

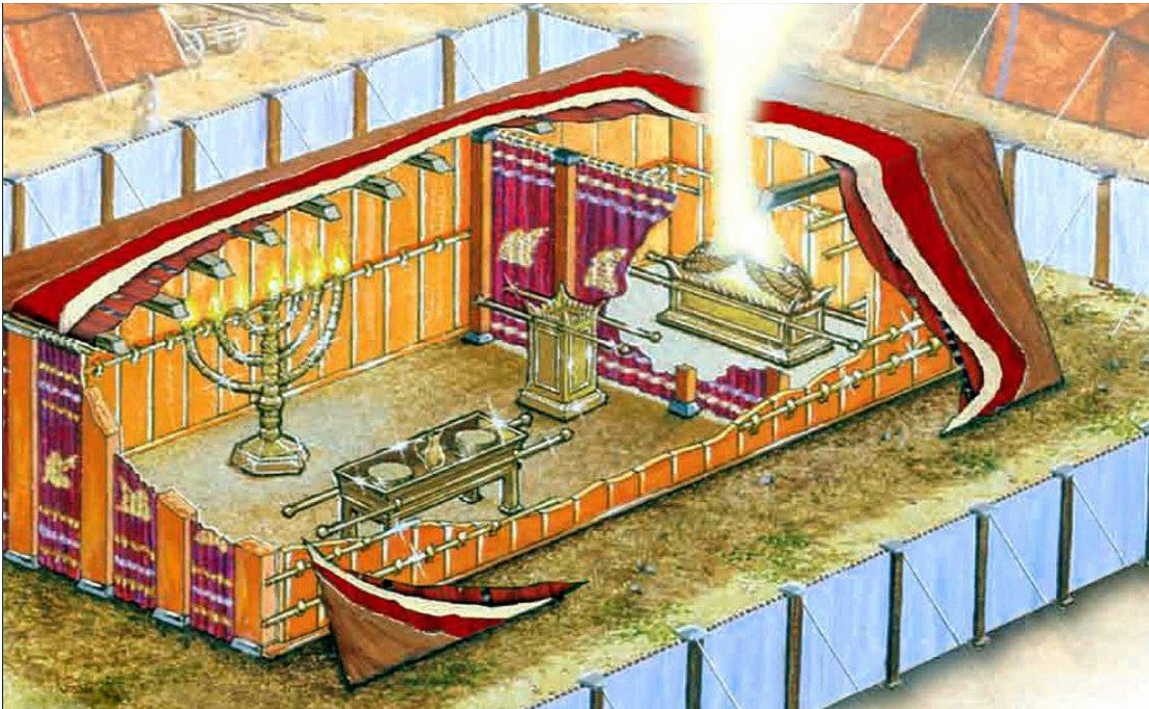


THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

Chapters 24 – 25

> Chapter 24 – “LIGHT, LIFE & JUSTICE”

(v1-4) This was a seven-branched LAMPSTAND of pure gold and stood in the midst of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-40). Solomon made ten similar lampstands for the Temple (1 Kings 7:49). Lamps burned olive oil.



Each morning and evening, when the high priest burned incense on the golden altar, he was to care for the lights on the lampstand to make sure they would continue to burn. Special golden instruments were provided for pulling up the wicks from the oil and trimming them.

The commandment in Lev 24:1-4 emphasized two essentials:

- (1) the people of Israel had to provide the olive oil regularly, and
- (2) it had to be beaten and pure (Ex 27:20-21).

There was a method of extracting olive oil by heat, but beating or crushing the olives and straining out the impurities produced the best olive oil. And the God of Israel deserves the very best.

What does the tabernacle lampstand signify? The golden lampstand first of all symbolizes the Word of God, the light that God gives us in this dark world.

Psalm 119:105 - *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

Psalm 119:130 - *The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

2 Peter 1:19-21 - *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

The unconverted can't see or understand the light of the Word of God because they lack the ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:9-16). Nobody outside the holy place could see the light from the golden lampstand, but those within appreciated its light.

Apart from the light of the Word, God's servants can't see where they are or what they're doing, nor can they serve God effectively. The lampstand gave light so the priest could burn the incense on the golden altar, and apart from the Scriptures, we can't pray effectively (Ps 141:1-2; John 15:5; Acts 6:4). The light from the lampstand illuminated the beautiful hangings in the holy place and also revealed the bread on the golden table. The illuminating ministry of the Spirit of God makes the things of God real and clear to us. (from The Bible Exposition Commentary)



- In John 8:12 - *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

- Christians are to keep our lamps burning! - PERSONALLY - Matthew 5:14-16 - *"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they 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 so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

- As a CHURCH – Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 (the seven churches); and we are to be RAPTURE READY – Matthew Ch. 25:1-13.

(v5-9) SHEWBREAD – Was holy or consecrated bread placed in the sanctuary of the tabernacle or Temple every Sabbath to symbolize God's presence and His provision for His people. This ritual always involved 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. It was called *shewbread* (Ex25:30), which can be translated "*bread of presence.*" God was present with His people and they were in His presence in the tabernacle.

