

Being a Menorah

Introduction:

This week we will start with the New Testament portion and then we will look at the Torah and we will conclude with the Haftarah.

New Testament:

The New Testament portion is 1 Corinthians 10:6-13. Just before the selection for this week, are verses that discuss the Jewish heritage. The Messianic church's heritage includes being redeemed from slavery in Egypt, the wilderness experience and entering into the land of Israel.¹ The stories of how the Lord saved, lead and protected His people were given to us, so we would not worship idols.²

1 Corinthians 10:11 (*Contemporary English Version*) **These things happened to them as a warning to us. All this was written in the Scriptures to teach us who live in these last days.**

Since this verse tells us things that happened to the children of Israel are written for us, we will shift our focus to how the Lord the protected His people in the Torah.

Torah:

The Torah portion includes Numbers Chapters 8 to 12. Rabbi Harvey Fields identifies two major themes in the parashat. One involves understanding and responding to complaints and the other is understanding people's motives before criticizing them.³ Those are good themes, but today we will be looking at a different theme in the three portions of Scriptures.

Numbers 8:1-4 (*Contemporary English Version*) **The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps on the lampstand so they shine toward the front." Aaron obeyed and placed the lamps as he was told. The lampstand was made of hammered gold from its base to the decorative flowers on top, exactly like the pattern the LORD had described to Moses.**

The menorah or candelabrum, was made of a sheet of solid gold.⁴ A menorah is a light or a lamp. In Revelation, a lamp represents the church of Yeshua.⁵ You are part of the Messiah's church. You are solid gold. Valuable beyond belief. Take your weight in ounces. Multiply that figure by the price of gold per ounce and you will get a wee bit of an idea of how valuable you really are to the Lord. That will make you shelve your plans for diets and exercise plans!

In these verses, the Lord commands Moses to install the candelabrum or menorah.⁶ A menorah has seven branches, symbolizing God's life-giving power.⁷ Seven is a number representing wholeness and completeness.⁸ The menorah could show the fullness of God's life-giving and light-giving presence to His people and to the entire world.⁹ Light and fire also represent God's "life-giving presence" and blessings.¹⁰

No other god can throw light and life on his people like the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Our God threw an overwhelming amount of light and life on the earth when Messiah Yeshua was

¹Merrill F. Unger. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 634.

²1 Corinthians 6:6-7.

³Harvey J. Fields. *A Torah Commentary for Our Times*. (New York: UAHC Press, 1993), 28.

⁴Wenham, 94.

⁵Walter Riggins. *The Daily Study Bible: Numbers*. (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1983), 63.

⁶Fields, 28.

⁷Gordon J. Wenham. *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), 94.

⁸Riggins, 63.

⁹Riggins, 63.

¹⁰Wenham, 95.

raised from the ground on a cross.

When the temple was dedicated, God moved in and consumed the sacrifice.¹¹ But the Lord did not light the menorah. Aaron was responsible for lighting the menorah.¹²

The temple menorah reminded the priests of ancient Israel that they were to be a light to the world.¹³ The menorah here is a reminder to us that we are to take the light to the world. When the priests and people failed to obey the Lord and to worship Him as He commanded, their light of witness grew dim.¹⁴ Our call to obey and worship the Lord is a command given that we might be a light to the world. Obedience is an act of service, not a demanding job.

The lamps were arranged in such a way that the light always fell on the shewbread. This illustrates the idea that God's people are to always live in the Lord's presence.¹⁵

Haftarah:

The Haftarah portion comes from Zechariah chapter 2, verse 14 to chapter 4, verse 7.

The book of Zechariah has a Messianic emphasis that is unique among the minor prophets of the Tanakh.¹⁶

Zechariah sets out to do what might seem like the impossible. He is trying to encourage the Jewish people who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple.¹⁷

In the first portion of this chapter, we see the context of the Haftarah portion. An angel gives the prophet a dream. In the dream, the prophet is shown a gold menorah. A partial interpretation of the meaning of the menorah is given in verses 4 to 6.

Zechariah 4:4-6 (*Contemporary English Version*) **"But, sir, what do these mean?"**

⁵Then he asked, "Don't you know?" "No sir," I replied.

⁶So the angel explained that it was the following message of the LORD to Zerubbabel: I am the LORD All-Powerful. So don't depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit.

The rest of the explanation is given toward the end of Chapter 4. The menorah represents God's eyes and his perfect ability to see what takes place on the earth.¹⁸

The Lord sees all. But that is nothing to fear. Because the Lord sees all and is on our side, we can have confidence in situations that appear overwhelming. God's eyes are looking for ways to help His children.

Doing something impossible? At work? In your home? At church? Serving in a situation that really feels hopeless. God is watching. His eyes are searching. Because the Lord is watching, you know that you " . . . **don't depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit.**"

Conclusion:

As believers, as children of the King, we are left with a task too. We are left with the task of being a menorah to those around us. We are to spotlight the Lord, to bring assurance to those with heavy loads that the Lord is watching, that He cares.

¹¹Warren W. Wiersbe. *Bible Exposition Commentary: Pentateuch*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Victor, 2001), 322.

¹²Wiersbe, 322.

¹³Wiersbe, 322.

¹⁴Wiersbe expresses a similar thought on page 322.

¹⁵Wenham, 95.

¹⁶Unger, 435.

¹⁷Kenneth Barker, et. al, eds. *The NIV Study Bible: New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1985), 1400.

¹⁸Refer to Zechariah 4:10.