

## **The Seven Candle Menorah**

The first menorah was created to hold seven candles. These candles are all level and lit together. The menorah and its lighted candles can represent several things, including:

- The flames of God from the burning bush
- The seven days of creation
- Spreading the light of Judaism throughout the world
- Offering light during worship
- A symbol of the Jewish state of Israel

The image of a menorah appears on many artifacts, including ancient coins and gravestones.

## **The Nine Candle Menorah**

When asking how many candles are on a menorah, the most common answer is nine. This is because today, the menorah is most often associated with Hanukkah, the Jewish celebration of the seven-day battle against the Greek-Syrians in which the Jews reclaimed their Second Temple.

At that point, only a single days' worth of oil was found inside the temple to keep the menorah lit. However, during the reclaiming ceremonies, the oil lasted for eight days, at which time new oil could be purchased. This is seen as a miracle, and the reason for the number of candles on the Hanukkah menorah.

Eight of the Hanukkah menorah's candles are level with each other, to symbolize the eight days that the oil lasted. The ninth candle, which is either elevated or shorter than the others, is used to light the other eight candles, and referred to as the Shamash.