

**THE LAMP STAND
THE ONLY LIGHT (PART I)
EXODUS 25:31-40**

INTRODUCTION:

Once you stepped behind the curtain into the holy place of the tabernacle, there were three pieces of furniture in the holy place. There was the beautiful golden lampstand that stood on the south side of the holy place. There was the table of showbread that was placed on the north side of the holy place. There was the beautiful golden altar of incense that stood on the west side of the tabernacle and just outside of the Holy of Holies. Each of the pieces of furniture in the Holy Place was made of gold in contrast to those that stood in the courtyard, which were made of brass.

We have already discovered that the brass altar reminds us of the cross of Jesus Christ, as the place where the sacrifice was offered for our sins. We have also learned that the brazen laver represents the cleansing that is so essential for those who are going to serve in the Holy Place. The person who will be involved in service to the living God must make frequent visits to the laver for the washing of their hands and feet.

What is the significance of the pieces of furniture in the holy place? In this study we will focus just on the Menorah, the beautiful golden lampstand. We will divide this study into two parts. Tonight, we will look only at Christ as the only source of light in a dark world. Next time, we will look at the church and the individual Christian, because of their relationship with Christ, as also the light of the world. There are seven significant things

to be learned from this inspired description concerning the golden lamp stand that will give us insight into Christ as the light of the world.

I. CHRIST AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

1. The unity of the lamp stand reminds us that He is the only light.

From the replica of the Menorah you have noticed that there was just one lamp stand.

This one lamp stand was made up of the central stem from which there came six branches. There was one lamp at the top of the central stem and a lamp on each of the six branches--three on each side. The instruction was specific that the lampstand was to be all of one piece. The unity of this lampstand and its oneness is of great importance. There is only one source of light in the Holy Place. There is only one source of saving light in the world in which we live.

Jesus made this claim for Himself on more than one occasion. In the Gospel of John He stated, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). John introduced this theme of Jesus as the light of the world in the prologue to his gospel. He says of Him in the prologue, "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness does not understand it" (John 1:4-5). Then after referring to the ministry of John the Baptist and indicating that he was a witness to the light, he says, "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" (John 1:9).

In this claim Jesus is declaring Himself to be the once source of understanding. He is the one source of truth about God. Those who want to know who God is and what God is like come to Him. Their inner beings will be illuminated with the light of God as they relate themselves to Him in faith and trust. There is only one such lamp stand in the tabernacle. And only one such lamp stand in the world. Christ is the only source of light. He is indeed the light of the world.

2. The gold reminds us of His deity.

God always typifies the deity of Christ in the tabernacle. This most precious metal of all was used for the making of this lamp stand. It was no cheap venture. The gold from which the lamp stand was made would probably make it worth as much as \$60,000 in our day. It was made out of pure gold. It could not be mixed with any other metal or alloy. It was to represent the pure deity of the Son of God.

It is His unique relationship to God that makes Him the light of the world. He Himself said, "The Father and I are one." Without denying the humanity of Jesus, for He was 100% man, we must strongly affirm that Jesus was 100% God. His incarnation is the ultimate manifestation of the reality of God that human history has ever known. The gold of the lamp stand is a reminder of the deity of the Son of God. In Jesus, the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. Who could ask for more?

3. The hammering of the gold reminds us of His suffering.

The instructions that Moses received on the mountain were specific. He was instructed, "Make a lamp stand of pure gold and hammer it out base and shaft; its flower-like cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it." Then to emphasize it further we are told, "The buds and the branches shall be of one piece with the lamp stand, hammered out of pure gold." The old version reads, "beaten" out of pure gold.

It would have been possible in that day to have made a mold of some kind and molded the lampstand out of pure gold. Evidently, this is what Aaron and the people of Israel did a little later when they made the golden calf. But this one is not to come out of a mold, but is to be hammered out of one piece of gold. What a gifted artist it must have taken to produce such a beautiful lampstand to stand in the tabernacle. This one little piece of information is included to teach us about the sufferings of our Lord.

The life that Jesus lived was marked by sufferings. He became the man He was before God through the things He suffered day by day. The writer of Hebrews presents this profound truth to us in his letter. "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Hebrews 2:10). And again the writer of the Hebrews declares, "Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:8-10). The hammering of the Lord Jesus with sufferings was essential for the mission that he had in the world. He was to be the light of the world, then as the God-man He had to be

hammered by the experiences of life. He experienced what it means to be obedient to the Father in life's circumstances when the consequences of that obedience will be rejection, pain, humiliation, and ultimately death. This enabled Him to truly be for us the golden lamp stand, the light of the world.

