

The Tabernacle

The Introduction To The Candlestick - Part 1

Introduction

The Historical Setting Of The Israelis

- 1) Early in Israel's days of liberation from Egypt (Ex. 12:37), God commanded His people to build Him a sanctuary (Ex. 25:8) in which He would dwell. When I have the responsibility to speak to children about the Tabernacle I tell them it was the time when God went camping. Compared to the average tent in which the ancients nomads lived, it was a considerable size, being approximately 45 feet long, 10 feet high, and from what we can gather 10 feet wide.
- 2) This large tent was in the midst of the Israeli encampment, and while the tent itself was divided into two sections, there was surrounding it a courtyard which was approximately ninety feet by forty-five feet. The forward section of the tent was called the "Holy Place" and the back section was the "most holy" (Ex. 26:33), or the "Holiest of all" (Heb. 9:3), or at times called the "Holy of Holies" as in the NASB; NAS 1977; ERV.
- 3) Within the front section, called "the first tabernacle" (Heb. 9:2), there were three pieces of furniture, a table, an altar of incense, and the candlestick (Ex. 25:31-40). The term "candlestick" has two meanings depending on context. At times it refers to the central shaft and at other times it indicates the entire piece of furniture, that is the central shaft and the six branches jutting from it.
- 4) It may be thought that the Tabernacle and its furnishings were little other than an ancient sanctuary and of little real spiritual importance. To counteract such an idea the Holy Spirit had the writer to the Hebrews show emphatically the relationship between this ancient structure, furniture and rituals with the spiritual realities. In Hebrews nine there is particular attention drawn to the furnishings and the Mercy Seat, Ark and Golden pot (which was intimately connected to the golden altar of incense) as having a particular importance. Therefore, the study of the tabernacle is not simply the consideration of an ancient building but it is God's pictorial object lesson.
- 5) Furthermore, since all scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable (2 Tim. 3:16), that in itself teaches that the consideration of the Tabernacle and its furnishings is to be a blessing.
- 6) When considering the Candlestick it needs to be understood that it was a lamp stand, for its means of giving light was from the burning of olive oil and not wax, as candles had not yet been invented.

It's Placement

- 1) While I have said it was in the forepart of the structure, Moses was not permitted to put it where he wanted, nor could it be moved as one might do in the rearranging of one's home. God decreed where it was to be put.
 - a) It was inside the Holy place (Ex. 40:4)
 - b) It was outside the Vail (Ex. 26:3; 27:20-21) (cp. Ex. 40:3)
 - c) It was inside the door (cp. Ex. 40:5)
 - d) It was on the opposite side to the Table (Ex. 26:35; 40:24; Heb. 9:2)
 - e) It was on the south side (Ex. 26:35)

Interesting Features Of The Candlestick

- 1) In connection with other pieces of furniture:
 - a) The candlestick and Mercy Seat were the only two pieces of furniture constructed completely of pure gold. This is given in the instructions God gave to Moses (Ex. 25:17; 31).
 - b) Only the candlestick and laver were given without measurements.

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- 2) Features exclusive to the candlestick:
 - a) It is the only piece of furniture of which we are given the weight of it and the instruments connected with it: "Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels" (Ex. 25:39; 37:24). A talent of gold was approximately 131 pounds Troy which today would be worth approximately \$17,634 USD.
 - b) It was the only piece of furniture we were told how it was made. It was beaten. The work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, the shaft, and the flowers (Num. 8:4; Ex. 25:31, 36: 37:17, 22).
 - c) It was the only piece of furniture with the likeness of any created life on it.

The Transportation

- 1) Who was responsible for the transportation of the Candlestick?
 - a) And their (The Kohathites) charge shall be the ark, and the table, and candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof. (Num. 3:30-31)
- 2) How was it to be transported?
 - a) "And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it" (Num. 4:9). This was then covered with badger skins (Num. 4:10). Finally, there would appear to be some sort of a bag which was suspended from a bar in much the same way as the grapes of Eshcol were conveyed (Num. 13:23-24).

That Which The Candlestick Was A Shadow Of

When God gave His design for an article of furniture, it was never to fill in space, but always had a significance, and the candlestick was no different. It was a light bearer and so shadows and foreshadows a number of matters.

- 1) The word of God which is a Light and a Lamp (Psa. 119:111)
- 2) The churches:
 - a) I do not think we can apply Philippians 2:15 where saints are seen as the light in the world, for the candlestick only gave light within the Holy Place. But in Revelation the assemblies are seen as seven independent candlesticks, all answerable to the Lord (Rev. 1:11-20).
- 3) God and the Father:
 - a) He is the Father of lights (Jam. 1:17) and God uses "light" to manifest some of His features:
 - i) His character:
 1. God is Light. Having written that, the inspired apostle also wrote: "in Him there is no darkness," and as if that is not enough he also wrote: "at all". What a statement: "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). Being the Light God is intensely Holy, and consequently is beautiful. There is nothing beautiful in sin, it is a manifestation of disfigurement of the Adamic nature and the "sin within". The expression, "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" occurs three times in the Scriptures (1 Chron. 16:29; Psa. 29:2; 96:9), and the expression, "Praise the beauty of holiness" once (2 Chron. 20:21).
 - ii) His favour:
 1. "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us" (Psa. 4:6)
 - iii) His commandments:
 1. "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles" (Psa. 43:3)

