

Messianic Rabbi: My Light Shines Because We Are Still Here

A part of the traditional celebration of Hanukkah is the lighting of a nine-branch Hanukkah Menorah (called a Hanukkiah) each night for eight consecutive nights. This year, as we joyously lit our Hanukkiah with our two youngest grandchildren, we once again placed the menorah in a location clearly visible not only from inside our home, but we also made sure it was visible from outside of our home.

The tradition of placing the Hanukkiah in a clearly visible location is done as a reminder not only to those inside the house, but also to those outside of the home that the Jewish people are still here and that our light is still shining.

This statement is made visible with the lighting of the Hanukkiah each Hanukkah to remind ourselves and those around us that despite the numerous attempts to either annihilate the Jewish people (such as in Egypt, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Holocaust and the Pogroms, and the attempts to destroy the Jewish people by assimilation that we read about in the Hanukkah narrative), we are still here.

This year, I stood watching the candles burning and the smiles on the faces of my grandchildren and thought of the words of Yeshua (Jesus) from Mathew 5:14-16:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a lampstand so it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men so they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

As a Messianic Jew, a Jewish believer in Yeshua as my Messiah, the Hanukkah story has an even greater meaning based upon a verse from the book of Acts 5:34-40:

But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Torah respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. Then he said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful what you are about to do with these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody; and a number of men, maybe four hundred, joined up with him. He was killed, and all who followed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this fellow, Judah the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and got people to follow him. He also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So now I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or undertaking is of men, it will come to an end; but if it is of God, you will not be able to stop them. You might even be found fighting against God." They took his advice, called in the emissaries, flogged them, ordered them not to continue speaking in the name of Yeshua, and let them go.

So, as a Messianic Jew who lives my life as a Jew who believes in Yeshua, I let my light shine—not only because the Jewish people, my people, are still here, but because the Messianic Jewish people, my people, are still here. {eo}

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