4. The seven branches remind us of His perfection.

Seven is always in Scripture, the number of completion, fulfillment, or perfection. This coincides with the oneness of the lamp stand. Even though there was just one lampstand, there were seven lamps as a part of it. Indeed, He is the perfect light of God. There is absolutely no imperfection or short coming in Him as the light of the world.

This should build in our hearts great confidence and be a source of encouragement. We are not left in the dark wondering about where we are going and who we are. We are following the one who is the perfect Light of God in every way.

5. The almond flowers remind us of His fruitfulness.

It is somewhat difficult to picture in our minds exactly what Moses is describing in the instructions concerning the lampstand. At least it must have included this: that the lamp that sat on the top of the branch was in the shape of almond flower. You may have noticed this in the replica that we saw earlier. The instructions say, "And on the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped liked almond flowers with buds and blossoms. One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lamp stand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair, six branches in all. The

buds and the branches shall be of one piece with the lamp stand hammered out of pure gold."

The almond flower reminds us of that incident that happened later in the life of Israel during their journeys in the wilderness when some of the people of Israel began to question as to whether or not Aaron was the true high priest of the people. The Lord gave Moses some special instructions. The representative of each of the tribes of Israel were to bring a staff that would be placed in the tabernacle. The name of each tribe would be on the staff that they placed at the tabernacle with the name of tribe of Levi on the staff that Aaron brought. When they laid them before the Lord they were just dry sticks. When Moses came the next day he found that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. Moses brought these out to the people and it was seen as a clear confirmation that Aaron was indeed the chosen high priest for the nation (Numbers 17). The same symbol is involved in these branches of the golden lamp stand.

As the symbol of fruitfulness the almond bud, flower, and fruit symbolizes the fruitfulness of the life of the Son of God. As the Light of God in the world, He has produced an abundant harvest for the heavenly Father. There is no question about the fruitfulness of His life as the Light of the world.

6. The oil reminds us of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ.

Even though there is no reference to the oil in this description we do have further instructions concerning the lamps in Leviticus. There the Lord said to Moses, "Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. Outside of the curtain of the testimony in the tent of meeting Aaron is to tend the lamps before the Lord from evening til morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come" (Leviticus 24:1-3). Oil is regularly in Scripture the symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is so with reference to the golden lamp stand.

Even though Jesus Christ was very God of very God, the only begotten of the Father, the Holy Spirit had a significant role in His life. If you read carefully the Gospel of Luke he gives more attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus than any other. The reality is that Jesus walked day by day in dependence upon and in submission to the Holy Spirit in His life just as we seek to live day by day. His effectiveness as the Light of the world was made possible by the Holy Spirit being upon Him in power and blessing. It is the Holy Spirit that made this distinctive difference in His life. He lived every day in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is proper for us to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit had such a significant role in the light of the lampstand, the only Light of the world, the Lord Jesus.

7. The light allowed the worshipper to see the bread and the way to God.

The place and the role of the lampstand in the Holy Place was very practical. When you stepped through the curtains into the Holy Place it was void of all light apart from the

burning of the lampstand. The seven lamps burning filled the Holy Place with light. The light from the lampstand illuminated the table of showbread, which was so significant to the priest. It also illuminated the golden altar of incense. It illuminated the beautiful veil that hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. In this role, the lampstand was illuminating the way that the worshipper was to approach God. Worshippers would have stumbled around in the holy place groping here and there if it had not been for the lampstand.

This is the unique role of the Lord Jesus as the Light of the world. He came into the world to illumine the way to God for us. He Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." If you want to find your way to God and to have a saving, life-changing relationship with God, then you need to make the Lord Jesus indeed the Light of your life. He will illumine the way into the presence of God.

We have only looked at half of the truth, but what a truth it is. Jesus, the Son of God, is the Light of the world. This is the message that we are to learn from the goldenlamp stand in the tabernacle. There are yet other lessons to be learned about our relationship to Him and how we become the light of the world. We will take them up next time, but it is important tonight that we determine in our own lives as whether or not Jesus Christ is the Light of God to us. Have we been looking in other places for light? I assure you that any other direction you pursue will end up only in darkness. The only true Light that has come into the world is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

