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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE LAMPSTAND.

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by

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You all know something about the Bible; and you all know something about the second BOOK of the Bible; yes, you know something about the Tabernacle. I want to speak, as God shall give grace, about the Lampstand in that wonderful Tabernacle. We still call it the Candlestick, but our English word "candle" now means that which is without a tube and which simply BURNS ITSELF AWAY. The lampstand, however, had a golden tube; it was not for WAX but for OIL. It could be refilled, it could have a fresh supply always; in other words, it was a "place of light", and this is the very word which God uses. What a lovely name - not only for a thing, but for someone, or someone - "a place of light". Oh, you say, the lampstand was a THING. Yes, but a thing that was a picture, and therefore, a lovely name for Someone - "a place of light". The lampstand is brought before us about twenty times in Exodus, and again in Leviticus we find it; and then in Numbers. There were SEVERAL lampstands in the temple; there is a wonderful lampstand in the vision of Zech. 4, which leads up to the beautiful unveiling of lampstands in Revelation. Nor must we forget that the epistle to the Hebrews, which ALWAYS refers to the book of Exodus and to the book of Leviticus, speaks of the lampstand. You will say the lampstands in the temple were different. Yes, but they bring before us one thought just the same - that God weighed them all! Again, the lampstand in Zechariah is different. Yes, BUT it shows beautifully the meaning of the OIL, of which there was a supply all the time, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord". And the book of Revelation also helps to explain, for there we find the lampstand, as a picture of a called out people, with the Lord Jesus in the midst. I should not be surprised - would you? - then, if we find that the first lampstand which had a wonderful central shaft in the midst was a picture of the Lord and His

people. This would fit in with the LAST beck. should not wonder if the oil pictures the work of the Holy Spirit. But we are going along somewhat quickly.

We come back to the Tabernacle. WHERE was the lampstand? Not in the court. It was in the Holy Place. Then it was the lampstand for the ONE family! The court was not covered over, it belonged to the "day" and is a picture in one sense of the blessings which will be in the coming day of the Lord. Though God's dear people are, in one sense, now in the court, and there they have a laver, there they have water (picturing God's Word), yet God has not yet claimed the court - it will be claimed in the day of the Lord. In the midst of the unclaimed court, where the Lord Jesus was crucified, - for the altar was in the court, they live owning their need for cleansing, the altar speaks of Christ's life, and the sacrifice of His death, - and so it was in the court, for He died on earth! But the court at present unclaimed, although there they have a laver. They always feel their need of washing as they go along their life of service, and waiting for the Lord. But their real place is in the holy room which belonged to the priestly family, all joined to Aaron - and all God's people are joined to Christ. Inside the holy place was the lampstand and the lampstand belonged to the NIGHT especially. And so God's people own that the present time of service and of worship is in one sense the night.

Inside that beautiful room, with its reminder of blood and salvation everywhere, with its golden glory and its redemption sockets - inside that room there were three pieces of furniture. On the north side, the right hand for the worshipper, the same side as the place of killing the sacrifice in the court, was a table, as if to tell us where there is a sacrifice outside there is REFRESHMENT, there is FELLOWSHIP, there is FOOD inside; and the word "north" means the hidden place - to tell of the HIDDEN preciousness of everything that is in Christ

Over against the table on the other side was a lampstand, as if to remind us that the two must be together. If I feed on the Lord Jesus, if I feed on God's Truth, there must be the light, there must be the lampstand. Of this lampstand we read in Exod. 25, where we are told it was pure gold of beaten work, and the 31st verse speaks of its shaft, branches, bowls, knobs, flowers. The shaft is first, and remarkably, the branches come out both sides of the lampstand. Then the shaft itself is the lampstand, and if we read on we find that after mentioning the branches in verse 33 that come out of the lampstand we notice the words "And in the lampstand four bowls". Plainly, therefore, the "centre" piece is the lampstand; but yet we find that the whole is viewed as the lampstand, for when God's servant made it we do not read that he made the lampstand with the shaft and the branches as different. "Of beaten work made he the lampstand", and all the parts are viewed as the same; and THEN we have brought before us in the fortieth chapter "He put the lampstand ... and he lighted the lamps". Evidently the WHOLE was the one lampstand. Ah, here is our difficulty. No, here is our difficulty met. The centre-shaft pictures Christ Who GIVES HIS NAME TO HIS PEOPLE. The branches are called by the SAME name - the disciples were called CHRIST-ians. They are made members of Christ. Take away the shaft, where are the branches? They have gone too. Cut out the shaft, THEY fall to the ground - no standing, no usefulness, no light, nothing WITHOUT CHRIST; everything with Christ. Out in the courtyard God's people are pictured as resting on a foundation, but here we read "One beaten work of pure gold". Here they are viewed, not as resting upon a Saviour, but rather as members of a Saviour. Where they rest upon a Saviour the material is not gold but copper, or again we read of the resting on silver sockets, setting forth redemption. But where we have the gold, there is UNION with Christ the branches are joined, not only linked but joined

