

God's vehicle of light in the darkness. Our blessed Lord stands in the midst (Rev. 1:13). He is the One around whom we rally; it is He Who also is able to remove our witness (Rev. 2:5). Unlike Israel which stood as one nation as a testimony, we are individuals and mutually independent in our witness unto the Lord. What a fantastic charge has been given to the believer and to the entire Body of Christ for this day! Pathetically, the Bible indicates that the light of the Church of Christ will grow dim and end in a dreadful apostasy. (Rev. 3:14-22). The lukewarmness of the general set of believers today is taken by many to be indicative of the Laodicean era in which we live. It is a tragedy to hear some confess that the church has lost its power and light! Unfortunately, we do not have another chance as the Body of Christ. Israel will yet have the privilege of another witness during the Tribulation and the coming Millennium.

Conclusion No one is able to read about oil and the candlestick without giving reference to a whole host of Bible verses related to witness and testimony. Israel and the Church are lights for God at different times and for standard-bearers of the grace of God. As the tide of darkness rises, may the Lord enable those who truly know Him to stand and be counted. He does provide the enablement; it is up to us who know Him as Saviour to yield to the Holy Spirit for usefulness. How does it stand with you and your witness by the Spirit today? God looked to Israel to perform the injunctions here "continually." That word is used three times in these verses to emphasize the necessity of regularity and continuity. So it is with our witness for God today. Let it be ever! Amen.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

"Lamps on the Candlestick" Leviticus 24:1-3

Introduction

1. Feasts in one chapter (23) and more convocations in another chapter (25) find consistent arrangement. There is some question as to how the present chapter (24) fits into the picture.

2. Since Tabernacles is the final feast in the previous chapter and concerns the ingathering of fruit, it is likely that this is the connection to be noted. The olive oil and the meal for shew bread come from the harvest and are involved in this chapter.

3. Whatever the connection in the progress of divine revelation, it will forever be true that this chapter, like all the Bible, has God's message for the believing heart (v. 1). This IS God's Word and affirms His purpose for His own. He is concerned about light being spread in the place of His habitation, the tabernacle (v. 3).

4. Study carefully the truths here as they relate to the record in the Bible and God's people Israel and the Church. You will agree that God is interested in the maximum of light where He dwells! Here are points to prove the statement:-

1. INSTITUTION OF THE LIGHT.

a. By the Lord. vv. 1, 2.

Here is something which needs to be reaffirmed as often as possible. We are not dealing with the word of man, but the Word of God. Indeed, just as God spoke to Moses (v. 1 cf. Heb. 1:1), so He commanded the children of Israel (v. 2). The Hebrew verb in this instance is the common one for giving a charge. What is stated here is therefore the institution of God Himself!

b. For the people. v. 2

This is an interesting detail which is often overlooked in the study of the feasts and O. T. institutions. Not all was done by the priests and Levites. The people were vitally involved! Here, the thought is that the tribe of Reuben and Asher were obliged to send up to the Holy Place the produce of their olive trees. This was to make every Israelite learn that he had an interest in the unseen work of the sanctuary! The people of God still must learn this lesson!

c. With the material. v. 24

God carefully outlines the substance with which the people were to be occupied in this matter. Two items are listed:

- 1) Oil. This oil is described in two important ways: it is pure and beaten. The former word is from a Hebrew root meaning "pure" in the sense of absence of foreign material. This is clean oil. The fact that this oil did not have impurities in it notes that here is a substance which was the finest. God expects this and not just the left-overs.

The other aspect of this oil is that it was to be "beaten." This means that the oil was to be crushed. Here is a strong Hebrew verb meaning to hammer or forge. The fruit was virtually beaten to pieces, hence the oil was squeezed out of the olive. The preparation of the oil as outlined here is in complete agreement with the information provided Moses earlier (Ex. 27:20,21).

- 2) Candlestick. It is true that the people did not have any direct connection here, but the candlestick was the receptacle into which the oil brought was to be poured. Instructions for this are also given earlier in the Word (Ex. 25:31-40; 37:17-24). The seven branched candlestick is the common Jewish "Menorah" which is the transliteration of the Hebrew noun. The term "pure" as used here signifies that the candle-

stick was "bright and shining." The thought is that the instrument with which the Lord was to be worshipped were of certain cleanliness.

2. SIGNIFICATION OF THE LIGHT.

a. Historically.

It would be strange if one did not see in the O. T. the fact that God chose Israel as a peculiar people (Deut. 7:6; 32:8; Ezek. 5:5). No other nation has this special place in the purpose of the Lord. Just as the oil in the candlestick speaks of the light to be borne by the lampstand, so Israel was to be this light for the Lord among the nations. Surely a part of the reason Israel is called the "servant of the Lord" is to be found in this mighty truth (Isa. 41:8). How tragically Israel failed in this divine mission is the story of the Babylonian captivity and the present world-wide dispersion (Diaspora). The light of the nation failed to shine in the darkness!

b. Prophetically.

The lampstand of Israel is out now, but not forever. This is the blessed truth of the prophets and N.T. revelation. The Bible clearly teaches that the nation will be reborn and clothed with the garment of salvation (Zech. 3). When this takes place, the nation will be restored to a place of testimony and blessing. This is all described under the figure, though literal truth, of a candlestick (Zech. 4). Then, like Levi to Israel, so Israel will be to the world (Isa. 60:1-3; 62:1, 2). Similarly, as oil speaks of the Holy Spirit in the Bible, so Israel's renewed opportunity for witness and blessing will be through the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6). What a day is coming for her!

c. Dispensationally.

When Israel was set aside due to her abysmal failure, the candlestick was passed on to the Church, the Body of Christ (Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15). Today, during this present Age of Grace which commenced with the Day of Pentecost, the Church is