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The Menorah in the Sanctuary: Christ, the Light of the World **Exodus 25:31-40, 27:20-21, 37:17-24 and Leviticus 24:2-4**

The menorah in the Sanctuary DIG: What features define the distinctive menorah described here? Why the number seven? Why the blossom motif? The pure gold? What did its light represent for early Israel? What did this menorah represent for the early Church (Hebrews 8:5; Revelation, Chapters 1-3)?

REFLECT: Do you think this pattern of furniture set forth by God is necessary to adequately worship Him? Why or why not? Where is the light of Christ that you carry: (a) Hidden under a bushel basket? (b) Set on a menorah? (c) On a dimmer switch? (d) Snuffed out altogether? How can you brighten your lamp to reflect God's powerful light in your life?



There were five pieces of furniture in the Sanctuary. As the priest entered the Holy Place he would see the menorah on his left, opposite the table of the bread of the Presence on his right. Like the mercy seat, the entire **menorah** was hammered out of **pure gold**. **Rabbi Rashi taught that because of a different spelling for the phrase, *hammered out* (the extra *yod*, not the usual *passive*), that Bezalel was told by Moses to throw the gold into**

the fire, and low and behold, out popped the menorah. It had a base and a shaft, or middle branch, with **six branches** extending from its **sides, three on one side and three on the other.** Each branch was like the limb of an **almond tree.** There was an **oil lamp** made of **flower like cups, shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms** atop the shaft and each branch (**25:31-33, 37:17-19**). It was there that **lamps, small receptacles for the oil and wicks,** were filled.

The almond flowers with their cups and buds were merely ornamental. The center shaft had **four** such **cups. One bud** was **under the first pair of branches extending from the menorah, a second bud** was **under the second pair,** and **a third bud under the third pair.** There were **seven branches in all.** It is interesting to note that no measurements were given for **the menorah.** Why? Because you can't put a yardstick on deity.⁵⁷⁵ Today **the** seven branched **lampstand, or menorah,** is a popular symbol of Judaism and of the modern nation of **Isra'el.**⁵⁷⁶ The number seven, of course, represents completeness, and may also point to the concept of the Sabbath. It may also be intended to serve as a reminder of the seven-day creation account.⁵⁷⁷ **The buds and branches** were **of one piece with the menorah, hammered out of pure gold** with no wood (**25:34-36, 37:20-22**). It was very expensive and easily the most ornate piece of furniture in **the Tabernacle.**

The almond flowers remind us of **Aaron's staff that budded.** When **Aaron's priestly prerogative** was in question, **the budding** of **his staff** established **his right to the priesthood** (see the commentary on **Numbers Cu - Aaron's Staff Budded**). The **almond staff,** a dead branch, was made to come alive and bear fruit. **Messiah** was established as **the Son of God** by **His** resurrection from the dead. The resurrection did not make **Christ the Son of God,** because **He** was already that before time began. The resurrection only confirmed it. **Aaron** was appointed high priest by **ADONAI** and the fact that **his staff budded** only confirmed it.⁵⁷⁸

The menorah provided all the light in the Holy Place because there were no windows. **Its seven lamps** were **set up so that they** would provide all the **light** that was needed. **Its wick trimmers and trays** were also **to be made of pure gold. A talent,** or about seventy-five pounds **of pure gold** was **used to hammer out the menorah and all its accessories (25:37-39, 37:23-24).** No outsider could see the beauty of **the golden menorah;** nor can any but believer-priests today know the beauty of **Christ,** or **His** union with the Church. **The person**

without the Holy Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he or she cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (First Corinthians 2:14). The outsider only saw the hides of sea cows. To the unsaved heart, **Jesus** was merely a good man – not the eternal **God** who became man to save sinners. The skeptic sees no beauty in **Him**. But the believer sees the **gold, His** deity, now by faith (and one day by sight).⁵⁷⁹

Parashah 20: T'tzaveh (You are to order) 27:20-30:10
(See my commentary on Deuteronomy, to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

The Key Person is **Moshe**, with **ADONAI**.

The Scene is **Mount Sinai**.

The Main Events include **God** continuing to instruct **Moses** about **the Tabernacle** service, including the eternal light, dressing **the priests, Aaron** and **his sons**, consecrating **them**, how **they** shall offer **sacrifices**, and how to make **the altar of incense**.

