

Message Nine

Lighting the Lamps

Scripture Reading: Num. 8:1-4;
Exo. 27:20-21; Rev. 1:4; 4:5; Psa. 73:16-17

I. Although many details regarding the Tent of Meeting were omitted in Numbers 8, God specifically instructed Aaron to light the lamps of the lampstand—vv. 1-4:

- A. After the offering of the twelve tribes of Israel and the speaking of God in Numbers 7, God instructed Moses to light the lamps; Numbers 8:1-2 says, “Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, . . . When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in front of the lampstand”:
 - 1. The seven lamps, signifying the seven Spirits (Rev. 4:5), gave light in front of the lampstand, shining toward the middle of the tabernacle; thus, the shining of the lamps was in the right direction for serving and moving; at this point God’s people could begin to render their spiritual service to Him.
 - 2. The unique purpose of lighting the lamps was for offering, fighting, and moving; offering, fighting, and moving all require light.
- B. Without the shining of the light, the children of Israel could not move, much less fight for God; therefore, as soon as they consecrated something to God as seen in Numbers 7, they immediately lit the lamps in order for the light to shine.
- C. If God’s people consecrate something to God, He will shine among them, and they will have light; in order for God’s people to become His army, they must have light in order to fight, walk, and serve—cf. Rom. 13:12, 14.

II. The light of the lampstand is based on the strength of the priests’ service:

- A. In 1 Samuel the lamp of God was about to go out because Eli the priest was weak and degraded—3:3.
- B. The light in a local church cannot be bright unless we fulfill our priestly duty to burn the incense and light the lamps—Exo. 25:37; 27:20-21; 30:7-8; Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:24-25.
- C. Numbers 7 ends with God speaking in the Tent of Meeting, and chapter 8 begins with God’s continued speaking concerning the lighting of the lamps for light—7:89—8:3:

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1. This sequence indicates that whenever God's word comes, His people receive light; thus, during the age of Eli the priest, when the word of Jehovah was rare, the lamps in the Holy Place were about to go out—1 Sam. 3:1-3; cf. Psa. 119:105, 130.
2. Only when there is God's speaking in the church can light shine brightly among God's people; the ministering priests were able to minister and move because of the light of the lampstand—cf. Mal. 2:7.
3. Moreover, the seven lamps giving light in the same direction signifies that even though each person has a distinct ministry in the Body, their direction is the same and their ministries are still one ministry—Col. 4:17; 2 Tim. 4:5; Acts 20:24.
4. For example, Paul had his ministry, Peter had his ministry, and John had his ministry; nevertheless, their direction was toward Christ; they testified for Christ together; their light shone out from Christ and shone toward Christ; hence, their ministries were one.

III. "You shall command the children of Israel to bring to you pure oil of beaten olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. In the Tent of Meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall maintain it in order from evening to morning before Jehovah; it shall be a perpetual statute to be observed throughout their generations by the children of Israel"—Exo. 27:20-21:

- A. The olive tree signifies Christ (cf. Rom. 11:17, 24), and the oil of beaten olives signifies the Spirit of Christ produced through Christ's process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection—cf. John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- B. *To make the lamps burn continually* means literally "to cause the light of a lamp to ascend":
 1. The lampstand, signifying Christ as the embodiment of the Triune God, was made of pure gold (Exo. 25:31), but the wicks that burned to give off the light were of the plant life; in order to burn so that light would shine, the wicks had to be saturated with oil.

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2. The wicks signify the uplifted humanity of Christ, which burns with the divine oil to shine out the divine light.
- C. The tabernacle as the Tent of Meeting, the place where God met with His redeemed people and spoke to them (Lev. 1:1), typifies the meeting of the church:
 1. Thus, in typology the lighting of the lamps points to the proper way to meet; everything done in the church meetings, whether praying, singing, praising, or prophesying, should cause the lamps to shine; this is to light the lamps in God's sanctuary so that the light may swallow up the darkness—cf. John 1:5; Phil. 2:15-16a; Eph. 5:8-9.
 2. *Before the Testimony* means before the law in the Ark, which was behind the veil:
 - a. For the most part, the meeting of God's people is in the Holy Place, not in the Holy of Holies; however, we meet in the Holy Place with the expectation of entering the Holy of Holies.
 - b. The light from the lamps enables us to see the different aspects of Christ, signified by the items of furniture in the Holy Place, and also the way leading into the Holy of Holies, into the depths of Christ within God—cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-10.
- D. The holy task of lighting the lamps was a service of holy persons, the priests, not of the common people:
 1. According to the entire Bible, a priest is one who is possessed by God, filled with God, saturated with God, and living absolutely for God; furthermore, a priest had to be clothed with priestly garments (Exo. 28:2), which signify Christ lived out of the priesthood.
 2. The lighting of the lamps in the Holy Place requires the service of this kind of person—cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6.
- E. The light in the Holy Place was not a natural light or a man-made light; it was a light that came from the golden lampstand, that is, from the divine nature of Christ.
- F. To experience the genuine lighting of the lamps in the church meetings, we must have Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, as the lampstand, the divine nature as the gold, the uplifted humanity of Christ as the wick, and the Spirit of Christ

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as the oil with all the steps of Christ's process, and we must be holy people as the priests, clothed with the expression of Christ as the priestly garments.

- G. The priests were to maintain the lamps from evening to morning before Jehovah:
 - 1. Nothing is said in Exodus 27:21 about the day; the present age is the night, not the day.
 - 2. Hence, we need the light to shine during this age of night until the day dawns—cf. Rom. 13:12; 2 Pet. 1:19.

IV. The seven lamps of the golden lampstand are the seven Spirits before God's throne, the seven lamps of fire burning before God's throne—Rev. 1:4; 4:5:

- A. In the universe God has a center of administration, which is His throne.
- B. God is administering and moving from His throne to execute His eternal policy.
- C. The seven lamps of fire burning before God's throne signifies that the seven lamps are absolutely related to God's administration, economy, and move.

V. To know God's administration and economy we must have the light of the golden lampstand from the seven shining and illuminating lamps:

- A. Natural light cannot help us to know God's economy, administration, and eternal purpose—21:23, 25; 22:5a.
- B. The light of the lampstand is the light in the Holy Place, which typifies the church.
- C. Once we enter into the realm of the church, we are enlightened to know God's eternal purpose, His heart's intention, and His economy, and we also know which path we should take for the journey before us toward God's goal.
- D. In God's sanctuary (in our spirit and in the church) we receive divine revelation and obtain the explanation to all our problems—Psa. 73:16-17.

VI. According to Revelation 4, the emphasis with the seven burning lamps of fire is on the move of God's administration:

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- A. Christ carries out His mission as the Ruler of the kings of the earth by the seven burning Spirits before the throne to sovereignly control the world situation so that the environment might be fit for God's chosen people to receive His salvation—Acts 5:31; cf. 17:26-27; John 17:2; 2 Chron. 16:9.
- B. The flame of the seven burning Spirits judges, purifies, and refines the church to produce the golden lampstands.
- C. The burning of the fiery lamps is not only for shining and burning but also for motivating us to rise up and take action for the carrying out of God's economy—Dan. 11:32b.