

Exodus pt. 48
The Golden Lampstand
Exodus 25:31 - 40

I. Introduction

A. Opening Prayer

B. As we continue our study of the Tabernacle we come to the Golden Lampstand.

Remember that Jesus is the ultimate Tabernacle where God met with mankind. So everything in the Tabernacle points us toward Jesus in some way. First, I would like to examine the details of this ornate lampstand and then I want to show you how it points us to truths about the Lord Jesus.

C. Read Exodus 25:31 - 40

II. The Form of the Lampstand

A. Pure Gold

1. "Then you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it." (Exodus 25:31)

a) Notice that it was to be made of "pure gold." The purity of gold is simple enough to understand. God is perfectly holy so the furniture of the Tent of Meeting was to be as valuable, beautiful, and pure as possible.

b) Also notice that the entire lampstand was to be made as "one piece." There were not to be seams or connection points.

c) "In the craftsmanship of that day, the gold was set against a wooden mold and then hammered into shape." (*Preaching the Word:Exodus*, pg. 790)

d) "The whole thing was made from a single talent of solid gold, which in today's measurements would weigh roughly seventy-five pounds." (Idid)

e) By the amount of gold used, it is estimated that this lampstand was around five feet tall.

2.

B. The Shape

1. "Six branches shall go out from its sides; three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches of the lampstand from its other side. Three cups shall be shaped like almond blossoms in the one branch, a bulb and a flower, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bulb and a flower - so for six branches going out from the lampstand; and in the lampstand four cups shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers. A bulb shall under the first pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the second pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the third pair of branches coming out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. Their bulbs and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it shall be one piece of hammered work of pure gold." (Exodus 25:32 - 36)

a) The lampstand was made up of a central shaft with three branches coming off of either side. The centerpiece as well as the six branches all housed lamps at their tops. This would look similar to modern-day menorahs though larger in size.

b) Each branch was decorated with golden almond buds, blossoms, and fruit.

- c) The central shaft had four decorations. Perhaps, three of these would be the origin point of the three branches on either side.
 - d) The flowery cup at the end of each branch and the central shaft were fashioned into a cup which would hold the lamps.
- 2.
3. Almond Flowers
- a) “The almond blossom flower represents purity, hope, renewal, and new beginnings. This symbolism is linked to the way almond trees start to blossom at the end of winter or the beginning of spring, representing the end of the cold and dark season and the beginning of a new, fresh, and vibrant era.” (<https://foliagefriend.com/almond-blossom-flower-meaning/>)
 - b) “Almond blossom flowers also hold significance in Jewish culture. They are often associated with [...] the Jewish New Year [...]. Almond blossom flowers are seen as a symbol of **renewal and the beginning of a new cycle of growth.**” (Ibid)
 - c) “Some commentators associate [the lampstand] with the rod of power that God gave to Aaron. Their reason for making this connection is that when Aaron’s staff blossomed, it was with flowers from the almond tree, just like the ones on the lampstand. So there may have been a connection between the staff, which represented the Levites, and the lampstand that gave light to the place where they served.” (*Preaching the Word: Exodus*, pg. 791)

III. The Function of the Lampstand

- A. “Then you shall make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it. Its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold.” (Exodus 25:37 - 38)
- B. Near the end of the 1800’s an invention changed the course of human history: Thomas Edison’s lightbulb. As modern people, we take for granted how accessible light is. We do not have to use oil lamps or rely on natural light sources to function during the night. The purpose of golden lampstand is simple: to provide light for the Tent of Meeting.
- C. “The Tabernacle [...] was a tent four layers thick. Its inner lining was made of fine linen, covered with cloth woven from goat’s hair. These two layers, in turn, were covered with ram skins. Imagine how dark it must have been underneath all these layers. There were no windows...” (*Preaching the Word: Exodus*, pg. 789)
 - 1. The Tent of Meeting was designed to be so thick that no outside light could get in. There would be heavy darkness inside the Tabernacle so the lampstand is essential. However, we should also remember that the thick covering of the Tabernacle was to prevent outside eyes from seeing the glory of God in the Holy of Holies. The thick walls of the Tabernacle were similar to the heavy veil that separated the temple in Jesus’ day.
- D. Last week when we studying the table that held the bread of the presence, I mentioned that the details provided in the Bible give weight to it being a literal piece of furniture in a historic narrative. I believe that the lampstand carries symbolic meaning but again including a lamp for the Tent of Meeting is a detail that would be included in a historic account.
- E. The light from the lampstand allowed for the priests to serve God in the Tent of Meeting. One commentator said, “God never leaves His people in the dark.” So it is that God provides where He guides. He equips us with what we need to serve Him.

