

Christians Reaffirm Support for Israel During Hanukkah Bible Study With Jews

On the first day of Hanukkah, a group of 120—comprised of 75 Christians and 40 Jews—brought light to the Knesset in a joint Bible study that included 40 honored guests, Christians visiting from Taiwan.

Representing the fifth Schindler Society Knesset Bible Study, co-sponsored by the Knesset Caucus for the Encouragement of Bible Study and Israel365, Knesset Member Yehuda Glick (Likud) opened the Tuesday session with Israel's national anthem (*HaTikvah*, "The Hope") and exuberant renditions of Psalm 118:24 in English, Hebrew and Taiwanese Mandarin:

"This is the day that Hashem has made— let us exult and rejoice on it" (Ps. 118:24, The Israel Bible).

Glick lit a chanukiah made by Holocaust survivors, thanking God for "our ability to be His light in the world."

Reading from The Israel Bible—the world's first Hebrew Bible to highlight the special relationship between the land and the people of Israel—Glick spoke about the prophetic beginnings of Hanukkah, maintaining, "Hanukkah is celebrated in the darkest time of the year, on the longest and darkest night, but by putting the menorah in our windows, we can bring light to the entire world." He continued, "That's our job on Hanukkah—to remind the world that even in the darkest of darkness, we had a connection to the light of the menorah, to the temple, to God and to Jerusalem."

Rabbi Shmuel Veffter, president and co-founder of Galilee Green Olive Oil, spoke of the biblical aspects of olive oil and its

connection to Hanukkah and the Jewish people. "The menorah, which was chosen as the emblem of the state of Israel, needs olive oil as fuel. In biblical times, olive oil was the basis of the economy, and it was used in the temple to spread light."

Veffer further explained, "Light represents Torah, our instructions for living. In addition, Jews are compared to olive oil—because if you try to crush them, you get this beautiful pure thing that lights up the world. But more importantly, it represents our job as the proprietor of the fuel to spread the Torah—the wisdom of the Almighty." Without olive oil in the menorah—the Jewish people in the land of Israel—posed Veffer, there will be no light for the nations and "the world is destroyed."

Singer Rabbi Shlomo Katz spoke of the "fixing of the eyes" that Hanukkah brings. "We have no permission to use the light for any other benefit, only to observe the light," he explained. When we see each other in this way—"looking at each other, ourselves, Israel and God just for the presence of our light, without thinking of how we can use what is in front of us," he posed—"man comes to a state of gratitude and everything becomes a miracle."

Outreach coordinator for the City of David, AnaRina Heymann, spoke of the importance of "flipping the switch" from Greek influence that tried to drown out Jewish spirituality to "becoming who we really are." The physical embodiment of Greek influence, she said, an Acra (a massive Greek stronghold) which some scholars claim was found in the City of David was originally built "to block out the vision of the Temple Mount." When King David re-conquered the city, she said, he "flipped the switch of the Jewish people to understand who they really are, not bound to the system of the world, but rather, being the system of the living God and being the light unto the nations."

Rabbi Pesach Wolicki of the Center for Jewish and Christian Understanding and Cooperation (CJCUC) focused his comments on the exhilaration and celebration we have during Hanukkah for a miracle that happened “in those days”—over 2,000 years ago—“now.” He exclaimed, “We are not recalling history—there is no word in the Hebrew language for history—we are remembering, and memories only happen in relation to our own experiences.” Thus, he posed, the miracle of Hanukkah is related to each and every one of our lives.

David Nekrutman, executive director for the CJCUC, praised Christians who light the Hanukkah candles for “affirming that the Torah is still alive and standing in partnership with the Jewish community and Israel to sanctify God’s name together.”

Rabbi Elan Adler warned against Israel’s secular tendencies, becoming “more Greek” and breaking from traditions and discarding customs. He connected this thought to the Hebrew word for Greece (יוון). When read in Hebrew, the characters show increasing tendencies. Adler urged the audience to follow in the footsteps of Judah the Maccabee, who stood resolute against increasing tendencies to become more Greek. He argued for the Hanukkah story to affect government and public policy by requiring all Jewish students to learn the basis of the Jewish faith. Rather than “let my people go,” he said, “let my children know.”

Dr. Rivkah Lambert Adler, Bible and prophecy watch reporter on Breaking Israel News and editor of *Ten From the Nations: Torah Awakening Among Non-Jews*, spoke of an alternative biblical paradigm of leadership—a female and private form of leadership—that can change the world. She recalled the lesser-known story of Judith, aunt of Judah the Maccabee, who “contributed to a victory in her own way” during the Maccabean revolt against Syrian-Greek oppression.

Rabbi Tuly Weisz, director of Israel365 and publisher of *The Israel Bible* and Breaking Israel News, spoke of the Bible

study happening in the Knesset as a prophetic event, where the nations non-Jews come to Israel and declare their desire to learn the Torah as stated in Zecharia:

“In that day many nations will attach themselves to Hashem and become His people, and He will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that I was sent to you by the lord of Hosts.” (Zecharia 2:15, The Israel Bible).

“That’s what’s happening here, in Taiwan, all over the world—together we are bringing Zecharia’s vision to light,” he said.

Pastor Jim Garlow (a member of U.S. President Trump’s faith advisory council) and Rosemary Schindler Garlow, founders of the Schindler Society, found the location of the Bible study—Israel’s Parliament—especially meaningful as a place where government officials can explore biblical concepts and lessons in leadership that may guide their governance of the Jewish state. The Schindler Society is a Christian group that has introduced ongoing Bible study in the U.S. Congress and the United Nations.

In the context of Judeo-Christian values that have shaped societal and governmental values from the times of the Maccabees until today, Schindler thanked the Jewish people and the nation of Israel “for the victory that you portrayed through the Maccabees and through the Hanukkah story.” She maintained, “When anti-Semitism rose up and the Greeks tried to influence governments against the ways of God, you stood strong and preserved the light for the nations so we could be here today and understand the ways of the Lord and worship the God of Israel.”

Garlow posed that Hanukkah is a “picture of the struggle that we are in right now.” He spoke of the opposition of “two different worldviews,” represented by “all that is light and all that is dark”—the Maccabees and the Greeks, “one of a

reverence and awe of God in which biblical truths lead governance and one of many or no Gods.” He closed the event wishing upon those in attendance to continue the “Maccabean spirit,” representing “the truth of God’s revelation from Zion.”

Immediately following the Bible study, the Christian Taiwanese group traveled to Israel’s Biblical heartland of Ofra, where they met with owner and CEO of Lipkin Tours, Aaron Lipkin. The group planted trees—representing Judeo-Christian roots to the land of Israel—actualizing the promise at the Bible study that the Christian people will continue to stand with the Jewish people, playing an active role in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy in the Jewish homeland in Israel. {eo}

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