

## UNIT 48: THE CANDALABRA (Exodus 25:31-40; 37:17-24)

The same approach may be taken with the section on the lampstand (*menorah*). Clearly the point here is to provide light in the Tent for access to the LORD; but the way that this was constructed signified far more than a light-bearer.

God wanted His worshippers to provide light for the lamp (olive oil, trimming the wicks, etc., to ensure the light continues), but it is God who places the lampstand in their midst. In the New Testament the image of the lampstand remains. See the letters to the seven churches in Revelation for this important image.

Verse 31-36 describe the basic piece. There was one central shaft, resting on feet, with three branches turned out and upwards. The stem and branches were ornamented by gold, which was formed into the shape of the calyx and corolla of the almond-flower every so often on the branches. All of it was a talent of gold, or 75-96 pounds.

On the central shaft and the six branches of the lampstand were seven oil lamps (verse 37). These lamps (*nerot*) were then to be lit so that they would give light in front of it, or straight forward (as the oil lamp points out with the wick).

To assist in the maintenance of the lamps there was to be a preparation of tongs and censers (verses 38, 39).

Verse 40 is a summation of the parts made so far. Here God reminds them to make these things according to the pattern shown on the mountain.

In expounding this we would surely say it refers to light which shows the way of access to God, or ***God provides the light of life to illumine the way to His presence.*** But being that it is in an instruction section, we must modify our exposition to say something like ***God requires that His people ensure that the light will guide the way to the access to God.*** Naturally, the metaphorical significance of light will come to the fore in the New Testament. Light in the Bible

can mean knowledge, illumination, holiness, joy, life, and a couple of other related ideas. Here it certainly has at its central meaning the illumination of the way. And, as people are preparing places of worship which may on occasion use candles, or preparing to worship, this meaning should be uppermost in their thinking. The light represents the way to God; the light represents the church, or the ministry, that enables people to come to God. If they are unfaithful (shall we say not walking in the light), God will remove the “lampstand” from them. And the symbolism of these lights in Israel includes using olive oil, which comes to signify the Holy Spirit’s enablement.

We could treat this in sections as well: God's instructions for preparing light (one lamp, many branches) (vv. 31-36); the purpose and maintenance of the light (37-39), and the divine source of the instructions (v. 40). Each of these sections would have to be worded to capture the timeless truth, or the theological message—otherwise the application will have to be how to make a lampstand. You could say these in forms like this: 1. The light of life illumines the way to God (light for the lamps, and life for the fact that the whole thing is a blossoming, living tree made out of gold). 2. The people of God must ensure that the power of God provides the light for the way (the meaning of oil, and the work of preparing and trimming). 3. The ministry of illumination is the command of God.