

Exodus 25:31-40

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The next item described for the tabernacle was the golden lampstand. As with the ark and the table of showbread, the instructions for its design are very detailed. It was to be placed on the opposite side from the Table of Showbread (Exodus 26:35), and its purpose was to provide light in the tabernacle.

After discussing how to build the Table of Showbread, the LORD then explains how to create the *lampstand* that was to be used in worship in the tabernacle. The *lampstand* or candelabra (Heb. “menorah,” literally “place of light”) was to be built according to very detailed specifications:

It was to be made of *pure gold*, signifying its importance and value in the worship of the LORD.

Like the cherubim described in v. 18, *the lampstand and its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work*, implying that it was to be made with meticulous care by the goldsmiths. The phrase *hammered work* anticipates decorative embellishments created by the craftsmen. In addition, it was not to be made of several individual pieces, but instead *its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be of one piece with it*. God chose to have the *lampstand* be decorated with images from His creation, *bulbs and flowers*.

The *lampstand* was to have *six branches* which were to *go out from its sides* (v. 32). Protruding from the central stem, they were to build it with *three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches of the lampstand from its other side*. Some have seen these *branches* as representing the six days of creation in [Genesis 1](#).

The *lampstand* was to be decorated with *three cups shaped like almond blossoms in the one branch, along with 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*. The *cups* could be the blooms of the *almond blossoms*. The significance of the *almond blossoms* is that the almond tree is the earliest to bloom and was a harbinger of the coming of spring, and new life. It also produces its flowers before the leaves emerge. It is a picture of consistency, and represents the LORD’s consistency in keeping

His word as the Suzerain and covenant maker, and His unending watchfulness over His people ([Jeremiah 1:11 – 12](#)). Aaron possessed an “almond rod” that miraculously bloomed to confirm that he was the LORD’s appointed high priest ([Numbers 17:8](#))

Verses 34 – 36 describe what was to decorate *the lampstand*. There were to be *four cups shaped like almond blossoms, its bulbs and its flowers*. The design is quite detailed—*A bulb shall be under the first pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the second pair of branches coming out of it, and a bulb under the third pair of branches coming out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand* (v. 35). All of these items (*cups, bulbs, and flowers*) were parts of the almond tree. As seen with other items, *their bulbs and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it shall be one piece of hammered work of pure gold* (v. 36).

We have an idea of the appearance of the lampstand (Heb. “menorah”) from a depiction engraved on the Arch of Titus in Rome, where the menorah was displayed as a valuable item captured in the siege of Jerusalem.

Also, the craftsmen were to *make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it*. These seven lamps, one at the top of each of the six branches and one on the center post, were to provide light in the tabernacle. There are seven lights in all. Seven often appears in the Bible to represent completion, fullness. The Creation was completed and on the seventh day God rested from that completion ([Genesis 2:2](#)). This is remembered in each week, when the people are to rest from their labors on the Sabbath. The *lampstand* (“menorah”) having seven lights might represent that Jesus is the full and complete light of the world ([John 8:12](#)).

Its snuffers and their trays shall be of pure gold. A *snuffer* was a set of tongs (to be made of *pure gold*) used to cut the wicks of the candles on the *lampstand*.

Everything associated with the *lampstand* must be made from a talent of pure gold, along with all these utensils (v. 39). A talent was approximately 75 pounds (around 34 kilograms). Using a gold price of \$1500 USD per ounce, that means the *lampstand* (“menorah”) and associated utensils was made of gold worth \$1.8 million. Instead of prescribing dimensions for the *lampstand* (*menorah*) God prescribed a volume of material.

Finally, the LORD reminds Moses that he was to *make* these things *after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain*. Everything was to be made exactly as the LORD had specified while Moses was on Mount Sinai.

The purpose of the *lampstand* was to provide light in the tabernacle during worship. It was to be tended to twice a day and the oil for the lamp was to be provided by worshippers ([Exodus 27:20 – 21](#)).

Since these are copies of true things in heaven ([Hebrews 9:24](#)) the lampstand also likely represents Jesus. Jesus Christ proclaimed that He is the “Light of the world” ([John 8:12, 9:5](#)). In Revelation, the churches are referred to as “lampstands” ([Revelation 1:12, 20](#)), implying that New Testament believers were (and are) to be like Christ and represent Him (the Light of the world) to the world. If Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, then the followers of the Light must also be lights ([Matthew 5:14](#)).

The Suzerain (Ruler) God who demanded exclusive loyalty from His vassals ([Exodus 20:3](#)) found it necessary to teach them the proper way to worship Him. Each of the elements of the tabernacle were thoughtful and intentional, and pointed to a greater truth. Its intent is to provide for the people a constant reminder of their commitment to follow in God’s ways, and the covenant between them ([Exodus 24:3](#)). The ultimate beneficiary of remembering and following in God’s commands would be Israel. God gave His commands so that Israel would live in self-governance, choosing to love and care for their neighbors and live in harmony and fellowship.

This subject of proper worship, and remembrance, which properly began after the covenant ratification in [Exodus 24](#), will continue throughout the book of Exodus. It will also be discussed in length in Leviticus and the early chapters of Numbers.

In all ages, worship, when done in spirit and truth, should bring glory to God, by acknowledging the truth of His nature ([Psalms 96:8](#)). But it also focuses the attention of the worshipper on the fellowship available with God, to walk in His ways and receive His blessings, just as with God and His people, Israel.

The principle of worship transcends time, and is true for New Testament believers. Jesus resisted one of the temptations from Satan by responding “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve” ([Luke 4:8](#)). Jesus was quoting from the Law ([Deuteronomy 6:13](#)). It is worth noting that service to God is an integral part of worship. This is also echoed by the Apostle Paul in Romans, when he says that being transformed by the

renewing of our mind is a means to present our “bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” ([Romans 12:1](#)). That is to say “Live the commands of Jesus in daily life.”

This is, the Bible says “an act of “spiritual worship.” The tabernacle was a way to remind, teach, and connect with the people, to aid them in following in obedience to God’s commands, the way of life and fulfillment. The New Testament believer is to live life as a living tabernacle.

Biblical Text:

³¹ “Then you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand *and* its base and its shaft are to be made of hammered work; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers shall be *of one piece* with it. ³² Six branches shall go out from its sides; three branches of the lampstand from its one side and three branches of the lampstand from its other side. ³³ 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; ³⁴ and in the lampstand four cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, its bulbs and its flowers. ³⁵ A bulb shall be under the *first* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *second* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *third* pair of branches *coming* out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. ³⁶ Their bulbs and their branches *shall be of one piece* with it; all of it shall be one piece of hammered work of pure gold. ³⁷ Then you shall make its lamps seven *in number*; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it. ³⁸ Its snuffers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold. ³⁹ It shall be made from a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. ⁴⁰ See that you make *them* after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.