

“And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded... The candle-stick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for light (Ex. 35:10,14)... And thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof (Ex. 40:4)... And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to CAUSE THE LAMP TO BURN ALWAYS. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord; it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.” Ex. 27:20,21.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive BEATEN FOR THE LIGHT, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute for ever in your generations.” (Lev. 24:1-3)

“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.” (Jn. 8:12)

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Mat. 5:14-16)

The ancient Jews were commanded to make a huge, 7-pronged golden candlestick, and fill it with the purest of olive oil, beaten fresh every day, to be kept filled and kept burning night and day, 24/7/365 – as they say, all day and all night, every day, and every year, year in and year out, for ever – to be kept just outside the veil in the holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and later in the Temple of Solomon on Mt. Zion. All of which was to be kept and performed – meticulously and perfectly -- in line with the rule laid down for the entire tabernacle; to wit:

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith he, that thou make ALL THINGS according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” (Heb. 8:5)

And it is more than a little significant to me, that the Old Testament quote which the apostle Paul uses here was spoken originally by the Lord God in connection with the seven-pronged golden candlestick and oil for the eternal light in the immediate context; to wit:

“And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof; and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of PURE GOLD. Of a talent of PURE GOLD shall he make it, with all these vessels. AND LOOK THAT THOU MAKE THEM AFTER THEIR PATTERN, WHICH WAS SHOWED THEE IN THE MOUNT.” (Ex. 25:37-40)

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Further, *“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work; ACCORDING UNTO THE PATTERN WHICH THE LORD HAD SHOWED MOSES.”* Num. 8:1-4. And, only when Moses had completed the creating and the rearing up of the tabernacle – with the light brightly burning from the crushed olive oil in the candlestick – did the Lord by His presence within the tabernacle signal His approval and His acceptance; to wit:

“Thus did Moses; according to ALL that the Lord commanded him, so did he. And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, THAT THE TABERNACLE WAS REARED UP... And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So MOSES FINISHED THE WORK. – (BANG !) – Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TABERNACLE.”
(Ex. 40:16,17,33,34)

Similarly, some 500 years later, when the Temple of Solomon was finished in the building and contents thereof, we read: *“And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord; the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the show-bread was, AND THE CANDLESTICKS OF PURE GOLD, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle (the ark), with the flowers, AND THE LAMPS, and the tongs of gold... And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. – (BANG !) – And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”* 1 Kgs. 7:48,49; 8:4,10,11.

Now, think with me, and take the marvelous lesson and the meaning of the message; to wit: If all had been in meticulous order, all, I say, all EXCEPT *“the two tables of stone, which Moses put there”* – (i.e., put in the ark of the covenant) – *“at [Mt.] Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.”* 1 Kgs. 8:9.

Remember, the tables of stone are within the ark (like a chest) of the covenant, covered by the mercy seat, and two golden creatures (called, cherubims) thereon, with their wings touching; and all within the holy of holies (sometimes called the most holy place), behind the holy place and separated by a veil; and remember that only the high priest could ever go into the holy of holies – and he only for a short time, once a year. This makes it highly unlikely that anyone, ever, would notice that the tables of stone were missing. No one, that is, except the Lord God Almighty. Get the picture: There stands the tabernacle in all its beauty and divine glory. None but God knows that however meticulous, complete, and perfect it appears from without, the heart, the meaning of it all is missing. Does anybody think that the glory of the Lord would have filled the tabernacle of the Lord under such circumstances?

Similarly, when King Solomon had spent probably \$Billions in today’s equivalent money, and all is in readiness for the Lord to signal in some supernatural way that He was pleased and satisfied with His house on earth, does anybody think that the glory of the Lord would have filled the house of the Lord if the ark in the holy of holies was EMPTY? Would Solomon’s flowery oratory and prayers have been enough to make up for the missing tables of stone in the ark? To wit:

“Then spake Solomon, The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel; (and all the congregation of Israel stood;) and he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it.” (1 Kgs. 8:12-15)

I say, that notwithstanding all the pious platitudes of King Solomon, and despite the \$Billions spent to build the Temple and to place therein the tabernacle – all would come to nothing unless the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. And the glory of the Lord would never have filled the house of the Lord if the two tables of stone had been missing from inside the Ark of the Covenant. And, the same is true about any other item missing – of the literally thousands of items that were prescribed for the building of the tabernacle (!) – all pursuant to the simple command of God; to wit:

