

<http://jewishroots.net/library/holiday-articles/illumination-of-the-temple-ceremony.html>

During the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) there was a great ceremony called the "Illumination of the Temple," which involved the ritual lighting of four golden oil-fed lamps in the Court of Women. These lamps were huge menorahs/candelabras (seventy-five feet high) lighted in the Temple at night to remind the people of the pillar of fire that had guided Israel in their wilderness journey. All night long the light shone their brilliance, it is said, illuminating the entire city.

In celebration and anticipation, the holiest of Israel's men danced and sang psalms of joy and praise, before the Lord. This festival was a reminder that God had promised to send a light, the Light, to a sin-darkened world. God promised to send the Messiah to renew Israel's glory, release them from bondage, and restore their joy. Imagine that you are in ancient Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. Visualize seeing these massive menorahs giving a tremendous amount of light. Now imagine the impact of the words said by Jesus in the Temple courtyard when he announced, "I am the Light of the world."

Jesus is the Light, the source of illumination to bring the lost out of darkness. Jesus declared himself to be the Light of the world. It is not clear from the text when this incident happened, but it was some time between the Feast of Tabernacles and the [Feast Of Dedication](#) (Hanukkah); both of these celebrations focused on light.(1)

**"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).**

During this ceremony the priests and Levites would use their own worn out clothing for wicks. Some believed that the light represented God's Shekinah glory that once filled the temple.(2)

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### *The House Of The Water Drawing:*

The Water Libation Ceremony, known as Nissuch Ha-Mayim in Hebrew, was one of the most popular parts of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. This ceremony followed the daily sacrifices. It is no longer practiced today but it was being practiced during the Second Temple era and during the time of Jesus Christ. Jesus used this ceremony to make a bold statement.

#### *Description Of Ceremony:*

One reason the water libation ritual was so popular in Second Temple days was the accompanying ceremony of the water drawing, which took place at night when water was drawn from Siloam for the next morning's water libation. Each day for seven consecutive days a priest would walk up a ramp leading to the bronze altar located in the Temple Court and pour a jug full of water into a bowl that drained into the altar.

The ceremony of the water drawing was a jubilant occasion. The Mishna states, "He that has never seen the joy of the [ceremony of the water drawing] has never in his life seen joy." (Sukkah 51a) As the ceremony took place, Levite's played lyres, trumpets, harps, cymbals, and other instruments, while other Levite's sang. In the Temple area, three golden candlesticks nearly 75 feet high were lit by young boys climbing tall ladders, and the light from these candlesticks could be seen throughout all Jerusalem. Respected men of faith danced and sang in front of these candlesticks while carrying burning torches. As the ceremony progressed through the night, the priest blew the shofar three times. In the manner of the text of Isaiah 12:3, "**Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,**" the evening was characterized by exuberant joy. It was a wonderful occasion that no one wanted to miss.(1)

Sometimes Rabbis would perform acrobats and juggle flaming touches as part of the festivities.(2)

Some interpreted the passage in Deuteronomy 14:26 to mean it was good to spend one's tithe money on food or liquor or whatever delicacies one might desire for the purpose of eating and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord.(2)