

TO THE CONQUERORS

OCTOBER 4, 2026 / CLASS 4 / LAMPSTAND SUPPLEMENT

Seven golden lampstands

A supplement to Revelation 1:9–20: the lamps John's churches used every night, the lampstand's history in Scripture and after it, and why every church is a lampstand.

When John turned to see the voice speaking to him, he saw seven golden lampstands, and in the middle of them One like a son of man (1:12–13). Anyone who knew the Scriptures knew that object. The tabernacle had a golden lampstand, and so did the Temple standing in Jerusalem while John wrote. Each had one lampstand, and it stood in the Holy Place. John saw seven, and Jesus told him what they were: "the seven lampstands are seven churches" (1:20).

That change in number is a big part of what this supplement is about. The Temple had one lampstand because God's presence was in one place, and Israel had to bring its offerings and sacrifices to that place. Now the Spirit has been poured out on God's people in Christ. The Spirit of God is wherever Christ's people are, so each church is a lampstand, and Jesus walks among them all.

Six parts fill in that picture:

1. **The lamps.** What an oil lamp was, the Bible's words for it, and four lights from the Bible's world.
2. **The lampstand in God's house.** Its making at Sinai, its place and its service, and its story down to the exile.
3. **Zechariah's lampstand.** The vision in which God explains the lampstand's oil by His Spirit.
4. **The centuries before John.** The Maccabees, Herod's Temple, the great lamps of the Feast of Booths, Jesus' own lamp sayings, and what Rome did with the lampstand.
5. **Revelation's lampstands.** Everything the book does with lamps and lampstands, from chapter 1 to the holy city.
6. **The theology.** The Presence of God, the Spirit, the oil, and the lamps, and why every church is a lampstand.

A timeline closes the supplement.

Part I. What was a lamp, and what held it up?

An oil lamp was a small dish of olive oil with a wick in it

A lamp in the Bible's world was a small vessel, usually clay, filled with olive oil. A wick of twisted linen or flax lay in the oil, with one end resting at the lip or spout. The wick drew the oil up, and the flame burned it at the tip. One lamp gave about the light of one candle. When the oil ran low, someone filled the lamp. When the wick charred, someone trimmed it or laid in a new one. Every house in John's world lived by this light. After dark, a room had as much light as its lamps gave. The lampstand in the Holy Place worked the same way. Its gold, its room, and the priests who tended it set it apart.

The Bible uses separate words for the lamp, the stand, and the torch

Object	Hebrew	Greek	Where to see it
Lamp: the vessel that holds oil and wick	<i>ner</i>	<i>lychnos</i>	Exodus 25:37; Zechariah 4:2; Matthew 5:15; Revelation 18:23; 21:23; 22:5
Lampstand: the stand that holds lamps up	<i>menorah</i>	<i>lychnia</i>	Exodus 25:31; Zechariah 4:2; Matthew 5:15; Revelation 1:12, 20; 2:1, 5; 11:4
Torch: a burning brand held in the hand	<i>lappid</i>	<i>lampas</i>	Judges 7:16; John 18:3; Revelation 4:5; 8:10

Menorah is the ordinary Hebrew word for a lampstand. Revelation's lampstands are *lychniai*, the word the Greek Old Testament uses for the tabernacle's menorah (Exodus 25:31). It is also the word for the stand in an ordinary house where Jesus says people set their lamp (Matthew 5:15). Older English Bibles such as the King James call the lampstand a "candlestick." The lampstands of Exodus and Zechariah held oil lamps.

Four lights from the Bible's world

The Israelite open lamp. For centuries the everyday lamp of Canaan and Israel was an open clay saucer with one side of its rim pinched into a spout to hold the wick. The Metropolitan Museum's example (323173) comes from the late 8th or 7th century BC, the age of Hezekiah and Isaiah. It is 4 3/4 inches long and 1 1/4 inches high.