“See, saith he, that thou MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWED TO THEE IN THE MOUNT.” (Heb. 8:5)

All and every part of the tabernacle testified to and symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ. Accurate notions of God, and His Attributes, were – and absolutely are today – communicated to the minds and hearts of God’s Elect in the reading and study of the tabernacle in all its parts. For example, the golden candlestick – burning continually – night and day – fueled by pure oil pressed fresh from the finest of sun-ripened olives each day – is a wondrous type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the perpetual glow of the golden candlestick, the entire tabernacle would have no light, and all its other furnishings and items would be plunged into utter darkness. Hence you see that when the risen Savior threatens the church of Ephesus with sudden removal of her candlestick, the warning is dire, and the meaning is that except the church of Ephesus took quick action to repent, the church of Ephesus would be plunged into complete spiritual darkness; to wit:

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” (Rev. 2:4,5)

Dreadful thought – that our church, where so often we have had the experience of the two on the road to Emmaus; to wit: ***“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” Lk. 24:32.*** And how often have we had in the church what the old preachers called, impulses upon the heart? to wit:

“Then opened he their UNDERSTANDING, that they might UNDERSTAND the scriptures... And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” (Lk. 24:45,52)

So, light in the tabernacle stands for UNDERSTANDING the scriptures. And it also stands for holy KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God; to wit: ***“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts (minds), to give the light of the KNOWLEDGE of the GLORY OF GOD in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:6.***

Thus, when the candlestick is gone, so is also the UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE and KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE is gone. Hence the absolute necessity that we have the light in the tabernacle; and that we have each and every other part and item of the tabernacle, as well; to wit: ***“For, See, saith he, that thou make ALL THINGS according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” Heb. 8:5.*** And remember that Moses was there with the Lord in the mount forty days and forty nights receiving the law. **Ex. 34:28.**

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Only after Moses complied with the building and rearing up of the tabernacle strictly according to the pattern showed Moses in the mount – I say, only then did the glory of the Lord fill the house of the Lord. And I say further, that if the tabernacle had been defective or deficient in the least part or item, the glory of the Lord would never have filled the house of the Lord. And, if the church of Ephesus becomes defective or deficient – deliberately – in the least part or item (***“thou hast left thy first love” Rev. 2:4***) – and fails, neglects and refuses to quickly remember, repent, and ***“do the first works” Rev. 2:5*** – then and in that event, the glory of the Lord will depart (Ichabod **1 Sam. 4:21**) from that church; to wit: ***“I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Rev. 2:5.*** And, beloved, all the good things that the Lord Jesus said about the church of Ephesus didn’t seem to matter very much if those people didn’t get back to loving each other as God’s co-Elect ought to love each other.

Listen to the Lord Jesus critique that church; to wit: ***“I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.” Rev. 2:2,3.***

Just think, Beloved; all those wonderful people doing all those wonderful things. But failure to love one another in the church with a pure heart fervently will cancel all these things out, and the Savior will quickly depart when the candlestick is gone; to wit:

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently... And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8.

I first borrowed the outline for this sermon, I believe, on Monday, September 30, 1957, when this church was less than two years old. The Calvinistic Baptist Church pastors from across the country were having a preaching conference in Little Rock hosted by the Little Rock Baptist Temple, a huge, no-frills building with an asphalt floor, kind of a cross between a sawdust trail floor and a more expensive concrete floor. Another young preacher friend, from Emporia, Neal Brillhart, and I drove together to the conference – and arrived to find ourselves right in the middle of the Little Rock Nine school integration squabble.

Armed troops in battle gear from the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army were everywhere – ordered by President Eisenhower to protect and escort nine black kids to enrollment in Little Rock’s all-white Central High School, in obedience to the Supreme Court’s 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education ruling. Gov. Orval Faubus had ordered the 10,000 member Arkansas National Guard to dress in battle gear and keep those 9 kids out of Central High School. Eisenhower federalized all 10,000 members of the National Guard, which he hoped would take the situation out of the hands of Gov. Faubus.

I was 26 years old at the time, and this amazing event – (which some of those preachers referred to as living in occupied territory) – sealed the experience of that Bible conference in my mind and memory. Especially do I recall one elderly Southern Baptist preacher’s sermon, which I have “borrowed” from memory, and the outline of which appears above, and the thesis of which was; to wit: ***“The glory of the Lord will never fill your church, unless you obey Heb. 8:5; to wit: “As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.”*** He then elaborated on the many ways those preachers kept God’s glory out of their churches.

I love you. Amen.