with the Centre, joined to Christ. In the tabernacle, as a rule, where we have pictures of Christ we are told the MEASUREMENT; where we have pictures of God's people we are not told the measurement. The measurement of the lampstand is not given. Its WEIGHT is given, for God knows all about His people. So we are reminded of the Lord's people joined to the Lord Jesus, raised up from the dead. Oh, you say, why raised up from the dead? In His earthly life He Himself said He remained alone, but when He died He brought forth MUCH FRUIT (John 12.24). It is only by His death we can be joined to Him. How was that pictured? Where you have the JOINING to the Lord Jesus there is no wood. The boards - wood covered with gold, rest upon the sockets, not joined. The cherubim are gold. Are they joined to the ark with wood? No, they are joined to the mercy-seat - no wood, only gold. Why? Wood is a picture of Christ's earthly life when He humbled Himself. Gold shows us Christ raised from the dead, God's people are joined to Him, He is raised from the dead. They are members of Christ. So is it here. Only the cherubim bring before us God's people in glory, joined to Christ, viewed in glory. Here we have God's people with the Lord Jesus in the midst of them. For what purpose? There is a verse which says "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee". "Ah", you say, "singing praise: but here we have a lampstand giving light". But is this the Light of the world? WHO first said the Light of the world? The Lord Jesus Himself said the words, but in quite a different position. His people ARE to be the lights in the world, but there we have the figure, a city set on an hill. A lampstand is quite a different picture. It is INSIDE the house. It is important for God's people to shine as lights in the world, but there is something which is, in one sense, more important than being a light in the world, and that is the shining of praiseful worship BEFORE GOD. Do you know one

word for oil means to be shining? Oil was meant to shine brightly, and the word for "praise" means that which was bright. We find in Scripture there is a reference to the music of light. Do you know that light sings? God shows us that light has a music, and praise has a BRIGHTNESS. You think of shining and singing as quite different. God does not think of them as quite different. The two are together. So Heb. 2 fits in beautifully. Here then we have brought before us God's people praising, and the Lord Jesus in the midst. How are they to praise? In heavenly places, - Hebrews shows that. The tabernacle pictures heavenly places. Ah, but I said, "How?" That seems rather an answer to the question "Where?" The "where" and the "how" are joined together in this place. And now we ask the question again "How worship?" We will go a step further. The lampstand branches need the oil; how much oil would those branches receive if it were not for the central shaft? None, if they received all from this. Certainly this is so with God's people. - If we receive the Holy Spirit, it is because we are united with Christ. So here we have a reference to the beautiful character of praise, and a remembrance of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. There is a verse which says, "Through Him we have access in one Spirit unto the Father", and here we have the praise to God the Father of those who are joined to the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, - the oil. Do you wonder that in Zechariah the oil was CONTINUALLY supplied? Surely not; the wonder is not that it was continually supplied, the wonder would be if it was NOT continually supplied. God's people should always be praising. Now you see why we have brought before us the table one side, the lampstand the other. What a wonderful subject this is. We must come back again.

The BEATEN work brings before us what happened that made it all possible. The death of

the Lord Jesus is hinted, but He is raised from the dead and so His people are called branches. Everything here suggests LIFE. Branches, is that the only reference? No, we have brought before us flowers and bowls made like ALMONDS. Here is an almond tree, an almond tree of gold, shining brightly in the holy place. Why a golden ALMOND tree? The word "almond" suggests expectation in the Hebrew. Ah, now we understand it; what is the Lord Jesus expecting? To come again! What are His people expecting? The last prayer in Scripture is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus". We can well realize, therefore, that when praise is seen in the midst of God's people, there will be the thought of the coming again of the Lord Jesus, which they want and for which He is looking. Here is the almond tree of expectation. And what kind of expectation? Not just what I want or what you want or what someone else wants - something better than that. In the book of Jeremiah we have the real idea of expectation. "Jeremiah", the Lord says to the prophet, "What seest thou?" and he said, "I see a rod of an almond tree" and the Lord says, "I will watch for My word to perform it". An expecting what God says in His words of truth - and that is the idea of the praise of God's people in the holy place. They are expecting God will keep His Word, feeding on the food of God's Truth, on the food of the Lord Jesus, and expecting that God will keep His word, and therefore full of praise. What wonderful meetings all God's people ought to have, if these are pictures of them! Notice the precious thought - A living people joined to the Lord Jesus on resurrection ground by the power of the Holy Spirit, praising, ever looking for the coming of the Lord, expecting to see the precious Saviour Who died for them, the Lord Jesus as the One before the Father. Surely the meetings ought to be wonderful meetings. But would not you like to be part of such a lamp-stand? Boys and girls, it is a glorious privilege to be saved, not only to be saved from judgment in

