

Holiness to the Lord – walking in the light

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Introduction

We have heard recently that the lampstand speaks to us about the spiritual body, the church. We have received understanding on the way in which the lamp interfaces with the lampstand so that a lampstand is effectively shining light. The first thing we note is that the lampstand within the holy place is a symbol of the fellowship of light. We cannot have light without fellowship, or fellowship without light.

The apostle Paul used the symbol of a lamp set upon a lampstand to portray the apostolic ministry in which he and his fellow presbyters were engaged.

A star in the hand of Christ is an *aggelos* presbytery which is described as ‘seven lamps’ and refers to the fullness of lamp-light for the whole lampstand church, which includes all of the congregations which belong to that lampstand. The leaders of a local congregation are part of the presbytery whose responsibility is to minister the fullness of light from Christ’s hand to the lampstand church. In this way, each lamp brings the fullness of light to a congregation.

The lamp is set in the receptacle of a flower which belongs to a lampstand. Paul said that when this happens, it shines the light of salvation to the whole world. When a lamp is set within the flower of the lampstand, it shines the fullness of light from Christ’s hand which is being ministered by the presbytery. The fullness of light shines in the fellowship of a church, and then from the church, or to express it another way, as this light is shone from the lamp, the church itself can reflect and shine that light.

We now understand that a flower on the lampstand refers to a church congregation and that each petal of a flower symbolises or represents every member of that congregation in which the lamp is being set. The lamp is shining the fullness of the light of a ‘star’ which belongs to Christ’s hand. The lamp is being set – that lamp-light is set – in a congregation. The petals of that flower which symbolises the congregation, are all the individual members of that church gathering.

These notes focus on our sanctification as petals of the flower of the lampstand, and our participation in the shining of the light of fellowship. We are all supposed to be shining lights. Phi 2:15. The light of the presbytery shines on the petals of the flower of the golden lampstand, which has been formed to reflect and focus the light in the front of the lampstand in the manner of a mirror.

Remember that the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church, ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification...’ 1Th 4:3. The light that each person ministers through body ministry, in sanctification as a son of God, is the light of the gospel of sonship that shines

from the face of Christ into the hearts of the hearers. Through this ministry, the sons of God are receiving the light of the knowledge of their sonship from the face of Christ.

The light is first one Spirit, and is then the fellowship of the word which is 'the word from the beginning'. Joh 1:1-5. This is the word of the Father which contains in it the word that belongs to the name of every son of God. When that light, or that fellowship in the word, is set in the fellowship of a congregation, the light that is shining is the light pertaining to everyone's name as a son of God. They are looking into the face of Christ as it shines like a mirror, and are receiving into their hearts, the knowledge of the glory of God, which is the knowledge of their sonship. Every one of us is to shine the light as we participate in this *ministry of light* as members in particular of the body of Christ. We are all to receive that ministry from one another. It is a fellowship of giving and receiving!

Seeing and receiving the light of life

When the apostle John was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and he received the revelation of Jesus Christ, he described Jesus' appearance. John said that Christ had eyes as a flame of fire and His countenance, or face, was like the sun shining in its strength. John also described how Christ was in the midst of seven lampstands and was dressed in priestly garments. We know that Jesus explained that the seven lampstands are the seven churches. Rev 1.

When the prophet Zechariah saw the vision of the gold lampstand with its seven lamps, the word of the Lord came to him saying that the seven lamps are the eyes of the Lord. Zec 4:2,10. This immediately connects us to the face of Christ. The lamps are shining the same light that John saw in Christ's eyes which were as a flame of fire.

Matthew recounted that Jesus was with Peter, James and John on a high mountain and He was transfigured before them. His appearance changed. He was transformed. Matthew described Christ's face as shining like the sun and His clothes being as white as the light. Mat 17:2. The three disciples beheld the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, 'For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' 2Co 4:6.

The main point of our study today is that we see and receive the light of life from the lamps shining on a lampstand church. This light is the light of the knowledge of God. Every firstfruits believer is participating in the shining and reflecting of that light that is being shone into our heart from the face of Jesus. As this light is shining into our hearts, we are being transformed as sons of God and we then have this same light in us. Christ is abiding in us and we are abiding in Him. We read in the book of Isaiah that 'the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.' Is 60:19. The Lord himself is our glory.

Glory

We note that the Scriptures describe the ministry of the law through Moses as *glorious*. 2Co 3:7. When Moses received the law from God, his face shone so much that the children of Israel could not look steadily at him and he had to cover his face with a veil. Ex 34:29-35. However, this glory faded and passed away.

Paul explained that the glory of a son of God does not fade or pass away. It remains. It is eternal. More than that, we have unveiled faces and we are looking into the face of Christ. Paul wrote, 'But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' 2Co 3:18. We are sons of God. We are being transformed into the image of Christ, who is the Son of God.

