

Title: **THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK**

Text: Exodus 25:31-40

Subject: *The Spiritual Significance of The
Tabernacle's Golden Candlestick*

Date: Tuesday Evening — December 23, 2008

Tape: Exodus #88

Readings: *Bobbie Estes and David Burge
Zechariah 3:1-4:14 & Revelation 1:10-20*

Introduction:

Our text will be Exodus 25:31-40. Let's read it together.

(Exodus 25:31-40) “And thou shalt make a candlestick *of* pure gold: *of* beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. (32) And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: (33) Three bowls made like unto almonds, *with* a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, *with* a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. (34) And in the candlestick *shall be* four bowls made like unto almonds, *with* their knops and their flowers. (35) And *there shall be* a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. (36) Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it *shall be* one beaten work *of* pure gold. (37) And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. (38) And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, *shall be of* pure gold. (39) *Of* a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. (40) And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.”

I want, so very much, for you to see and see clearly that the tabernacle and its furnishings, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the ceremonies, the sabbaths, the holy days, and the events of the Old Testament were all types and pictures of heavenly things by divine design. They were all intended for that purpose, to portray Christ and God's salvation in him. When I assert, without hesitancy, that all these carnal things were pictures of spiritual

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

things, specifically, that they were types of Christ and the gospel of God's free grace in him, I am not just pulling these things out of the air. Read a portion of Hebrews 9 with me. Here, in Hebrews 9:1-12, the Apostle Paul is speaking specifically of the tabernacle in the wilderness, its furnishings, and the sacrifices offered upon God's altar at the tabernacle.

(Hebrews 9:1-12) “Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. (2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. (3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; (4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. (6) Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*. (7) But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: (8) The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: (9) Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; (10) Which *stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. (11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

In verse 23 we are told that these carnal things were “*patterns of things in the heavens*.” In chapter ten (v. 1) we read that they were “*a shadow of good things to come*.” That is exactly what we read about these things in Exodus 25:40.

(Exodus 25:40) “And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount.”

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Try to get a picture of the tabernacle in your mind's eye. As you approach it, the very first thing that strikes your eye is the **brazen altar**, the place of sacrifice. Between that brazen altar and the door of the tabernacle stands the **laver of brass**, the place of cleansing.

Then, if you **pull back the curtain**, you enter the outer court of the tabernacle, "*which is called the sanctuary.*" In the sanctuary (the holy place), there were three pieces of furniture. On your right is the **golden table of showbread**, with twelve loaves of bread and incense on it. In the back, just before you get to the veil separating the sanctuary from the "Holiest of all," is the **golden altar of incense**. On the left side is the **golden candlestick**, a candelabra with seven candles burning constantly.

Then, if you could go with Aaron behind the veil on the day of atonement into **the inner sanctuary**, "*which is called the Holiest of all,*" you would see just one piece of furniture, the center of Israel's worship, **the ark of the covenant**, overlaid with pure gold. Inside the ark is a golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of God's broken law. Over the ark, completely covering it, is the **mercy-seat**, the place of atonement, symbolizing the very throne of God, the throne of grace. At each end of the mercy-seat are **cherubs** facing one another, looking constantly upon the mercy-seat. This is where God declares he will meet with and commune with men (Exodus 25:22).

(Exodus 25:22) "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

- This is what Isaiah saw in his vision (Isaiah 6:1-8).
- This is what Ezekiel saw in his vision of the wheels of providence (Ezekiel 1-10).
- This is what Daniel saw (Daniel 7:9-14)
- This is what John saw (Revelation 4:1-5:14).

Exodus 25:31-40 describes just one of the three pieces of furniture in the outer court of the sanctuary — **THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK**. In Leviticus 24, we have a few additional instructions about the candlestick and its seven lamps.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

(Leviticus 24:1-4) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. (3) Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations. (4) He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually.”

Proposition: We do not have to guess what this candlestick represents. The Holy Spirit specifically tells us that this candlestick represents the church of God in this world (Revelation 1:20). — More particularly, it represents the Lord Jesus Christ the Light of the world in glory (John 8:12; 9:5) and his mystical body the church, which is the light of the world on earth (Matthew 5:14).

THE OIL

God required the children of Israel to bring pure olive oil for the candlestick (Leviticus 1-2).

(Leviticus 24:1-2) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.”