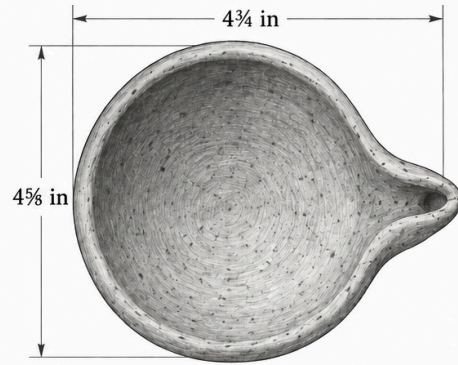
OPEN-BOWL OIL LAMP

Iron Age

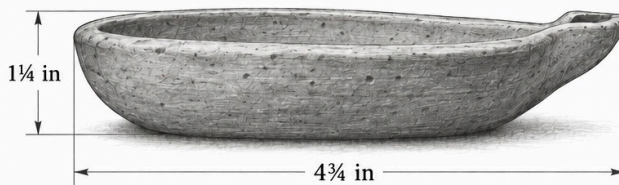
PERSPECTIVE VIEW



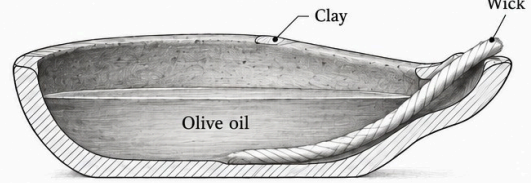
TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW



SECTION

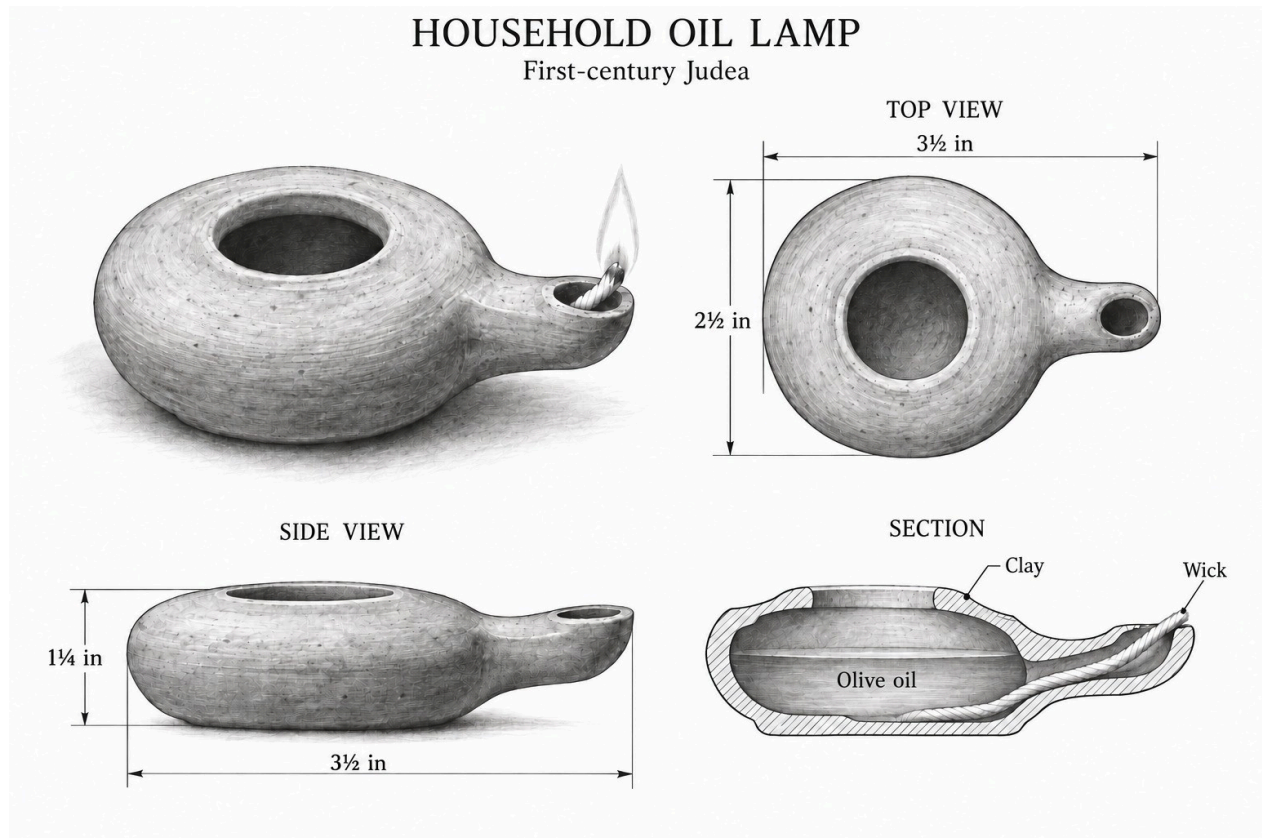


The Herodian lamp. In Jesus' century, Jewish households used a round lamp thrown on the potter's wheel. Its spout was shaped by hand, joined to the body, and trimmed with a knife. It was plain and undecorated. Most were made around Jerusalem, and they turn up wherever Jews lived on both sides of the Jordan. Jesus' hearers lit lamps like this one. The woman in His parable lights one to sweep her house for the lost coin (Luke 15:8). Most are about 3 to 3 1/2 inches long.



