

Message #51

Exodus 25:31-40

Back around 1951, a man by the name of A. Sevison, wrote a little children's Christian chorus called "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." This song was so popular that in 1969, the secular band The Byrd's, a folk rock band that featured guys like David Crosby, Roger McGuinn and Gram Parsons, sang it in the key of "D" on their album "Easy Rider." They actually did a really good job with it. You can actually go on You Tube and listen to them sing it (wait until the service is over before you give it a listen).

The lyrics are "Give me oil in my lamp keep me burning—give me oil in my lamp I pray—give me oil in my lamp keep me burning—keep me burning till the break of day."

That idea of having oil in a lamp that kept burning and burning did not start with A. Sevison or The Byrd's; it started way back in the days of Moses and Israel, and it comes from this text in Exodus.

At this point in Israel's history, the nation is on one big camping trip. The people are living in tents at Mt. Sinai. In normal tent life there were lamps that were lit at night to give light to the children of Israel. During the day, the doors of the tents were typically pulled open so the light shined in, but during the night lights were used.

If God's people are to worship God in God's sanctuary, there needs to be lighting. This lighting is designed for humans. God does not need it because He sees everything that happens whether it is in light or in darkness.

Now the light in this sanctuary would do a couple of things.

First, it would enable those who were ministering to see what they were doing. In this specific tabernacle, only the Levitical priests would ever go into this holy place and when they went in to perform duties, they would need light to see so they could carry out their ministries.

Second, when the people would look toward the sanctuary at night, it would be the brightest thing that would shine. What this certainly would suggest is God's presence was at this place during the day and all through the night.

GOD DEMANDED A LAMPSTAND BE MADE FOR HIS SANCTUARY THAT WOULD SHED LIGHT ON THE SPACE IN FRONT OF IT.

It is impossible to worship God and be walking in darkness in any context at any time. To worship God, one must walk in light and minister in light. This is true in the O.T. and this is also true in the N.T..

Now this lampstand is extremely important and God gives great details about it to Moses, who was responsible to give the details to those who could make it.

The passage breaks down into two main themes:

THEME #1 – The design of the lampstand . **25:31-36**

Now this lampstand was a floor standing lampstand. It was to stand on the ground. It was not to be put on a table or hung from the frame at the top of the tent or hung on a pole inside the tent. This lampstand was to stand on the floor.

Now we are not specifically told how high this lampstand was to vertically rise because the height is not specifically stated. It has been estimated that it was probably 5 to 6 feet high. This would be high enough to still have stability so that it would not tip over.

If the table stood 27 inches tall, the lighting is better if it extends up higher, rather than lower. Any of us who have done a lot of tent camping realize this point.

J. Vernon McGee believes that this lampstand does represent Jesus Christ, which is why there is no measurement to it. You cannot measure deity. You cannot measure Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He is beyond mathematical comprehension (*Exodus*, p. 284). In fact, I think this lampstand actually represents the entire Trinity.

Now there are eleven specific details of the lampstand which are spelled out:

Specific Detail #1 - It is to be made of pure gold. **25:31a**

This was not to be cheaply made. This pure gold certainly speaks of the purity of the light of God and the value of the light of God. Most do not realize how valuable having the light of God's Word actually is.

Specific Detail #2 - Its base and shaft are to be made of hammered work. **25:31b**

The lampstand was to be made of solid gold that had been beaten or hammered into shape as with some sort of base. The truth is there is no place where the base is described, but we may assume from **verse 40** that Moses knew what the base was to look like.

Specific Detail #3 - Its cups, bulbs and flowers shall be made of one piece with it. **25:31c**

To make a one piece unit would not be easy, but then doing quality work for God is not easy. It takes time.

This particular lampstand would require amazing precision and detail. Why is it important to have this made out of one piece? The reason is because all light comes from the One God and the One Person, Jesus Christ.

Becoming a quality light for God is not a simple task. It requires great attention to the details of God's Word and great precision in applying them.

