

AUGUST 13th
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

"You shall make seven lamps for it. And the lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it. Its tongs and their trays shall be of pure gold. It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent of pure gold. And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain." **EXODUS 25:37-40**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. Glory to the newborn King. A great song that brings memories of God's blessing given to us...our salvation. But did you know that this song written by Charles Wesley wasn't originally given that title or that first line? Here's what Wesley wrote (according to hymncharts.com): "Hark How All the Welkin Rings." The opening line referenced the "welkin," an old English word for the sky or heavens, ringing with joyful praise for the newborn king. The hymn originally had ten verses and was modified to broaden its appeal to a wider audience. George Whitefield changed the first line to what we know today. Part of the third verse of today's version states, "Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all he brings...". This verse reminds us of the essential nature of light because it discards the darkness. And God gives the lampstands here to point toward God's light to cast out the darkness. Let's take a closer look to see what God is teaching us here in Exodus 25.

While the obvious note here is one of light, don't get ahead of yourself yet. Have you ever noticed the details of the lampstands? If you didn't notice them before, join the club...I hadn't either! But God is slowing us down here to show us something very significant. We don't quite have a good picture of what God is describing here, but the Jewish Menorah is probably as close as we get. However, a golden lampstand isn't all that we see. Phil Ryken is wise in pointing out in his commentary on Exodus words that we quickly miss here: "flowers and almond blossoms." What could God possibly be pointing to here? John Currid points out that the budding flowers signify life. He states this: "In one sense, then, the lampstand is a metaphor for the tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden. God gives life to his people." The perfection of the Garden and the lifegiving Tree of Life is being signified here with the golden lampstands. However, we know the tragic outcome of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve's sin caused them to be exiled from the Garden and forever banned from eating from the Tree of Life.

Darkness came when sin entered the picture. Humanity suffers because we rebel against God. The tabernacle is a picture that God gives us of our condition before a holy God. To remind us of our darkness Ryken points this out: "The tabernacle of God was a tent four layers thick...Imagine how dark it must have been underneath all these layers. There were no windows; so a priest entering the Holy Place of God was swallowed in darkness. No light could penetrate. It would have been utterly and completely black...". Can you picture it now? God then provides the light of the lampstands. It all sounds so similar... "God said, let there be light, and there was light." God makes light shine into our darkness. David describes the truth perfectly in Psalm 36:9: "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light." This all points to the light that is the Light of men. His name is Jesus. John makes sure to emphasize another truth statement that Jesus gives on His identity: "Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'" The lampstands remind us of Jesus who brings light to our dark world. No wonder the angels praised God...and we join them in praising our glorious Savior, the light of the world!

As men, we can't stop at praising Him...our praise continues by sharing that light with others. Isn't it amazing that our God, who never needs us, invites his saved saints to give the light to others? Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." How can we as men shine his light with the people that God has entrusted to us...our wives, our children, our coworkers, our neighbors, and our friends? Let's be bright light to others around us today!

Spend some time thinking about God's Light that He's given us. Thank Him for giving Jesus to give us exactly what we need. Ask Him for wisdom to share God's Light with others today.

For Further Reading: Revelation 22:1-21