HOUSEHOLD OIL LAMP

First-century Judea

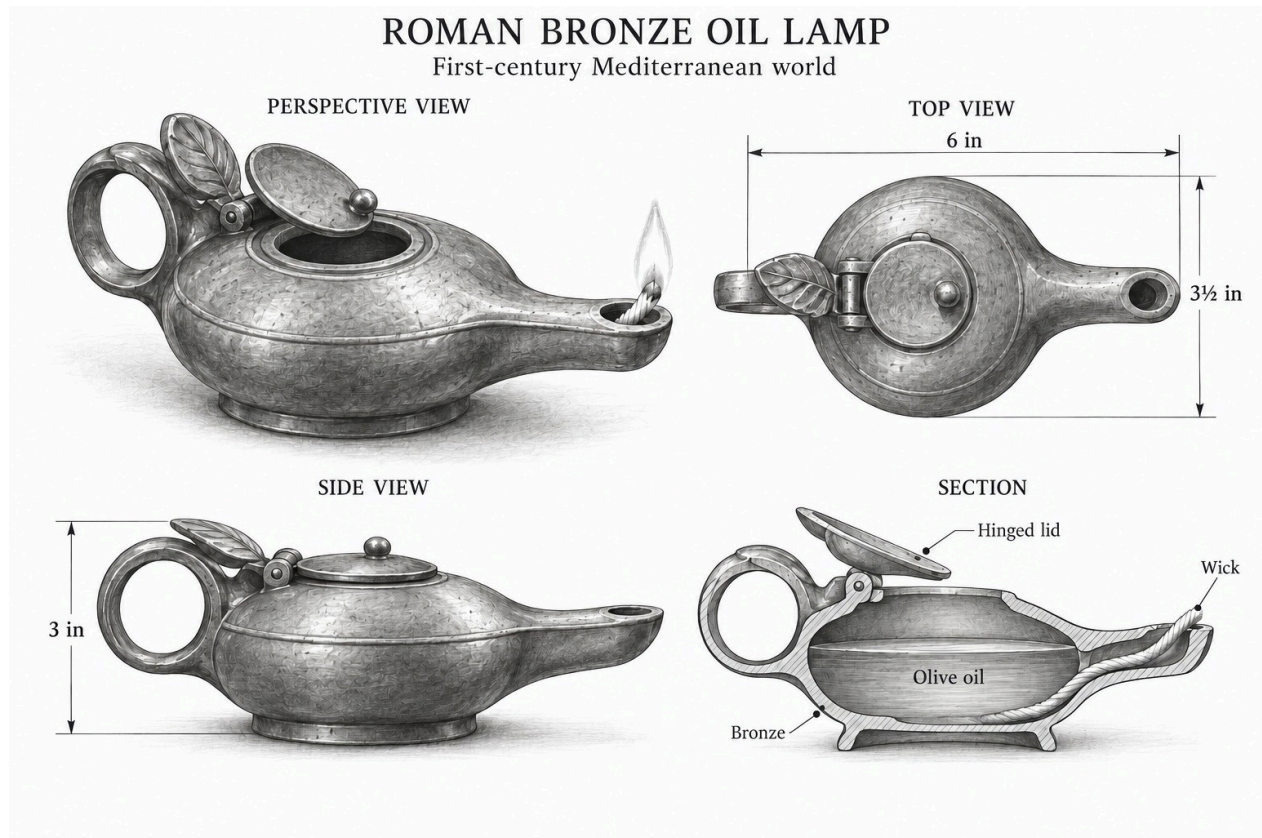


The Roman mold-made lamp. Across the Roman world, including the cities of Asia where John's churches met, lamps were pressed in two molds, top and bottom, and joined. The round top, the discus, was often decorated with a picture and had a small hole for pouring in the oil. The wick hole sat at the end of the spout. Workshops made these lamps by the thousands. The Metropolitan Museum's example (241656) dates from about AD 40 to 100 and is 3 7/8 inches long. Ephesus had a history with lamps: two centuries before John, the potters of Ephesus made mold-made lamps that were among the most widely traded pottery in the Greek world. Wealthier households owned bronze lamps of the same shape, often with a ring handle, a leaf ornament, and a hinged lid over the filling hole.

