

THE MENORAH – The Golden Candelabra – The Seven Branched Candlestick

Ex. 25:31-32,37,39 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. 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: And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it... Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels.

VIDEO ON MENORAH

When we enter the Tabernacle, we find on our left hand, to the south of the Holy Place, opposite the Table of Showbread, the 7-Branched Candlestick or Menorah.

Like the Mercy Seat, the Golden Lampstand was fashioned of pure gold, depicting the full and perfect deity of Christ. There are no dimensions given for the lampstand, reminding us that deity knows no boundary and infinity has no limitations.

A talent of pure gold reminds us, however, that Jesus paid an enormous price for our redemption. This ornate of one shaft and six branches, with its 22 sets of buds, blossoms, and bowls, was hammered out of one piece.

If the branches prefigured the Church, then the beating of the branches spoke of a suffering Church as well as a suffering Savior. Jesus explicitly told His disciples that the Church would suffer persecution, and that “some of you shall be put to death” (Luke 21:12-17).

Then He added, “But there shall not an hair of your head perish” (verse 18). Martyrs who gave their lives for their faith in Christ have not perished. To die was their gain, their graduation and completeness (Rom. 8:36,37) Their death bears fruit for eternity.

There were no windows, no natural light, nor any other lamp in the Tabernacle, except this Lampstand. Jesus is “the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9). “HE was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light” (John 5:35).

Christ said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5), but He also expects His Church to be “the light of the world” (Mt 5:14), from the point of His Ascension to that day when He returns for His Bride.

Returning to the Holy Place, according to Alfred Edersheim, while one set of priests were busy at the Brazen Altar offering the sacrifice, the two whose responsibility it was to trim the lamps of the candlestick and to prepare the altar of incense had gone into the Holy Place. As nearly as possible while the lamb was being slain in the outer court, the first of these priests took with his hands the burnt coals and ashes from the golden altar, and put them into the golden vessel, and withdrew, leaving the golden vessel in the sanctuary. Similarly, as the blood of the lamb was being sprinkled on the altar of burnt offering, the second priest trimmed and refilled the lamps of the candlestick that were still burning, removed the wick and old oil from those which had become extinguished, supplied fresh, and re-lit them from one of the other lamps.

The fire that lit the large central wick of the Menorah might only be re-lit by fire from the altar.

Without the lampstand the priests were not able to minister in the Holy Place. Likewise as believers we must have the light that is the Gospel of Christ and the oil which represents the Holy Spirit.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Among the trophies carried away by Titus after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome, the Altar of Incense is not depicted, though the Menorah, the two silver trumpets (mentioned in **Numbers 10:2-10**), the mortar and pestle used for preparing the incense, and possibly the Table of Showbread are seen.

THE OIL

The oil that was used for the candlestick was pure olive oil obtained by beating. Does the Holy Spirit ever suffer? Yes. He can be grieved (Eph 4:30), and grief is suffering. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb 4:15) and “vexed” by our rebellion (Isa 63:10). The Holy Spirit is the oil that causes the lamp to burn always (Ex 27:20) Without the Spirit we have no light, and with Him there is no darkness.

The priests had to make sure that the wicks were trimmed every morning and every evening, and that the oil was refilled. God commanded that the light had to burn continually.

Lev. 24:2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

This directs us and reminds us as Christians that we are expected to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and keep our light burning, day and night, morning and evening. Christ shares with us a solemn warning:

Matt 25:7-10 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the prudent answered, No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves. And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.

Once it happened that the light in the Holy Place went out, when the priesthood backslid and neglected the commandments of the Lord:

1 Sam 3:3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

1 Sam 3:11-14 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth;

because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

The ministry of the Candlestick was only for those who had been to the Altar of Sacrifice and had washed themselves with pure water at the Laver.

We need to prepare ourselves with Godly sorrow before entering into the Holy Place to minister unto the Lord.

THE LIGHT

Light is an expression of God's character and of the Christian character.

Luke 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Matt 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Eph 5:7-8 Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Jesus is the Light of the world. He is represented by the central lamp stand.

The Church is also the light of the world and represented by the branches. The branches are curved and cannot stand by themselves. They need to be supported by the central stand. We the Church need the support of Christ and His light.

The central stand and the ever burning candles are a reminder of the burning bush from which God called Moses to deliver Israel from bondage.

Rev 1:12-13 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

The 7 lights represent the 7 Churches and therein the Church Age – the Age of Grace.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

THE ALMOND KNOBS

Ex 25:33-34 Three cups shall be shaped like almond blossoms in the one branch, a bulb and a flower, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the other branch, a bulb and a flower—so for six branches going out from the lampstand; and in the lampstand four cups shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers.

Each branch had three sets of knops, flowers, and bowls like unto almonds, and the central stem had four sets (Ex 25:32-25). Three stages of maturity, all present at the same time, suggest everbearing and perpetual fruitfulness, possible only in Christ.

The number of lamps were seven (indicating perfection), but of branches there were but six (the number of man, short of perfection).