Specific Detail #4 - It is to have six branches that go out from its side. **25:32a**

From the main shaft or trunk of this lampstand were decorated branches that extended out from the center beam in a tree-branch fashion. Each of these branches was to extend upward. This light that actually comes from heaven is to be that which reflects light upwards toward heaven.

Specific Detail #5 - It is to have three branches out of one side and three out of the other side. **25:32b**

It does not matter where we are at in position; all need light that comes from God.

Specific Detail #6 - It is to have three cups shaped like almond blossoms in one branch with a bulb and a flower. **25:33a**

Now cups were needed to support the actual lamps that would hold the oil. The lamps were to sit cradled in each cup. The cups were to be made resembling almond flowers each having a bud and each emerging from a blossom as a flower.

Specific Detail #7 - It is to have three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the other branch with a bulb and a flower. **25:33b**

This would be a beautiful piece of furniture. The question arises, why is there this emphasis on three plus three? The reason is because the number three is critical to the Trinity. All of the Trinity is involved in giving any light

Specific Detail #8 - It is to have these things for a total of six, one for each branch. **25:33c**

After stressing the three plus three, we learn that there are a total of six, so there is no misunderstanding on this point.

Specific Detail #9 - It is to have a lampstand that has four cups shaped like almond blossoms with its bulbs and flowers. **25:34**

So not only are each branch to have flower cups, but there are to be four put on the main lamp shaft or beam. So this would be similar to a floor lamp. You have one central beam that extends up to the light.

So what we have is a lampstand that features a total of seven different supports for oil lamps.

Specific Detail #10 - It is to have a bulb under each pair of branches coming out of the stand. **25:35**

Now the bulbs were attached to the main beam. So what we have are a total of seven bulbs—a total of three under each branch and a total of four under each cup on the stand. Now seven is a very important number because it is a number that specifically does relate to God. It is the number of completion. So clearly this lamp was to reflect that all complete light comes from God.

Specific Detail #11 - It is to be made all of one piece of pure gold. **25:36**

One of the best descriptions that we may see of this lampstand is seen in Zechariah 4:2.

It was a one piece unit that featured seven lamps all made of gold. Why one piece? God is One God. Why three branches? Because there is One God, and three distinct Persons to the One God.

THEME #2 – The design of the lamps and the accessories. **25:37-40**

There are two specific details brought out here:

Specific Detail #1 - It is to have seven lamps mounted in such a way that light shines in front of the lamp. **25:37**

There would be a lamp on top of each branch totaling six, and then one more at the top of the center beam totaling seven.

This lampstand was to burn continually and was to be serviced by the temple priests every morning and every evening (Ex. 27:20-21).

Specific Detail #2 - It is to include wick snuffers and trays made of pure gold. **25:38-39**

Now the trays were for the oil and the snuffers were for the wicks. A talent of pure gold weighs about 75 pounds.

Now we know that the light of the world is Jesus Christ. He is the One who reveals how sinful man may be brought into a right relationship with God.

Now notice **verse 40**, all the items were to be specifically made in the pattern that had been shown to Moses on that mountain.

This teaches us something very important. Moses knew things and saw things about this that no one else knew or saw.

God would not let this sanctuary be built without his oversight. The written blueprints that we have here were to be followed by Bezalel and we must assume that as he followed them in harmony with Moses' instruction, it was exactly the way God wanted.

Now this lampstand has several significant applications:

(Application #1) - To have any true light in order to worship God or have a relationship with God, one must be connected to the Trinity.

(Application #2) - Jesus Christ is the light of the whole world and without a relationship with Him, no one can worship God (Jn. 1:4, 9; 9:5).

(Application #3) - Jesus Christ will give great light to one who follows Him and His Word (Jn. 8:12).

(Application #4) - A church has the privilege and responsibility to grow in the light of God's Word and reflect it and if a church does not do that, God will remove the lampstand and stop it from shining (Rev. 2:1, 5).