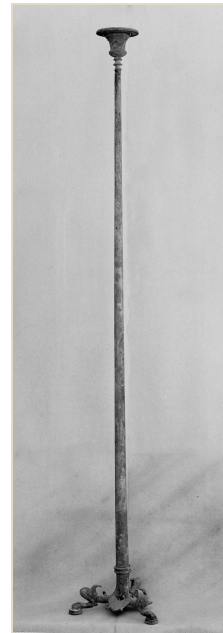


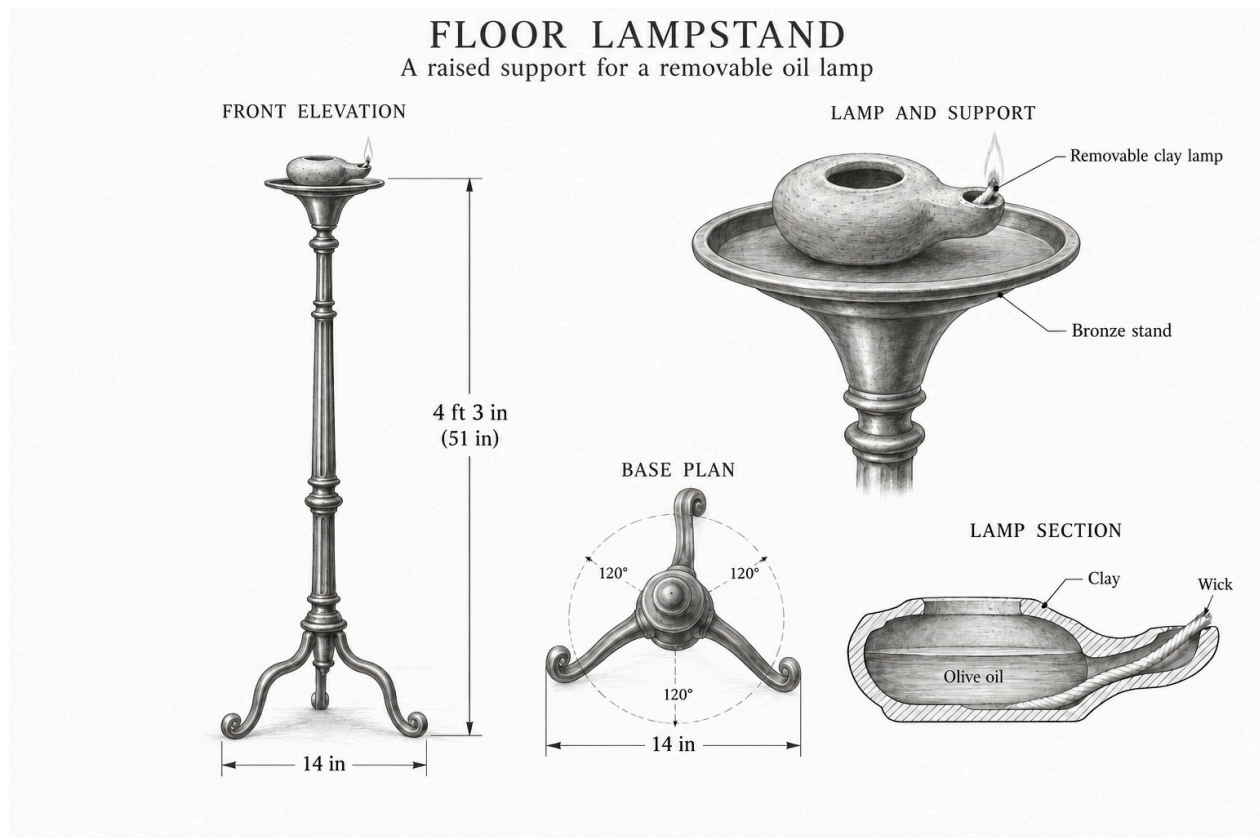
ROMAN BRONZE OIL LAMP

First-century Mediterranean world



The household lampstand. A lamp set on a table lit the table. A lamp set on a stand lit the room. The Metropolitan Museum's Roman bronze lampstand (248087), from about the 1st century AD, stands 4 feet 3 inches tall on three legs with paw feet, with a slender shaft and a flat disc at the top for the lamp. Jesus described what every household did with one: they set the lamp "on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house" (Matthew 5:15). The Greek word for that stand is *lychnia*, the same word John uses for the seven golden lampstands.





