading of the scripture, The power of evil meeting righteous resistance resulted in restoration of the light of not only the golden menorah in the Temple but the light of the scriptures being freely available to all. The pages of scripture are filled with a long history of the Hebrews resisting ungodly laws and edicts. This refusal to bend or bow to any god but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the biblical text has become an inspiration for religious and political independence down through the centuries. From the reformation led by Martin Luther through the Revolutionary War to the Civil rights movement under ML King, people have been inspired by the Jewish model of not submitting to laws that forbade them to worship God. Not bending and not bowing has often led to the miraculous deliverances; from slavery in Egypt to the fiery furnace in Babylon . The New Testament book of Acts records early Jewish believers spreading the Gospel in spite of threats, beatings, imprisonment, even martyrdom. The power of God overcame godless resistance resulting in the light of the Gospel shining brightly across the Roman Empire.

The modern light bulb is the result of Edison's discovery of the resistance of a filament in a bulb against the electric current traveling through a wire. Light results from the heating of that filament. When energy meets resistance it produces light. This illustration enlightens the principle of the resistance that a Christian meets as a conductor of the power of the Gospel and conversely as we become the resistance to the power of the world to conform us to their secularism. Jesus said, "let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father which is in Heaven." The world's resistance to the saving power of Christ should make us glow with His light in a dark world. The glory of that light will point to our Heavenly Father. Jesus said, If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me. We are commanded not to hide our light under a bushel but to let it shine. We are fearful of the resistance and the heat, but it is at that moment that His power through us will shine to guide those lost in darkness as well as expose their sin and shine upon the brightness of our Savior. Just as the Maccabees resisted the Seleucid Empire's demands to renounce their faith in the one true God and submit to paganism, so we must resist the world's influence on our lives. Jesus told His original disciples that the world would hate and persecute them because they hated Him. This resistance to the negative energy of the godless creates heat. That heat is then focused on us who are to be light.

The Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire from 168-164 BC began with a priest of the village of Modine who was commanded to bow to a Greek idol nor defile himself with swine meat. Judah Maccabee and his four brothers killed the enemy soldiers and began a three-year "gorilla" style resistance ending with reclaiming and rededicating their Temple. The Jews annually proclaim a Great Miracle Happened Here commemorating the one day supply of oil lasting for eight days. Thus, the annual ceremony has continued now for 2186 years. This lighting of candles for eight nights and giving gifts commemorates their victory and celebrates Israel's national and religious freedom. It started with resistance to secular domination.

In keeping with the analogy of light resulting from resistance, let's examine eight Jewish heroes of faith who share one common principle: refusing to bow or bend their belief in God at the risk of death. With each stand against the darkness of ungodliness, the light shined brighter pointing eventually to Jesus the Light of the World.

1. Jochebed: mother of Moses Exodus 2:1 “And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.” Numbers 26:59 “And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister”. Exodus 2:2,3 “And when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.”

2. Moses Hebrews 11:23,25 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

3. David 1 Samuel 17:26, 32,37 “And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? 1Sa 17:29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.”

4. Mordecai & Esther Esther 4:13,14 “Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

5. Daniel Daniel 6:10,22,23 “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” Daniel after a night in the Lion's den answered the sleepless king. “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.”

6. Hebrew Children - Hananiah , Mischial, Azariah Daniel 3:17,18 “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

7. The Maccabees Though the record of this conflict is not found in the Canon of scripture but rather in the books of First and Second Maccabees, it was prophesied by Daniel. “Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” Dan 11:28,29,32

8. Peter and John Acts 4:19,20 “But Peter and John answered and said unto them, **Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.** For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” 1 Peter 5:8-10 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.”

9. The Servant Candle: Jesus Light of the World

The *hanukkiyah*, menorah, is a candelabra designated specifically for Hanukkah. It holds nine candles — one for each night, plus the shamush or servant candle. The Messiah was prophesied to be the servant of God four times in Isaiah, 42,49, 50, 53, to bring light to His people Israel and to be a light to the Gentiles. Jesus was brought to that same restored Temple for his *brit*, (circumcision) fulfilling the Torah. He was proclaimed by Simeon to be the fulfillment of “a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of my people Israel. Lk 2:25-32 Hanukkah, also known as the Feast of Dedication, was observed by Jesus in John chapter 10:21.

That 1st century festival was marked in Jerusalem by the lighting of four 40’ tall candelabras in the Women’s Court of the Temple. Coinciding with this ceremony, candle lightings, spread all across the city of Jerusalem out to the Judean hills. So many fires lighted the hillsides of the capital city that the Jewish historian Josephus said, “from a distance it looked as if Jerusalem was on fire.” Jesus walked into the Temple and stood in Solomon’s court during the feast of Hanukkah and cried aloud “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Jesus taught and proved that He is the light of the world by healing the blind. “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” John 9:5; 10:21, 22 It was at this season that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1,2 “in Galilee the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...” “they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Thousands including rabbis and priests saw His miracles firsthand and heard His teachings for three years. Over 500 saw Him physically alive after He was crucified and buried (1 Cor. 15:6). Many Jewish disciples died as martyrs rather than deny what they knew to be true about Jesus in scripture and as eyewitnesses of his resurrection. 1 John 1:1-3, 5:1

It is no coincidence, but rather divinely appointed timing that Jesus had just healed a man who was blind from birth and proclaimed himself to be the light of the world during the season of the Festival of Lights. The Pharisees thoroughly questioned the former blind man and his parents and determined it to be a devilish work. “Others said, These are not the works of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” Jesus said that they who questioned the formerly blind man were willingly blind themselves. He spoke of them as blind guides of the blind. Freedom won by the Maccabees demands that Jews who have been forbidden to read about or to discuss Jesus read for themselves about the Jew who fulfilled Jewish prophecies. The Servant of God was predicted to die and arise for Israel’s sins. He has passed the light of salvation on to us “Ye are the light of the world.” Matt. 5:14 True believers through loving relationships should invite yea challenge our Jewish friends to discover for themselves that Yeshua/Jesus is the *shamus* light of Adonai in the Jewish gospels. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” John 8:36