Whenever **the Torah** was divided into the different portions, it was done so for very specific reasons. The divisions reflected someone's understanding of the text. This brings us to a very important question: Why was the short section about **the lampstand (menorah)** in the beginning of this parashah included with the teaching about **Aaron** and **the priesthood**? Shouldn't it have been included with the previous portion which talked about **the furniture of the Tabernacle**? **Well, it seems that Exodus 27:20-21 is placed in T'tzaveh to teach us that if we fully understand the significance of T'tazveh we will see more clearly how the Eternal One intended Isra'el to be a light to the whole world, illuminating her with the grace and splendor of ADONAI.**

ADONAI commanded **the Israelites to bring clear oil of pressed olives** to use in **the menorah (27:20a)**. This is supposed to have been **oil** that was obtained from **olives** not fully ripe and pounded in a mortar instead of being put into a press. It was considered the best and purest, producing little smoke and giving off better **light**.⁵⁸⁰ **Oil** is symbolic of **the Holy Spirit** in the Scriptures (**Zechariah 4:2-6, 11-14; John 7:37-39**). The seven **lamps** picture the completion or fullness of **the**



Ruach Ha’Kodesh that **Christ** possessed in a unique way that no other human being will ever possess. **The Spirit of ADONAI will rest on Him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of ADONAI** (Isaiah 11:2 CJB, also see Revelation 3:1, 4:5).

The priests were **to keep the seven lamps burning continually before ADONAI from evening till morning**. They were never to be extinguished all at one time. Therefore, **the menorah** was serviced twice a day, once in the morning and once at sunset. *This was considered to be one of the five key responsibilities of the priesthood.* But it wasn’t merely a commandment for the priests, it was a commandment for **everyone**. This was **to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites** as long as **the Torah** was in effect (**Exodus 27:20b; 30:7-8; Leviticus 24:1-4**). They were to supply only the finest virgin olive oil, oil from the first pressing, to fuel **the menorah’s** sacred flames. This gave **everyone** a share in **the light of the menorah**.

The significance of **the menorah** was that it provided light in the darkness of the Holy Place. While the Sh’kkinah glory provided **the light** in the Most Holy Place, the seven **lamps** provided **the light** in the Holy Place. **Christ’s** own words, the testimony of Zechariah, Simeon, and the inspired apostles leave no doubt as to whom that **light** pointed to. **I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life . . . children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine as lights in the world** (John 8:12; Philippians 2:15b KJ).

While I am in the world, I am the light of the world . . . you are the light of the world (John 9:5; Matthew 5:14).

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all . . . be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning (First John 1:5; Luke 12:35).

In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world . . . for you were once in darkness, but now you are light in Jesus. Live as children of light (John 1:4 and 9; Ephesians 5:8).

The rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in the darkness, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your

people Israel . . . for God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, made His light to shine in our hearts to give us the light of knowledge of the Sh’khinah glory in the face of Christ (Luke 1:78b-79a, 2:32; Second Corinthians 4:6).

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin (First John 1:7). One day that **light** will dwell again upon the earth in the Most Holy Place in the Temple in Jerusalem (see the commentary on [Isaiah Db - The Nine Missing Articles in the Messiah’s Coming Temple](#)), and all the world will be illuminated with it.

The Israelites were instructed to build everything **according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mountain (25:40)**. The writer to the **Hebrews** quotes this verse in the context of arguing that the offerings brought to **the Tabernacle** were merely shadows and copies of the heavenly sacrifices. **They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the Tabernacle. ADONAI** said to him: **See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain (Hebrews 8:5)**. So what was given to **Moses** on Mount Sinai was not blueprints for a *new* structure, but merely the plans of **the Tabernacle** that *already existed* in heaven where **Jesus** now serves as **High Priest. He** is there now, having offered **His** own body as a once-for-all sacrifice for **His** people.

The commandment to maintain **the light of the menorah** contains the first occurrence of the term **tent of meeting**. **YHVH** said: **Aaron and his sons are to put menorah in the tent of meeting, outside the curtain in front of the testimony, and “keep it burning” from evening until morning before ADONAI.** *Cohen* is the Hebrew word for *priest*. Here, the word is used as a verb. **Moses** was to ordain **Aaron and his sons “to priest” before the LORD**. This is to be a permanent regulation throughout all the generations of the people of Isra’el (27:21). The term **tent of meeting** was originally applied to **the tent** that **Moshe** set up outside the camp of **Isra’el** before **the Tabernacle** was built (33:7).⁵⁸¹