It will be helpful at this point to say that glory is the expression of identity, name and works. That is, your glory is the full expression of you. So when God is your glory, then the full expression of you is your identity, name and works as a son of God who is walking by the Spirit, in truth and righteousness. This is the sacrifice and service of your faith. Php 2:17. As you present your body as a living sacrifice in the fellowship of one body, the one bread, your offering is joined to Christ's offering. In this way, what you do in your body are the works of righteousness.

The ministry of the new covenant

Paul made the point that we are being transformed into the image of Christ, by the ministry of the Spirit of the Lord. This is the ministry of the new covenant. We are to be ministers of the new covenant. You are not just receiving the ministry of the new covenant. You are to be a minister of the new covenant. How do you do that? Simply, by walking in righteousness and by participating in the work of the lampstand, which is a ministry of righteousness. It is a work of shining the light of the word into the hearts of others. In the fellowship of the lampstand church, there is a reflection of the works of righteousness that you should be doing and there is also the capacity to do them. There is a pouring out of the life of God upon your sacrifice and service of faith from the communion table and throughout your entire week.

Walking in the light

Paul wrote to the Ephesian church, 'For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. Eph 5:8-10.

We have heard with respect to the picture of the lampstand, that we are part of the flower and that the light of the lamp is the light of the word of God to His church. The apostle John wrote, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Joh 1:1-4. And we are all familiar with the passage from 1 John: 'This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him

is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.' 1Jn 1:5-7.

We therefore ask ourselves the question: What does it mean to walk in the light and to be a part of a flower on the lampstand? Looking at the scriptures that describe the golden lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses, we learn that the flower on the lampstand reflected the light of the lamp. We have described each believer, each son of God, as a petal of the flower. Each one is receiving and reflecting the light of the lamp as they receive and obey the word of God, in fellowship with God and with one another.

Holiness to the Lord

John began his letter to the seven churches in Asia with this greeting and statement: 'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.' Rev 1:4-6.

We know that this is also speaking to all believers, remembering that the seven churches are not just seven individual churches, but the whole of Christ's church across all ages and generations. Note that John said that Christ has made us kings and priests to His God and Father.

Interestingly, one of the items of the garments of the high priest was a plate of pure gold engraved with the words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD". It was fastened by a blue cord to the holy crown and placed on the front of the turban on Aaron's head. So it was to 'be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.' Ex 28:36-38; 39:30-31.

The gold plate was made like a flower or blossom that glistened. It would have reflected the light of the lampstand.

Christ has made us kings and priests. The crown is an expression of the authority given to each of us as a particular member of the body of Christ. This authority is to do our particular works of sonship. As priests, we are ministers of the new covenant; ministers of righteousness. We are receiving the light of life which comes to us by the word of God through His messengers. As this light shines into our hearts and falls upon our faces, it reflects and shines towards one another. We then each see in this light, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD". We see the sanctification of each individual member of Christ's body and they see our sanctification. We are looking into the face of Christ in the face of the presbytery and our fellow brethren.

The light is shining from the gold plate as from a mirror. We see in this reflected light, Christ's image and likeness, the glory of God, into which we are being transformed. This

is our sanctification: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD". We are seeing and receiving the light and the light is shining from our faces and from our hearts.

As each one of us stands in our place in the fellowship of the lampstand church and ministers in the sanctification of our name and identity as a son of God, doing the works of righteousness, then the light of life will shine forth from us. It is the one light of the glory of God which we see and receive from the face of Jesus. We reflect the light. We are not the source of the light. There is no projection; only reflection of the one light of the life of God. We have no life in ourselves apart from that which we receive as we abide in Christ. Each petal of the flower is reflecting light to us in a fellowship. This is a fellowship of sanctified petals as priests. Our work is to reflect the light from the face of Christ to one another in a fellowship of light.

The fellowship of light

The scriptures speak of the glory of sons of God as shining forth. We read in the book of Judges, 'let those who love Him be like the sun when it comes out in full strength.' And in the book of Matthew, 'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' Jdg 5:31. Mat 13:43. Jesus told His disciples, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' Mat 5:6. This is the evidence of living in the fellowship of light - the light of the knowledge of God shining from the face of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, much of our history has been a collegial model which has meant that people are not coming to join a fellowship of light. They do not want to hear or receive anything or be obedient to the word of God. Instead they come to say something from their own resources and not from a fellowship of light being reflected and shone by the petals of the flower in the lampstand, where Christ is the life and light, and He is the lampstand and the vine.

As we fellowship and walk in the light, we must stand up as disciples of Christ so that we have a proper obedience to the word that is coming to us as light. We must be obedient to the faith which is coming in the word, as ones who are able to receive and not as ones coming with our own perspectives. Are we able to hear and receive? Are we obedient? Are we standing as sons who have been made kings and priests to God the Father? Are we doing our priestly work and shining forth the light of life in sanctification? Sanctification is not self-defined. It is known and revealed in a fellowship of light.

The will of God is your sanctification. 1Th 4:3. When you are doing the sanctified works of your sonship, then you are reflecting, or shining forth, light from the fellowship of the lampstand church. This is the light of the glory of God, and this is what others will see. They will see the glory of God shining from your face which will cause them to glorify God. This is doing the will of God.