

The Golden Lampstand

| Scripture | Main Theme | Description/Notes |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Exodus 25.31-40 | The Lampstand | |

The Construction and Use

The purpose of the Lampstand was to produce light in the Holy Place. It was made of a talent of gold (v.39) which was approximately 52kg (a value today of £1million). The Lampstand had a central shaft with six branches (three on either side). Each of the branches were decorated with bowls, knops and flowers. These symbolise the three stages of the almond:

- Knops (v.35) meaning 'to encircle'; the rounded unopened **bud**.
- Flowers (v.33) in the form of buds bursting into bloom (the **blossoms**).
- Bowls (v.33) were made like an almond nut (the **fruit**).

These stages were also seen in Aaron's rod that budded: *Numbers 17.8: Behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.*

The central shaft is described as being 'the' shaft and the other six branches as "his branch" (v.31). This centre shaft was set apart from the other branches. It was decorated differently and all other branches came from it. Tradition states that the Lampstand was 5ft high. It was made from beaten pure gold (v.31). The oil for the light was also beaten (Exodus 27.20, Leviticus 24.1-4).



Tongs (v.38) were used to clean the lamps. Without this the Lamp would not give its light as it should. Snuffdishes (v.38) were trays to carry the deposits cleaned from the lamps away, and carry the fire with which to light the lamps after they were cleaned.

The Significance - Christ

Notice in v.31 the personal pronoun "his"! This Lampstand speaks of a Person: Christ! Here He is seen as the light of the Sanctuary, not as the light of the world (it was unseen outside the Holy Place, cf. John 9.5). Christ is the light of His people as they come before God. Without spiritual light all is darkness and ignorance (cf. Colossians 1.13). Christ has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2.9). The Lampstand would also speak of the Word of God (Psalm 119.105) which is the only safe rule and guide of life and conduct for the believer.

Note. Christ is the light to His people (2 Corinthians 4.6, Proverbs 4.18); in His people (Ephesians 1.18, 5.13-14) and through His people (Matthew 5.14-16).

The beaten gold of the Lampstand speaks of the sufferings of a now glorified and risen Lord Jesus (Isaiah 53.3, Lamentations 1.12). Note that the golden calf made by Aaron was cast in a mould (Exodus 32.4). That which is worthless and empty can be quickly and easily moulded. That which is of value to God and brings most glory to Him takes time, effort and possibly suffering (cf. Job 23.10, 1 Peter 1.7, Hebrews 5.7-9).

The almonds speak of two principal things:

- **Resurrection.** Aaron's rod that budded yielded almonds (Numbers 17.8). Life came from a dead, dry rod speaking of the glory of the **risen** Christ who is the "firstfruits" (1 Corinthians 15.23) in resurrection.
- **Watchfulness.** The root of the Hebrew word means 'to watch over' and 'be alert'. This comes from the fact that the almond tree blossoms in January before any other tree and is seen as watching over the spring as it comes in (cf. Jeremiah 1.11-12, God uses this illustration to teach Jeremiah that He was watchful over His word to perform it). All God's promises have been vindicated and substantiated in a risen Christ (2 Corinthians 1.20).

The seven branches of the Lampstand remind us of the sevenfold Spirit of God in His relation to Christ. *Isaiah 11.1-2: And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him (central stem), the spirit of wisdom and understanding (first pair of branches), the spirit of*

counsel and might (second pair of branches), the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (third pair of branches).

The Significance - Believers

Responsibility

In Zechariah 4.1-14 the prophet views a lampstand which pictures the responsibility of Israel to be the Lord's light bearer to the world (Isaiah 42.6). The nation did not fulfil their responsibility. In Revelation (1.13, 1.20) there are seven lampstands which represent seven local assemblies. It is now **our** responsibility to witness for God (John 9.5, Philippians 2.15)! Note that in this respect the central shaft of the Lampstand represents Christ, the Head of the Church, and the six branches the Church (John 15.5). All believers are by their union to Christ able to shine as lights in this world.

The lamps in the Holy Place required attention every morning and evening (Exodus 27.20-21). The tongs and snuffers were required to ensure the light shone brightly before God "continually" (Leviticus 24.3). No such attention is needed with the Lord Jesus; His light always shines brightly, however, it was Aaron's responsibility to order the lamps to ensure they were burning brightly. Likewise it is our responsibility to get into the presence of God and allow His light to magnify our uncleanness. Let's administer the tongs!!

Revelation

The lamps were fuelled by oil (a type of the Holy Spirit). The light which Christ brings shines unto us by the Spirit of God. There were four purposes of the Lampstand illustrating four aspects of the Spirit's ministry to us:

- **To reveal the beauty of the Lampstand** (Exodus 25.37). The Spirit of God glorifies Christ (John 16.14) and enables us to see the beauty of the Lord (Leviticus 24.4).
- **To cast light on the Table of Shewbread** (Exodus 40.24). It is only by the Spirit that we can enjoy fellowship and communion with each other, sharing the things of Christ (the Bread).
- **To enable the burning of incense** (Exodus 30.7-8). Without the Spirit we cannot praise and worship God (John 4.24).
- **Shed its light before the Lord** (Exodus 40.25). This phrase "before the Lord" reminds us that God's eye is upon us. His light reveals our failures and should cause us to confess our sins to restore fellowship with God (1 John 1.5-9).