the future but to be made a member of the Lord Jesus NOW AND FOR EVER. It IS a glorious privilege. How interestingly we are told that the three branches on the one side and the three branches on the other side had bowls, knops, flowers. It is not quite clear how many knops they had. It looks as though they had three bowls in each branch, and three knops and three flowers. If so, there must have been eighteen of each. Then we read the central shaft had four - that makes twentytwo of each. Also we read they had further knops joining each pair of branches across - that would make twentyfive. So we have twentytwo bowls like unto almonds, twentyfive knops and the twentytwo flowers. Why twentytwo? Twentytwo is twice eleven. Eleven in Scripture seems to suggest WORSHIP. There is one psalm of worship which has twentytwo parts. The whole alphabet of praise; and the Lord Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega in the Later Scripture, and His people are to have a whole alphabet of expectation, a whole alphabet of praise. There is not much room to use the alphabet in grumbling then. All the letters are made up into words of praise. That is the character of those who are joined to the Lord. Do you wonder that eleven and twentytwo are the numbers of praise in Scripture? The very number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. But twentyfive - ah, there is a reason for this. Twentyfive knops; five by five. And five in Scripture brings before us God's own use of little things. God's use of them, and so His people realize how God uses them. I am glad to say the Lord Jesus Christ is marked out here as the One in the centre, and that He has MORE knops and MORE almonds than His people, anointed with the oil of gladness above those who have a share with Him (Heb. 1. 9). But He is in the midst and He leads their praise. What delightful meetings there should be, and further, do you not think it is enjoyable to see that EACH branch is beautifully arranged, for there is no confusion - three one

side, three the other, - Jews and Gentiles brought together, and all arranged IN the Lord Jesus. Do you not think it is beautiful to see that not only EACH branch had a knop, but a further knop joined each to one on the other side (Ex. 25.35). It is all joining, joined to the centre, joined to one another. And that was one of the very lessons in the cherubim. The cherubim looked toward the mercy-seat and one another. It is impossible for God's people to love one another UNLESS they love the Lord Jesus; but if they love the Lord Jesus they MUST love one another. Here is the beautiful view brought before us of the privileges of God's people. ALL the branches were the same; the Lord loves all His people; they are all golden, they are all blessed, they are all to praise IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. We are reminded in Exod. 30 that Aaron lit the lamps at even, or rather the margin puts it more clearly, "He made or caused the lamps to ascend at even". "Caused to ascend" - this word is just like the burnt offering word. Here is the GOING UP of worship. There MAY be the thought that some of the lamps were put out in the daytime, but the centre one may have been kept alight always. Anyhow, it is quite clear the Lord Jesus is One Who praises always. The causing to ascend at even is a very wonderful thought - the light of worship and praise goes up before God the Father because of the Burnt Offering. Well may God's people praise because the Lord Jesus was the Burnt Offering. Will you just turn with me to Lev. 24. Here we read "Command the Children of Israel that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light to cause to ascend the lamps 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". And verse 4 adds "He shall order the lamps upon the pure lampstand before the Lord continually". Boys and girls, how delightful it is when one is saved, to be BEFORE THE LORD continually, and to be able

to praise Him continually. Oh, how rich are the blessings which God so graciously gives away. Just turn to Num. 8. Here we read, "Speak unto Aaron and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the lampstand (the centre-shaft is the lampstand). And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the lampstand, as the Lord commanded Moses. And this work of the lampstand was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof". Here we have brought before us from the shaft to the flowers, ALL was one beaten work of pure gold. Christ and His beautiful people, with the flowers and fruit. Ah, there must be fruit when there is union with Him. Fruit is because of being joined to Him and there is the fruit of worship. Have we any other verse for that? Yes - "That is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name", and THIS comes in the epistle to the Hebrews itself.

And now, boys and girls, remember once more that the lampstand was in the holy place for those in one family, God's family; it pictured those who are joined to the Lord Jesus. Have YOU been joined to the Lord Jesus? You know ABOUT these things; you have heard ABOUT God's words hundreds of times, but when we think of the riches of grace toward those for whom the Lord Jesus died, that they might be joined to Him and able to praise and to worship and to serve, it must pain us to think there are those who do not know Him as their Saviour, although they have heard so often of Him. But what a refreshment it is when a boy or a girl, a man or a woman is brought to be able to say, "That Saviour is my Saviour, I rest on Him for life, I am joined to Him, I am made glorious in Him, I receive power from Him to please God, to praise, to worship, held up by Him, receiving everything through Him! The riches of salvation make us long that you too may know our Saviour to-day.

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