

The Mystery of the Menorah

Study 1

Revelation 1

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

Vision of the Son of Man

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, [15] his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches”.

Introduction

The *Menorah* (Heb “Lampstand”)

The 7 branched candlestick was one of the articles found in the tabernacle of Moses (Exodus 25:31-40). It was made out of gold that was hammered into a lampstand, which comprised a central stem with 3 branches on each side. The lampstand was placed in the Holy Place along with the altar on incense and the table of shewbread. The lampstand would provide the only light within the inner sanctuary of the tabernacle. Each of the lamps was supplied with oil and would be lit by the Priest.

The Menorah was one of the oldest symbols of the Jewish faith, a seven-branched candelstick used in the Temple. It has been said that the menorah is a symbol of the

nation of Israel and its mission to be "a light unto the nations." (Isaiah 42:6). The Rabbis emphasise that light is not a violent force; Israel is to accomplish its mission by setting an example, not by using force. This idea is highlighted in the vision of the Prophet Zechariah who sees a menorah (Zechariah 4:1-6)

"Not by power, or by might, but by my Holy Spirit". Each of the 7 branches are also seen to depict the 7 days of creation (Genesis 1).

In the book of Revelation, the Menorah is used as a symbol of Christ and the church. The central stem is referred to as the "servant branch" out of which all of the other branches proceed. This image is very graphic as it describes the union between Christ and the church and the way in which the Holy Spirit provides the oil that keeps the lamps burning.

The symbol of the Menorah teaches us many invaluable lessons:

1. The **Unity** of Christ and the Church. The lampstand was made out of one piece of gold.

Ephesians 4:1-6

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2. The **Purity** of the Work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church. Sanctification-Gifts and Fruit

1 Timothy 4:12

"Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity".

3. The **Victory** of Christ and the Church - light conquers the darkness. We are light of the world in Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

"For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".