

MINISTERS OF THE GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS

Exo 25:31 *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.*

Exo 25:32 *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:*

Rev 1:12 *And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;*

Rev 1:13 *And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.*

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 churches are branches that emerge from the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are six branches – the number of man – but, thankfully, Jesus perfects the church as the seventh branch in the middle (the shaft). Jesus declared, ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing’ (John 15:5). It is this spiritual image, the menorah, which is the national symbol of Israel, and one of logos of the Apostolic church, which should serve as a powerful object lesson for all leaders and ministers in the body of Jesus Christ, the holy church. ***Let us begin with the first aspect of the candlestick – pure gold.***

Eph 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

Eph 4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Like the candlestick, the body of Christ must be of the highest purity, 24-carat gold. Gold is refined by fire, and so leaders and ministers attending to the body of Christ must minister with the power of the fire of the Holy Spirit to purify the church. ‘Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick’ (Numbers 8:2). The source of fire is a flammable or combustible material – that is you the minister of Jesus Christ. All 120 on the Day of Pentecost were combustible material that caught fire. Minister, as you preach, pray, exhort and fast, the fire of Jesus in you will

melt away the dirt and impurities in the body of Christ. Note that the gold was of beaten work. This reminds us that the growth of the church, like the body of our Lord, will come about through some pain and suffering. ***The second lesson of the golden lampstand is the almonds which represents being watchful and alert.***

Exo 25:33 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.

In the Bible, God has chosen the almond tree to give expression to some very important spiritual truths. To begin with, the almond tree is one of the first trees to blossom in the early spring. The buds and flowers, which are almost white in appearance, appear before the leaves. In other words, it is the first tree to awaken and announce the arrival of spring and summer.

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.

Jer 1:12 Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

Like Jeremiah, we must see the plans and purposes of Jesus for his church clearly. Prophets like Samuel were called ‘seers’ in ancient times because they saw the invisible plan of God. The word ‘hasten’ speaks of the importance of time. God promises to perform his word swiftly. The almond buds and flowers in the golden lampstand serve to remind the ministers to be alert and watchful like the almond tree. Just as the almond tree is quick to respond to the summer, we must be the first to respond to the word of God. When Korah and his rebellious friends challenged Aaron’s priesthood, God used the almond branch to answer swiftly and eliminate the challenge.

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.

The almonds in the golden lampstand teach us to be fruitful for the church, the body of Jesus Christ. There is one more message the almond tree has for us. It is found in Ecclesiastes.

Ecc 12:5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

‘The almond tree shall flourish’ is a reference to old age. Just as the almond tree turns white very early in spring, so grey hair (old age) seems to appear so quickly. How transient time is! How quickly the grey hair appears! Ministers, time can either be our friend or foe depending on how wisely we use it. Did you know that King Hezekiah was 36 years old when God told him to put his house in order? He prayed and cried and God added 15 more years to his life. Although he was a righteous king, God deemed it appropriate to take his life at 36 had he not prayed. Oh, how quickly the almond tree blossoms and flourishes, as wise old Solomon remarked! ***Finally, the third lesson of the golden lampstand is the oil and light which was to be burning always.***

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

Please take careful note that it was the people who were to bring pure olive oil beaten for the light. Olive oil points to the sorrow, pain and suffering that our Lord Jesus experienced for us in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was crucified for our sins. What moved God to put on flesh and suffer for us? It was love for sinful, fallen humanity! What caused him to be squeezed and crushed at Gethsemane? It was his great love for humanity! Gethsemane means the place of the crushing of the olives. The oil, ministers of God, represents the great love of Jesus for humanity. This is why the oil was to be given to the priests by the people – it serves to remind the priests that they are serving people for whom Jesus was crushed in Gethsemane.

Please don’t forget this precious lesson of the golden lampstand! The oil was to be constantly supplied and burn because people in the church and all humanity will be continually sinning and need the grace and salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. As long as there is sin, there is grace! As long as people are deceived by Satan and suffer in sin, the oil of Gethsemane will continually flow and burn in the church. In Gethsemane Jesus was providing the oil to burn in the church until he returns. Let the people come to us with the olive oil; let the people be the source of renewed service and dedication in the church. Once we understand this beautiful picture and lessons of the golden lampstand, we will be called faithful priests and ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is then that people will see him as the light of the world and the one who dwells in the middle of the golden lampstands that represent the churches.

Jhn 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.*