IV. The Fulfillment of the Lampstand

- A. Everything in the Tabernacle carries symbolism. The Tabernacle is where God would meet and dwell with the Hebrews in the Wilderness. It is a physical reminder of God's presence with His people. Every time that a Hebrew felt afraid or forsaken by God all he had to do was look to the center of the camp and see the Tent of Meeting. God was with His people. The furniture of the Tabernacle depicts things about God's relationship with His people.
- B. As Christians we understand that Jesus is the ultimate Tabernacle. So the symbolism here should point us to Jesus as well.
- C. There are two general symbolisms in the golden lampstand that teach us about the Triune God of the Bible.
- D. Life
 1. Remember that the lampstand is fashioned in the shape of an almond tree. Trees symbolize life in general. As we saw, almond trees specifically represent life as well.
 - a) Consider that each branch on this tree contained buds, blossoms, and flowers. It depicted "the three life stages in the life cycle of a tree."
 - b) Not only does it depict life but perfect life. The lampstand is made of pure gold. It is perfect. Additionally there are seven branches on the lampstand. In the Jewish culture seven is the number of perfection.
 - c) The Bible begins with God making mankind in His image and tasking them with spreading the Garden of Eden into the wilderness. In the entire garden there are two specific plants that are mentioned. The Tree of Life and the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Adam and Eve sinned they were exiled from Eden so that they no longer could eat of the tree of life.
 - d) The bible never mentions the tree of life again, except for the book of Proverbs where it is used metaphorically, until the book of Revelation. In Revelation we see that God again gives access to the tree of life to His people. The entire Bible could be said to be set between the two trees. Eden and Heaven. God's desire is that we would live: abundantly and eternally in perfect life.
 2. The shape of the lampstand symbolizes life. But the light of the lamps also symbolizes life.
 - a) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "let there be light" ; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1 - 3)
 - (1) I believe that the Genesis account is describing a literal event: God's creation of the universe. But as modern people we should be careful not to read Genesis as a scientific explanation of the exact physical processes that God used in creation. That is not the way the book is written, it is not meant to be a science textbook. Rather it is meant to be read as a story that demonstrates spiritual truths.
 - (2) So we see that there is this void and darkness before God's creation. We cannot know what uncreation was like. How do you explain nothingness? How could you use words to articulate what was when there was no was? This void and darkness are meant to convey chaos and lack of life. When God creates He is bringing order and life to reality.
 - (3) How does He do this? By speaking creation into existence. "Let there be light."

(4)

- b) The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? (Psalm 27:1)
- c) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:1 - 5)
- d) Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." (John 8:12)
- e) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; (2 Corinthians 4:3 - 7)

E. Light

1. Holiness

- a) The Bible often uses the metaphor of light to describe holiness and purity. Thankfully we use this same metaphor in our culture so it is easy enough to understand. Light and darkness still represent good and evil.

2. Perfect Holiness

- a) The lampstand is made of one piece of pure gold.
- b) The lampstand has seven lamps. In the Jewish culture seven is the number of God, the number of perfection.
- c) God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are perfectly holy.
 - (1) God cannot lie.
 - (2) God cannot be tempted nor does He tempt others.
 - (3) God takes no delight in the death of the wicked but wants that they should turn and live.
- d) This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

F. Jesus is the Light of the World.

G. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14 - 16)

- 1. Notice that Jesus uses lamp stands as a picture of His followers. It seems to me that Jesus is possible that Jesus is thinking of the golden lampstand of the Tabernacle here.
 - a) In Revelation the seven churches are depicted as "seven golden lampstands" with Jesus standing in their midst.

- b) Where the golden lampstand was contained to the Tabernacle, the church is meant to light up the world. Jesus is the ultimate Tabernacle where God dwells with humanity. He is the ultimate Light of the World. Yet He has called us, commissioned us, and equipped us to shine His light as well.
2. What does it mean that we are the light of the world?
- a) We are to reflect the Light of Christ in our lives.
 - b) Remember that light in the Hebrew culture symbolizes life and holiness. Both of these aspects should be lived out in the Christian life.
 - (1) To be a lampstand for Jesus is to be a “life giver” or as Paul referred to it, “ambassadors of reconciliation.” We are to shine the light of the gospel of Jesus in our words, actions, and attitudes. We should be intentional about sharing the life that has been given to us with others.
 - (2) Additionally, we should be people of holiness. This does not mean we will be perfect. We will struggle with temptation and we must fight against our flesh, the world, and the devil. But we should be people who care deeply about honoring God in our lives. Obeying His commands, advancing His kingdom, and bearing His name well.

V. Conclusion and Application