Part II. The lampstand in God's house, from Sinai to the exile

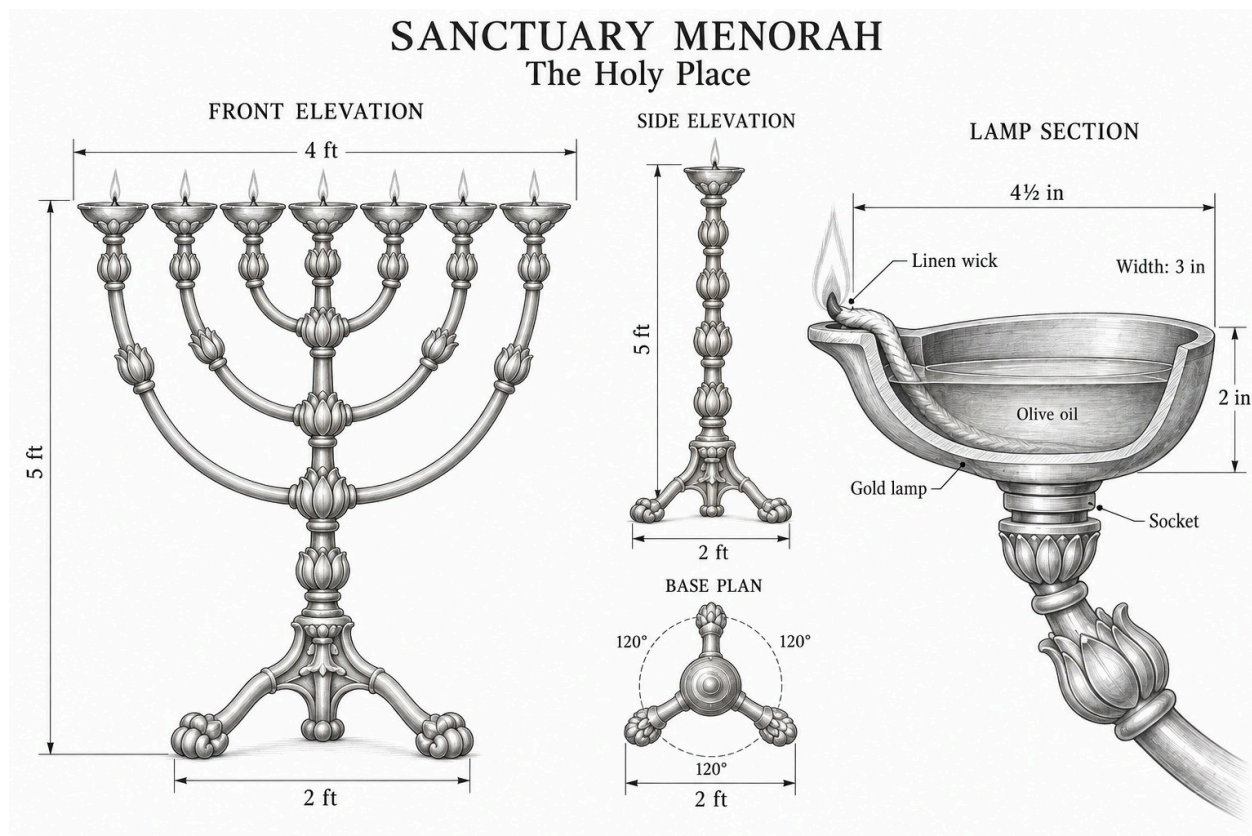
God showed Moses the pattern of the lampstand on the mountain

Exodus 25:8–9, 31–40; 31:1–11; 37:17–24; Numbers 8:1–4; 17:8; Hebrews 8:5.

The lampstand began with God's purpose for the whole tabernacle: "let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:8). It was hammered out of pure gold, one piece from base to flowers. A central shaft rose from the base, and three branches went out from each side. Cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with its calyx and flower, stood along every branch, and four more stood on the shaft. The almond was the tree that blossomed on Aaron's staff inside the tent, when God showed which house He had chosen for the priesthood (Numbers 17:8). Seven lamps sat at the top, arranged to give "light on the space in front of it" (25:37; Numbers 8:2). The stand with its tongs and trays took a talent of gold, about 75 pounds (25:39).

Moses was to make it after the pattern "shown you on the mountain" (25:40). Hebrews quotes that command to show that the tabernacle was a copy of heavenly things (8:5). The man who made the lampstand was Bezalel, whom God had "filled... with the Spirit of God" for the work (Exodus 31:3, 8; 37:17).

Exodus gives the lampstand's weight. Its height comes from the Babylonian Talmud: eighteen handbreadths, about five feet, with each ornament in its place along the shaft (Menachot 28b).