- When Jesus came on the scene He said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever;*

and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." (John 6:51)

- Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:11 - *Give us this day our daily bread.*

(v10-16) **The penalty for BLASPHEMY** – Blasphemy was a violation of the Third Commandment, which required that the name and reputation of the Lord be upheld (Exodus 20:7 - *"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain"*)

Let's examine the situation, this family was unequally yoked, a Jewish woman married to an Egyptian man, as their son gets into a fight with a man of Israel he blasphemed the name of the LORD and cursed. The people heard it, brought the son to Moses, they sought the LORD for judgment and God required him to be stoned to death. Why? Remember God had recently delivered them from Egypt and destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, whereas possibly this person was a traitor and hater of the God of Israel, otherwise he would not have blasphemed and cursed the God of Israel. Thus, the witnesses lay their hands on his head as a form of testimony and identification, thus the verdict, which was to stone him to death. The people transferred the guilt of them all to him. Usually the witnesses would begin the stoning process.

(v17-23) Observe the simple judicial process for various crimes. (No lawyer fees.)

> **CHAPTER 25 – "THE LAW OF THE LAND"**

(v1-7) **THE SABBATH YEAR** - The Israelites were to work the land for six years, then let the land rest for the seventh year. During the Sabbath year (7th year) the land would produce on its' own and all people were allowed to partake of it.

Not only did the land rest, but also the people and the farm animals rested. The men certainly took care of the routine tasks that keep buildings from falling down, but they were not to engage in the normal activities of an agricultural society, like plowing, sowing, and harvesting. This prohibition also included the servants and the animals, all of whom were given a year of rest from their normal duties.

- Warren Wiersbe writes, "We have no biblical evidence that the Jews ever celebrated the Sabbath Year, in fact, the Bible indicates that they

didn't: *"To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years"* (2 Chron 36:21). God sent Israel into Babylonian exile for seventy years in order to give the land the rest it needed (Jer 25:8-11; 29:10). This suggests that for nearly 500 years, the Jews had disobeyed God's law concerning the Sabbath Year.

It's a basic principle of life that whatever we rob from God, we can never keep and enjoy ourselves. In my pastoral ministry, I've met people who robbed God of tithes and offerings, only to end up paying extra money for medical bills or car repairs. I recall one church member bringing his family budget book to my office, just to show me how God had begun to bless him when he stopped robbing the Lord. His figures showed that every dollar he took from God had to be spent on some emergency need, and he never got to use that money himself. Leviticus 25:1-7

By disobeying the law of the Sabbath Year, the Jews robbed themselves not only of spiritual blessings but also of the strength of the land and of their servants and farm animals. By working the same land, year after year, they got their harvests, but they lost the renewal that comes from allowing the land to lie fallow and the workers to rest."

(v8-55) **THE YEAR OF JUBILEE** - (*blowing the trumpet*) - the 50th year after seven cycles of seven years, when specific instructions about property and slavery took effect (Leviticus 25:8-55). The word jubilee comes from the Hebrew *yobel*, which means to be "jubilant" and to "exult." The word is related to the Hebrew word for ram's horn or trumpet. The Jubilee year was launched with a blast from a ram's horn on the Day of Atonement, signifying a call to joy, liberation, and the beginning of a year for "doing justice" and "loving mercy." The 50th year was a special year in which to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land" (Leviticus 25:10). Specifically, individuals who had incurred debts and had sold themselves as slaves or servants to others were released from their debts and were set at liberty. Since all land belonged to God (Leviticus 25:23), land could not be sold; but land could be lost to another for reasons of debt. In the Year of Jubilee such land was returned to the families to whom it was originally given. Like the **SABBATICAL YEARS**, the Year of Jubilee was a year for neither sowing nor reaping (Leviticus 25:11). The 50th year became important in Israel's economic life. If anyone wished to redeem a person in debt, the price for doing so was calculated on the basis of the number of years remaining until the Jubilee. Part of the reason why God established the Jubilee Year was to prevent the Israelites from oppressing one another

(Leviticus 25:17). One effect of the Jubilee Year was to prevent a permanent system of classes. The Jubilee Year had a leveling effect on Israel's culture; it gave everyone a chance to start over, economically and socially. The Jubilee Year reminds one of God's interest in liberty; God wants people to be free (Luke 4:18-19). It also stands as a witness to God's desire for justice on earth and calls into question any social practices that lead to permanent bondage and loss of economic opportunity. One may also see God's provision for the land's conservation in the call for the land to rest (Leviticus 25:11,18-22). The people were not to extract the earth's resources in a greedy manner. The sabbatical year and presumably the Year of Jubilee were also characterized by instruction in the Law (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). In this way the people learned that God's demand to love and obey Him was directly related to his concern for the welfare of all the people of Israel.

(From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)