Six branches shall come out of the sides of it (Ex 25:32), most likely representing the Church totally dependent on Christ. “I am the vine, you are the branches” speaks of Christ and His Church. The Lampstand is very much like the vine and its branches.

The almond knobs remind us of Aaron’s rod that budded:

Num 17:8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

This is a picture of resurrection, the dead coming to life. It also points to firstfruits.

The almond tree is the first to bloom after winter, producing life with its snow white blossoms.

1 Cor 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Jesus Christ is the firstfruit.

The budding rod also shows the divine election of each saint as a servant of the Kingdom.

There were 22 sets of buds, blossoms, and bowls on the Menorah. This is also the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, pointing to the importance of the Word. It also points to the completeness of God and His plan.

The number 22 and the number 7 for the number of candlesticks results in the irrational number pi, which, in mathematics, is the relation between the circumference and the diameter of a circle.

This shows again God’s perfection as an unbroken full circle. And He is eternal – endless, like the number of decimals in pi.

The almond also points to the certain prophetic fulfillment of God’s plan.

Jer 1:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree.

In the Book of Revelation we see that the 7 lamps also represent the 7 spirits of God.

Rev 4:5 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.

There are 7 characteristics of the Holy Spirit as revealed by the Prophet Isaiah:

Isa 11:1-2 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

SONG PAUL WILBUR – Psalm 121 – I lift my eyes to the hills.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (SLIDE #35)

VIDEO ON Altar of Incense

Ex 30:1-10 Moreover, you shall make an altar as a place for burning incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. Its length shall be a cubit, and its width a cubit, it shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits; its horns shall be of one piece with it. You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and you shall make a gold molding all around for it. You shall make two gold rings for it under its molding; you shall make them on its two side walls—on opposite sides—and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it.

You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you. Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it. Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

The second altar – the first being the altar of sacrifice - was the Altar of Incense ([Exodus 30:1-10](#)), called also the Golden Altar ([39:38](#); [Numbers 4:11](#)), and the Inner Altar stood inside, in the [Holy Place](#) before the [Veil](#) that is by the Ark of the Covenant." The altar of incense represents prayer in all its meaning.

The altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold; wood typifies the humanity and gold the deity of Christ, as each was combined in the intercessory work of our Savior.

In Exodus 30, verses 7 and 8, the Lord had commanded that the priests burn incense on the altar every morning and evening at the same time that the daily burnt offering was made. The incense was to be left burning continuously throughout the day as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. It burned continuously, even as we are instructed to pray without ceasing.

1 Thes 5:15-18 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The Golden Altar speaks to us of the worship of Christ, our High Priest and Mediator.

It is by His sacrifice on the cross that worship is made possible.

The incense was placed on the coals which were collected from the altar of sacrifice located in the outer courtyard, thereby linking the sacrifice of the cross to intercessory prayer.

The Golden Altar is a representation of Christ as our intercessor before God the Father.

Rom 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Luke 22:32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

John 17:9-10 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

When we pray in Jesus's name, our prayer is based on the work Christ has accomplished and that not of our own.

John 14:13-14 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

THE INCENSE

Ex 30:34-38 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each. With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. You shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you. The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD. Whoever shall make any like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people."

The greatest care was taken to have the incense thoroughly bruised and mixed.

The incense was made of equal parts of four spices.

1. Stacte is related to the myrrh family. Exodus 30:34 is the only passage of Scripture in which the word occurs. All that is positively known about this plant is that it signifies an odorous distillation. Others regard it as the gum of the storax tree, or rather shrub, the *Styrax officinale*. "The Syrians value this gum highly, and use it medicinally as an emulcent in pectoral complaints, and also in perfumery."

2. Onycha was a black gum of an aromatic spice. A Latin word applied to the operculum, i.e., the claw or nail of the strombus or wing-shell, a univalve common in the Red Sea. The opercula of these shell-fish when burned emit a strong odour "like castoreum." The original Hebrew word used for this component of the *ketoret* was *shecheleth*, which means "to roar; as a lion (from his characteristic roar)" or "peeling off by concussion of sound. When the [Torah](#) was translated into Greek (the [Septuagint](#) version) the Greek word "onycha" ονυξ, which means "fingernail" or "claw," was substituted for shecheleth.
3. Galbanum was a resin that was used medicinally as an anti-spasmodic; something akin to a tranquilizer. It is an aromatic [gum resin](#), the product of certain Persian plant species. It has a disagreeable, bitter taste, a peculiar, somewhat musky odour, an intense green scent. The incense was an important component of the Temple service in Jerusalem. Rashi of the 12th century comments on this passage that galbanum is bitter and was included in the incense as a reminder of deliberate and unrepentant sinners. Rashi was a medieval French rabbi and author of a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the *Tanakh*.
4. Frankincense is an aromatic resin used in incense and perfumes. The English word frankincense is derived from the [Old French](#) expression franc encens meaning high-quality incense. The word franc in Old French meant noble or pure.

The combination of these four ingredients was considered Holy and was not to be used outside the tabernacle for private use or as a perfume; otherwise, they would be cut off from their people.

