

UNIT 53: THE OFFERING OF THE OIL (Exodus 27:20-21)

The section on the instructions for the tabernacle closes with the command for the people to bring pure olive oil for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually (20). Once it was brought, the priests would arrange it from evening to morning before the LORD (21). This is to be a continuing statute for Israel.

This little section lends itself to exposition rather nicely. The first part tells of the people's part in providing light—they bring the oil; and the second part tells how the spiritual leaders take their offerings and implement them so that the light continues to shine. *Those who lead the worship use the offerings of the people to ensure that access to God is illumined.* You can play with the words, or rearrange the ideas, but the message should come out the same. It will be based on the concept of light in the Old and New Testaments. You will have to show that light in the tabernacle was both practical and symbolical. (Show how the prophets used light, or the Lampstand and the oil itself). Oil symbolized the Spirit's provision so that the truth could be revealed. In the New Testament, the spiritual gifts of the people are to be channeled and used in the ministry of the truth by the appointed leaders. These ideas appear in Leviticus 24:2, 3 as well. Beaten oil was obtained by pounding olives in a mortar. The pulp was poured into a rush basket which acted as a strainer, allowing the liquid to run into a vessel below. The oil that would float to the top was skimmed off for the lamps. Other types of oil were obtained from the pulp.

In the early and traditional Christian service the bread and wine were gifts brought by the people. This passage with the verb "arrange" was used in the service: "When the priest hath so ordered the bread and wine." The idea fits the passage well, but is only one way it finds application in worship.