# The Lampstand

Mike Davies 21 October 2025




In the Holy Place of the tabernacle stood the golden lampstand—the menorah—crafted with exquisite detail. God commanded Moses to make it in Exodus 25:31-40, from a single piece of pure gold and adorned with sixty-six decorative elements: from the centre to one side, there were thirty-nine decorations, and twenty-seven on the other. This is no coincidence. Thirty-nine plus twenty-seven, equaling sixty-six, equates to the number of books in the Old Testament and New Testament, assuring us of God's sovereignty in preserving His word. The books included in the canon of Scripture were known by, and determined by Him, from the beginning. The design was not mere ornamentation; it pointed to the unity, completeness, and authority of God's Word. This picture is reinforced throughout Scripture itself. The Old and New Testaments repeatedly teach that God's Word is light for His people. For example: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

The priests could do nothing in the tabernacle without this light. It was their only source of illumination as they served God (Exodus 27:20–21). Likewise, as His priests, we need to realise that we are reliant on the Scriptures in our own lives and ministries: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Yet even this beautiful lampstand would have been useless without oil, which represented the

Holy Spirit (Exodus 30:7–8). Without the Spirit, the Word remains lifeless. Paul reminds us:
“The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6)

The lampstand illustrates this perfectly: the form alone cannot shine; it needs oil. Similarly, Scripture by itself cannot bring life or understanding—it requires the Spirit to illuminate it, to make it living and active in our hearts (Hebrews 4:12).

The menorah teaches a crucial lesson: we do not worship the Scripture itself, but its Author (John 5:39, Luke 24:27Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44–45).
“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Indeed, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they read their Scriptures avidly, but they missed Him, the author of those very Scriptures: “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” (John 5:39-40)

The Word of God is essential—it is our highest authority—but it is living because it reveals Christ (John 1:1,14) and works through the Spirit. Without the Word, the Spirit has nothing to illuminate; without the Spirit, the Word cannot shine. And without both, the priests could not serve—just as a church cannot function without Word and Spirit joined together (1 Corinthians 3:9, Hebrews 8:5). If we believe the Scriptures, we must accept the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit who points us to Christ, and if we listen to the Spirit, we must hold Scripture as our highest authority. Without the lampstand, there was nothing to hold the oil. Attempting ministry without both is dangerous: if the oil is carelessly spilled before being lit, then there is danger of the house burning down.

The priests were instructed to trim the lampstand every morning and evening (Exodus 30:7–8, Leviticus 24:3–4), keeping the wicks clean and the flame burning. This daily tending is a picture for us: the Word and the Spirit must be nurtured regularly in our lives. True worship and ministry are not built on routine alone; they require attention, care, and dependence on God (Psalm 119:11, Joshua 1:8). As we read in Acts 2:42, the early church was devoted to the apostles’ teaching: they were devoted to the care of the lampstand! They were devoted to the teaching of the Word because it pointed them to Jesus and gave them the light needed for life and ministry. We need it no less today.

The golden lampstand was more than a piece of furniture. It was a daily, living picture of Scripture illuminated by the Spirit, guiding priests in worship and service. Today, as a Kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9), we still need to ensure the lampstand is tended carefully and filled with oil so that it can shine brightly, and point us forward to Christ, the true Light of the world (Hebrews 1:3).