According to Jewish tradition, the incense was made by the [Avtinias family](#), who closely guarded its secret. The offering of incense also had to be seasoned with salt.

Afterwards, when the Temples of Solomon and Herod were built, the incense which was offered in the Holy Temple was made from eleven different ingredients, only four of which are mentioned by name in the verse above. The identity of the other seven spices has been passed down in the Oral Tradition. As is the case with regard to many other areas of Temple study, the exact classification of these ingredients is the subject of serious research and scholarship. Many of these are rare, and some can be obtained only in exotic and distant lands.

Incense and prayer are used interchangeably throughout Scripture. For instance,

Luke 1:9-11 According to the custom of the priestly office, he (Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist) was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

Zacharias had come up from the hill country of Judaea, from the neighborhood of priestly Hebron, to minister in the Temple. More than that, the lot had fallen on Zacharias for the most honorable service in the daily ministry – that of burning the incense on the golden altar within the Holy Place. As he ministered within the Holy Place, he saw Gabriel standing, as if he had just come out of the Most Holy Place, on the right side of the Altar of Incense. What passed between Gabriel and Zacharias is beside our present purpose this evening. Let's take note, however, of several details mentioned in the above narrative, such as

that a special lot was cast for this ministry;

that the priest was alone in the Holy Place while burning the incense; and

that the whole multitude of the people were praying outside the Holy Place at the time of incense.

Without taking more time than I have, by providing you all the details that would more fully describe the attention to detail required by the priests who ministered inside and outside the Holy Place, I will attempt to be brief. Drawing the 3rd and 4th lots would identify the priest responsible for the most solemn part of the service, that is, the burning of the incense. He on whom this lot fell chose from among his friends his two assistants. **NOW READ**

VERBATIM FROM PAGE 127-128 FROM EDERSHEIM'S "OFFERING THE INCENSE."

It is during this most solemn period, when throughout the Tabernacle and afterwards the Temple, that deep silence rested on the worshipping multitude, while within the sanctuary, the priest laid the incense on the golden altar, and the cloud of odors rose up before the Lord, which serves as the image of heavenly things as described in Revelation 8:1-5 and 5:8:

Rev 8:1-5 When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. 3Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. 4And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Rev 5:8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

The picture of prayer going up to heaven like incense is captured in David's psalm:

Psalms 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

As the incense was unique, so is Christ's righteousness. We can't pray effectively based on our own false claims of righteousness, but we can pray and are admonished to pray in the name of Jesus, our sinless Mediator.

King Uzziah offered strange incense and was struck with leprosy – he dared to offer incense without a mediator:

2 Chron 26:16-21 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron

who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God.” But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king’s house judging the people of the land.

Ex 30:7-10 “Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. “When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. “You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it. “Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.”

The incense was burned when the lamps of the candlestick were lit.

THE FIRE

There were three separate piles of wood burning atop the Altar of Burnt Offering. The largest of these piles was where all the portions of the sacrifices were burned; the second fire provided the coals for the Altar of Incense within the sanctuary, and the third was the "[perpetual fire](#)" which constantly burned on the altar. Nothing was placed on it, and no coals were taken from it. It existed solely to fulfill the commandment that there be a perpetual fire, as the Torah states: "And a fire shall burn there on the altar constantly; it shall not be extinguished" ([Leviticus 6:12-13](#)).

There was no commandment regarding the type of wood to be used on the Altar of Sacrifice; however, the Rabbis forbade the use of olive wood and grape vine, as these would not burn well and needed to be conserved because of their commercial value to the people.

Three particular types of wood were preferred: fig, walnut, and pine. These woods all burn well, and were therefore preferable. The choicest branches of fig were used for the second fire, the one from which coals were taken for the Altar of Incense. If all of the lamps of the [menorah](#) went out, they would have to be rekindled from the fire on the Altar of Burnt Offering.

Priests brought the burning coals from the altar of sacrifice within censers. God was uncompromising in His instructions as He gave them to Moses.

In Leviticus 10:1-3, we read about Nadab and Abihu, sons of the High Priest Aaron, attempting to offer unauthorized fire to the Lord.

Lev 10:1-3 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and

consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.

Their incense or prayer was not acceptable since it was not based on a blood sacrifice.

The golden crown placed on the edges on the top of the altar of incense was included to prevent the coals and incense from falling to the ground and being wasted. The crown also represents Christ as our King and High Priest in heaven, ever making intercession for us, our Mediator, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God.

The horns on the Brazen Altar or Altar of Sacrifice found in the outer courtyard represents the power of Christ's Blood to forgive sins.

The horns on the Altar of Incense represents the power of Christ's blood in prayer as we confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, intercede, petition, and supplicate for others, and to offer Him thanksgiving and praise in a spirit of worship and adulation.

During transport, the Altar of Incense would be covered in a blue cloth, and then with a badger skin. The badger skin points to Jesus the man; the blue cloth points to Jesus as deity, the Son of God, providing a direct link between His vicarious work as the Son of Man and His work as the Son of God, restoring our citizenship to His eternal kingdom.

This concludes our study of the Menorah and the Altar of Incense...