

Evening Worship May 21, 2017
"The Golden Lampstands" Exodus 25:31-40

The first words that we know of from the mouth of God are the words we read in Genesis 1:3

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 NKJ)

Light was also the first thing in the Bible called "good" – And God saw the light, that it was good; ... (Genesis 1:4 NKJ)

God's tabernacle would be a tent four layers thick: linen (inside) covered by goats hair, which were covered with rams skin, which in turn was covered by badger skin –

"You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that. (Exodus 26:14 NKJ)

Though there seems to be a little bit of uncertainty about what kind of skin made the outermost cover –

^{ESV} Exodus 26:14 ... and a covering of goatskins on top.

^{NAB} Exodus 26:14 ...and above that, a covering of tahash skins. (tahash = porpoise or dolphin)

^{NAS} Exodus 26:14 ... and a covering of porpoise skins above.

^{NIV} Exodus 26:14 ... and over that a covering of the other durable leather.

Ryken and Hughes in their commentary say the top covering was made of the hides of sea cows - "Over the top went a waterproof tarp made from the thick hides of sea cows."

Whatever the top covering was, it was thick enough to keep rain out and this plus the three other coverings would also keep out light.

Apart from the light from the lampstands the tabernacle would be a dark place, similar to the darkness from which God spoke to the people even before the tabernacle was built –

So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:21 NKJ)

"The tabernacle had no windows by which to let in the light of the day, all its light was candle-light, which intimates the comparative darkness of that dispensation, while the Sun or righteousness had not as yet risen, nor had the day-star from on high yet visited his church."

Matthew Henry

I. The lampstand itself was wonderfully made –
"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; ... (Exodus 25:31A NKJ)

1. Pure gold – I am going to stick with the idea I have communicated all along, this gold is symbolic of the righteousness of Christ.

2. Hammered work – the lampstand shall be of hammered work. ... (Exodus 25:31B NKJ)

"The lampstand was beaten out of pure gold. In the craftsmanship of that day, the gold was set against a wooden mold and then hammered into shape. According to verse 39, the whole thing was made from a single talent of solid gold, which in today's measurements would weigh roughly seventy-five pounds. The base and branches were not assembled but were made all of one piece, and when the lampstand was finished it stood perhaps five feet tall.

Ryken, P. G., & Hughes, R. K. (2005). *Exodus: saved for God's glory*

A. Was Job hammered by God?

But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:10 NKJ)

B. Were Peter's readers hammered and burned by fiery trials?

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJ)

When God wants to drill a man and thrill a man and skill a man...

When God wants to mold a man to play the noblest part;

When He yearns with all His heart to create so great and bold a man that all the world shall praise... Watch His methods; Watch His ways!

How He ruthlessly perfects whom He royally elects... How He hammers him and hurts him, And with mighty blows converts him Into frail shapes of clay that only God understands. How his tortured heart is crying and he lifts beseeching hands... How he bends but never breaks when His good he undertakes. How He uses whom He chooses...with every purpose fuses him; By every art induces him to try His splendor out... God knows what He's about!

3. It was made all of one piece of solid gold and yet it was not simple, it was beautiful, glorious and useful -

Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be of *one piece*.³² "And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.³³ "Three bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with an ornamental knob and a flower*, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, *with an ornamental knob and a flower*-- and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand.³⁴ "On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms*, *each with its ornamental knob and flower*.³⁵ "And *there shall be* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand.³⁶ "Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece*; all of it *shall be* one hammered piece of pure gold.³⁷ "You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.³⁸ "And its wick-trimmers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold.³⁹ "It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.⁴⁰ "And see to it that you make *them* according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain. (Exodus 25:31-40 NKJ)

1. *Its branches would spread out maximizing LIGHT –*

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.¹⁶ "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16 NKJ)

• *Such light is needed in a dark world –*

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJ)

2. *Almond blossoms may link it with Aaron's rod –*

Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. (Numbers 17:8 NKJ)

The Light of Christ is the Life of Light, Aaron's rod was a dead piece of wood and yet God brought fruit / almonds from it ...

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4 NKJ)

II. *These lampstands are like the light of God's Word –*

NUN. Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105 NKJ)

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; (2 Peter 1:19 NKJ)

III. *These Lampstands point us to Christ –*

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12 NKJ)

Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*, *By* the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.² The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:1-2 NKJ)

IV. *We are called to be lights, lampstands –*

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. (Revelation 1:12-13 NKJ)

"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:20 NKJ)

V. *Application –*

1. *We need light because of SIN, both for our own knowing of God and also our making Him known –*

Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see

2. *Remember, in great darkness true lights shine brightly –*

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing,¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, ... (Philippians 2:12-16 NKJ)

Arnold Brevick