

Lesson 5: The Menorah/Lampstand

Read: Exodus 25:31-40

After washing their hands and feet at the laver, the priests could enter the Holy Place, which was the first room in the tent of the tabernacle. There were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place: the menorah, the table of showbread and the golden altar of incense.

The menorah, also called the “golden lampstand” or “candlestick,” stood at the left side of the Holy Place. It was hammered out of one piece of pure gold. Like for the laver, there were no specific instructions about the size of the menorah, but the fact that it was fashioned out of one piece of pure gold would have limited its size.

The lampstand had a central branch from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Seven lamps holding olive oil and wicks stood on top of the branches. Each branch looked like that of an almond tree, containing buds, blossoms and flowers.

Discussion:

1. What was the basic function of the lampstand?

The lampstand’s function was to light up the Holy Place. Without it, the priests would have been moping around in the dark. The light shone upon the table of showbread and the altar of incense, enabling the priests to fellowship with God and intercede on behalf of God’s people.

2. Read Leviticus 24:1-3. What did God command the priests to do regarding the lamps?

The priests were instructed to keep the lamps burning continuously. There would always be light in the Holy Place.

3. Read John 1:9, 8:12 and 12:46. What is Jesus described as? How is the lampstand a picture of Christ?

Jesus is described as the true light, the light of the world, the light that gives life. Just as the lampstand was placed in God’s dwelling place so that the priests could see their way into the Holy Place and approach God, Jesus came into the world so that man could see God and not live in spiritual darkness anymore.

4. What is the significance of the lampstand’s one main branch and six sub-branches? (Ref. John 15:5, Ephesians 5:8, Matthew 5:14-16)

The branches serve as a picture of Jesus’ description of our relationship with him: “I am the vine, you are the branches ... apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Jesus is represented by the main branch of the lampstand, and we as

believers are represented by the six branches that extend from original branch. Having believed and come into His light, we are now living as “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8) who draw our source of light from Jesus, the true light. Jesus calls us “light of the world” and commands us to “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14, 16).

5. What was the significance of God’s commandment to the priests to keep the lamp burning continuously in the context of the last two questions?

The continuous burning of the lamp implied God’s continued presence with Israel. The priests were charged with the duty of keeping the wicks trimmed, the oil filled and the lamp burning before the Lord so that they could always see inside the tabernacle and minister before the Lord. In the same way, we are to keep standing firm in the light of God’s truth and keep our wicks trimmed and oil filled, prepared to serve God and shine as witnesses for Christ.

6. We will look at two other aspects of the lampstand. How does Jesus fulfill these aspects of the lampstand: it was made entirely of pure gold (not gold plated); it had seven branches?

Pure gold is a representation of the deity of Jesus Christ. He was pure and perfect, with no corruption. Seven is the number of completeness in the Bible. Jesus makes those who believe in Him complete.