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- iv) His manifestation in the Millennium:
 - 1. “The city had no need of the sun, neither the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23)
 - v) His judicial and governmental activity:
 - 1. Before the Throne the 7 lamps of fire indicating that this Throne knows nothing of covertness or putting a spin on a matter (Rev. 4:5).
 - vi) The state in which He dwells:
 - 1. “Called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9)
 - vii) In the consideration of God as Light. It is noticeable that this is a truth in the Old and New Testaments.
 - 1. “The Lord is my Light” (Psa. 27:1)
 - 2. “The Father of Lights” (Jam. 1:17)
 - 3. “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5)
 - viii) Since the candlestick was made of gold, which signifies “glory” (compare the cherubim, in Exodus they are said to be gold, Ex. 25:18; 37:7; but in Hebrews 9:5 the gold indicates glory), thus there is combined with the truth of God as light the truth of the glory of God. He is:
 - 1. “The God of glory” (Psa. 29:3; Acts 7:2)
 - 2. “The Father of glory” (Eph. 1:17)
- 4) The Son:
- a) Christ as the Light is a theme John dwells much on, mentioning the word “Light” 16 times in his gospel; 5 times in his first epistle; and 6 times in the Revelation. Some of the glorious truths are:
 - i) “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1:4)
 - ii) “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (Jn. 1:5)
 - iii) “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John . . . came to bear witness of the Light” (Jn. 1:6-7)
 - iv) “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (Jn. 1:9)
 - v) “Then spake Jesus . . . saying, I am the light of the world” (Jn. 8:12; 9:5); “The Light of men” (Jn. 1:4); “A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” (Lk. 2:32; Acts 26:23); a “Light to them that sit in darkness” (Lk. 1:78-79). The expression, “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” refers to the apostles (Acts 13:47).
- 5) The believer:
- a) Since gold speaks of glory it is not surprising to read of saints “rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2), that is, they are in the condition to share His glory. In another letter he fills in a little more revealing that the saints shall, “appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:4), then to be presented faultless to the Father in the presence of His glory (Jude 24).
- 6) Two witnesses:
- a) Rev. 11:3-4. The background of the two witnesses is Zech. 4:1-14, and when dealing with these two men it is important to understand that there are at least three avenues by which this passage can be considered. Those three avenues are:
 - i) Prophetically
 - ii) Historically
 - iii) Practically

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- b) At this juncture of Israel's history things were looking exceedingly dark spiritually and militarily, and with it came depression. True they were back from Babylon but there were the political threatenings from Egypt, and after many years the temple partially finished, the people began to wonder when anything would ever be done. Upon seeing the vision (Zech. 4:2-4), God reminds Zechariah of the words he had spoken to Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). In the vision the two olive branches, by means of the golden pipes, empty oil out of themselves, and that they are "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14).
 - c) Zerubbabel had laid the foundation for the house (Zech. 4:9) and he would also finish it (Zech. 4:9). Some had been despising the day of small things, God encourages the people to look and see brighter days ahead, for God was with them. The two anointed ones are presented in three ways:
 - i) As witnesses: They would bear witness to the faithfulness of God and exceeding dark days
 - ii) As olive trees: They would be sustained by the spirit of God
 - iii) As lampstands: They would shine forth the truth of God
 - d) Prophetically the passage points onward to the days of the great tribulation when two more witnesses will be the principal spokesmen for God for 1260 days (Rev. 11:3). This duration indicates to me that this was not the first part of Daniel's 70th week but the latter part of it. It will be then that the beast's ruling supreme, Satan has been cast out of heaven, believers are being beheaded and slaughtered across the world, and everyone to buy or sell must have the mark of the beast. This is the great tribulation during which time God will have two men standing before Him, who is the God of the earth (Rev. 11:4), and by their truthfulness and fidelity to God they will torment the people of the earth (Rev. 11:10).
 - e) As Lamps they shed light on the sins of the people and the falsehood of the Beast, False Prophet and by their straight forward talk and miracles consciences will be pricked so that they are spoken of as tormenting the people (Rev. 11:10).
- 7) Israel:
- a) "And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof" (Zech. 4:2).
 - b) "Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof" (Zech. 4:11).
- 8) Of knowledge:
- a) "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him" (Dan. 5:11)
 - b) "I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee" (Dan. 5:14)
- 9) Of Hope:
- a) "And unto his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant will have a light always before me in Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 21:17; 1 Kgs. 11:36; 2 Kgs. 8:19)
- 10) Divine Guidance:
- a) "And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Ex. 10:22-23; 13:21; Prov. 4:18)

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The Construction of the Candlestick

- 1) “And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the candlestick” (Num. 8:4)
- 2) “For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the Shewbread; which is called the sanctuary” (Heb. 9:2)
- 3) The whole candlestick was made of one solid piece of gold.
 - a) It is called pure gold (Ex. 25:31)
 - b) It is called “the pure candlestick” without the word gold (Ex. 31:8)
 - c) It was not moulded, neither was it made in parts, but was a single piece of gold. It was not joined to the central shaft it was not an artificial apparent union; it was a vital union, thus indicating, the thought of likeness and the organic union between Christ and His church.

The Maintenance of the Candlestick

- 1) By Whom?
 - a) By Aaron and the Priests:
 - i) “And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD” (Ex. 27:20-21).
 - ii) (Ex. 30:7-8; 40:25; Num. 8:2, 3; Lev. 24:2-4) Putting these scriptures together we discover that they had a threefold responsibility to initially light the lights, dress or trim them in the morning, and light them in the evening. Those lights must never be allowed to go out while the Tabernacle was stationary, but when in transit, it was covered with clothes, etc., and then the lights were put out.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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