The Lord God required the children of Israel to bring the oil from the olives of their own olive trees to the priests, to be burned in the candlestick. It had to be “*pure*,” the very best, undiluted, and clear. It must be oil “*beaten*” from the olive, prepared with the greatest of care. **I cannot elaborate upon them, but there are at least four very important lessons here.**

1. The oil, of course, represents God the Holy Spirit and the grace he gives.
2. True worship always involves personal cost. (Time — Effort — Money). — There is no such thing as worship without sacrifice (2 Samuel 25:24).
3. In all things, we are to bring our best to our God.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

4. Our great and gracious God would have us worship him in the full assurance of acceptance with him by Christ.

By requiring the children of Israel to bring the oil used by the priests to be burned in the candlestick, the Lord gave them assurance of acceptance. Accepting their oil, he said, “I have accepted you.” By this seemingly insignificant gesture, he was saying to his people, “This candlestick and the light it gives burns for you. Though you are not in the holy place personally, you are there representatively in your priest; and all that goes on in that holy place, all the transactions of the sanctuary are for you. You have an interest in them.”

(Hebrews 10:16-22) “This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (17) And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (18) Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. (19) Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) And *having* an high priest over the house of God; (22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

THE LAMPS

Next, I want you to see the significance of the lamps and the candlestick. — “*Make it a Candlestick of Pure Gold,*” — “*The Pure Candlestick*” (Exodus 25:31, 37; Leviticus 24:4). This pure candlestick was made of pure gold. **It had seven lamps at the ends of seven branches, upheld by one shaft.** As such, it was typical of God’s church in this world, upheld by Christ (the shaft of gold), being constantly supplied with light, life and grace by the Holy Spirit. Put this together with John’s vision, and we see that...

- Christ upholds and sustains his church in all its branches (The number seven suggests the fulness and completion of the church.), each true gospel church being represented in the seven branches of the candlestick.
- The Holy Spirit indwells his church (each individual believer and each local assembly). — “*An habitation of God through the Spirit.*”

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

- Christ not only dwells in his church by the Spirit and upholds it he walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, protecting both his church and the angels of the churches.

These lamps were to be kept burning continually (Leviticus 24:4). That does not mean that they were never allowed to go out. They were. The priests did not keep them burning when they were moving from place to place in the wilderness, but only when they were encamped in a specific place for a time.

The lamps were trimmed, filled with oil, and lit every morning. They burned until nightfall. In the evening they were trimmed, filled with oil, and lit again, and burned until the next morning. You may recall that the Lord first called Samuel after he and Eli had laid down in their beds, “*before the lamp of God went out in the temple*” (1 Samuel 3:3).

1. The lamps were **kept burning continually** to tell us that the grace of God and the supply of it to our souls is constant, both in the day when the sun shines brightly and in the night when our vision is dim. Our experience does not, in any way, affect or alter God’s goodness!
2. The lamps were **permitted to go out** to teach us our unceasing need of the light and grace of God’s Spirit, and to keep us ever mindful of the fact that all light and grace bestowed upon us comes through the Sanctuary work (intercession) of our great Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our great Aaron orders the light and the candlestick before the Lord continually, from evening until morning (Leviticus 24:3-4).
3. The lamps were **kept burning all through the day** to teach that something more than the light of nature is needed to lead us out of this wilderness to the throne of God.
4. Now, watch this — **The candlestick was kept burning throughout the night, until the dawning of the new day**, to teach us that the church of God in this world of darkness gives light and shall continue to give light, be it ever so dim or bright, until the Daystar, Christ Jesus, comes.

- **In Conversion** (2 Peter 1:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

(2 Peter 1:16-20) “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (17) For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (18) And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. (19) We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: (20) Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”

(2 Corinthians 4:4-6) “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

- **At the Second Coming** (Revelation 2:28; 22:16)

THE LIGHT IN THE LAMPS

Let’s take a careful look at this pure candlestick, as it is stood in the tabernacle. It would be too big a task to try to cover all that the Scriptures reveal about this candelabra in one message. So we will just focus upon the obvious.

This candlestick stands not in the most holy place (which refers to heaven itself), but in the sanctuary (which refers to heavenly things enjoyed on earth). Our Lord Jesus Christ, our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, uses this candlestick to speak of himself and his churches in this world (Revelation 1:20). So it is clearly his intention that we should see it in this sense.

1. **The seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God are the sevenfold Spirit of our God** (Revelation 4:1-5).

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

(Revelation 4:1-5) “After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. (2) And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. (3) And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. (4) And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. (5) And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

The shaft, as we have seen speaks of Christ. The seven lamps, we are told in Revelation 1:20, represent the church. But here, in Revelation 4, we are told that they represent the seven Spirits, or sevenfold Spirit, of our God. There is no contradiction here, but a delightful, instructive picture.

Christ is the Candlestick. He upholds the lamps, his church and each member of it. Without him, we would all fall and come to utter ruin in a heartbeat (John 10:28-30; Jude 24-25). The light we have, the oil of grace we enjoy is ours because we are in him and one with him.

Now, here is a great, marvelous and wonderful thing. – The Lord Jesus gives light, life and grace in this world by his Spirit; but he does so through the instrumentality of his church, using such things as we are to carry the light of his grace and glory into the corners of this dark, dark world.

2. **The olive oil feeding the flame is God the Holy Spirit.**

He is the unction, the anointing in and upon us, giving us light and knowledge and understanding (1 John 2:20-27). And he is given to us by Christ, by the merit, mediation and power of our Savior (Revelation 3:1). All the light shining from the lamp comes from the oil. All grace is the gift and operation of God the Holy Spirit. And Christ pours out his Spirit upon us by the merit of his sacrifice (Galatians 3:13-14) continually, as the priest poured oil into the lamp in the tabernacle. He gives us his oil in the day and in the night. **The care of the lamps is all his!**

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

- He upholds them.
 - He feeds them with oil.
 - He lights them and keeps them burning.
 - He trims them.
 - He carries away the ashes.
3. **The priest setting the lamps in order daily portrays our great Savior's unceasing work of grace causing his people to receive and give forth light.**

You and I are the representatives of Christ himself, who shined as light in the midst of darkness (Philippians 2:15; Matthew 5:16).

(Matthew 5:16) “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

(Philippians 2:15) “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

May he cause us each to be, like John the Baptist, burning and shining lights all the rest of our lives.

- Shining Clearly — That requires trimming!
- Shining Constantly — That requires a constant supply of oil.
- Shining Calmly — That requires constant grace.
- Shining on Christ!

The candlestick shined only upon the golden table of showbread and the golden altar. It shined to give light only upon those two things. The bread on the table speaks of Christ, the Bread of Life, who gave his life for us. The golden altar of incense speaks of Christ exalted and accepted, and of our full, complete salvation in him. Let us shine forth the light of the gospel, pointing the eyes of needy souls to him who alone is salvation and life!

Illustration: *A Lighthouse*

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Oh, may God give us grace to constantly hold before men the light of the gospel and the adorable name of Christ. We must never cover the light with...

- Religious Ceremony.
- Carnal Reason.
- Historic Traditions and Customs.
- Oratorical Eloquence.

Let it be ours ever to hold forth that Word of life, not to set up new lights, or to defend old ones, but to faithfully proclaim the gospel of God's boundless free grace in Christ. And let the light of our lamp be the light of the pure candlestick — PURE, FREE GRACE!

4. **There is a blessed unity about this candlestick and its lamps.**

- **The candlestick is one.**

(Ephesians 4:1-7) “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (5) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all. (7) But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

- **The light of each lamp is exactly the same.** The oil was pure, without mixture. The gospel is all grace. There is not a sputter of works or free will in it.

GOD'S INTERPRETATION

Now, turn with me to Zechariah 4. And let me wrap this message up by showing you **the Holy Spirit's own interpretation of this typical picture** in Zechariah's vision. — Stop by Zechariah 3 on your way to chapter 4. Here is a picture of a sinner saved by the grace of God. Such men are men who shall never cease to be “*men wondered at.*”

Zechariah 3

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

1. And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.
2. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire?
3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.
4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.
5. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.
6. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,
7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.
8. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.
9. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
10. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.”

If we would see the light of the gospel, the light of this candlestick, we must be awakened by the Spirit of God (Zechariah 4:1-2).

(Zechariah 4:1-2) “And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, (2) 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:”

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Let no one imagine that I have just dreamed these things up. The Lord God tells us plainly that **the meaning of the candlestick's light is salvation by grace alone in Christ alone** (Zechariah 4:4-9).

(Zechariah 4:4-9) “So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What *are* these, my lord? (5) Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. (6) Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (7) Who *art* thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone *thereof with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. (8) Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (9) The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.”

Application: It is my prayer that God will bring each of you to the light and cause you to behold his righteousness in Christ.

(John 3:19-21) “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. (21) But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

Amen.