The lampstand lit the Holy Place, across from the table

Exodus 26:33–35; 40:22–27; Hebrews 9:2.

A veil divided the tabernacle into two rooms. The inner room, the Most Holy Place, held the ark of the testimony. The outer room, the Holy Place, held three pieces of gold furniture: the table with the bread of the Presence on the north side, the lampstand on the south side facing it, and the golden altar of incense in front of the veil (Exodus 40:22–27). Inside the tent, the seven lamps were the room's light, shining across onto the table and its bread. Hebrews describes the same room: the lampstand, the table, and the bread. "It is called the Holy Place" (9:2).

The people supplied the oil, and the priests kept the lamps burning

Exodus 27:20–21; 30:7–8; Leviticus 24:1–4; Numbers 4:9.

Moses was to command all Israel to bring "pure beaten olive oil for the light" (Exodus 27:20). The sanctuary's light came out of Israel's own olive groves. "Beaten" oil came from olives crushed rather than pressed, the first and clearest oil. The Mishnah describes the method: ripe olives from the top of the tree were crushed in a mortar and set in a basket, and the oil that dripped through before any pressing was the grade fit for the lampstand (Menachot 8:4).

Aaron and his sons tended the lamps "from evening to morning before the LORD," as a statute forever (Exodus 27:21; Leviticus 24:3). Each morning when the high priest dressed the lamps, and each evening when he set them up at twilight, he burned incense on the golden altar (Exodus 30:7–8). When Israel broke camp, the lampstand was wrapped in blue cloth and packed with its lamps, its tongs and trays, and "all the vessels for oil with which it is supplied" (Numbers 4:9).

The lamp of God was still burning when the LORD called Samuel

1 Samuel 3:1–10.

"The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD" (1 Samuel 3:3). The lampstand burned from evening to dawn, so a lamp still burning meant it was the small hours before morning. The boy Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, keeping watch over the light through the night. That was a priest's job, and Eli's sons had left it to a boy. There in the sanctuary, Samuel heard the LORD call his name.

Solomon's Temple had ten lampstands, all in the one Holy Place

1 Kings 7:48–50; 2 Chronicles 4:7, 20; 13:8–12.

Solomon made ten lampstands of pure gold, "five on the south side and five on the north," in front of the inner sanctuary (1 Kings 7:49). The number grew, and every one of them stood in the one room of the one house God had chosen. Later, when the northern tribes worshiped at Jeroboam's shrines, King Abijah of Judah pointed to the priests in Jerusalem who "care for the golden lampstand that its lamps may burn every evening" as the sign that Judah kept the LORD's service (2 Chronicles 13:11).

The king himself was called Israel's lamp

2 Samuel 21:17; 1 Kings 11:36; 2 Kings 8:19; Psalm 132:17.

Scripture also calls the house of David a lamp. When David nearly died in battle, his men swore that he would fight no more, "lest you quench the lamp of Israel" (2 Samuel 21:17). When the kingdom split, God left Solomon's son one tribe "that David My servant may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem" (1 Kings 11:36). God spared Judah because "He promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever" (2 Kings 8:19). In Psalm 132:17 God says, "I have prepared a lamp for My anointed." In the Greek Old Testament the word for "anointed" there is *christos*.

The lamps went out, and the glory left the house

2 Chronicles 28:24; 29:3–7; Ezekiel 10:18–19; 11:22–23; Jeremiah 52:17–19; Daniel 5:1–5.

Under King Ahaz the doors of the house of the LORD were shut (2 Chronicles 28:24). His son Hezekiah said of that generation, "They also shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps" (29:7). Hezekiah reopened the doors in the first month of his reign and restored the service (29:3). More than a century later, Ezekiel watched in a vision as "the glory of the LORD went out from the threshold of the house," and then left the city for the mountain to its east (Ezekiel 10:18; 11:23). In 586 BC the Babylonians burned the Temple and took its gold and bronze. Jeremiah's list of what they took includes the lampstands (Jeremiah 52:19).

The gold went to Babylon. Decades later King Belshazzar drank from the Temple's vessels at a feast and praised his gods of gold and silver. A hand appeared and wrote his sentence "on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, opposite the lampstand" (Daniel 5:5).

Part III. What did Zechariah see, and how did the angel explain it?

The vision came to a people rebuilding the Temple

Ezra 3:10–11; 4:24–5:2; Haggai 1:1; 2:1–5; Zechariah 1:7.

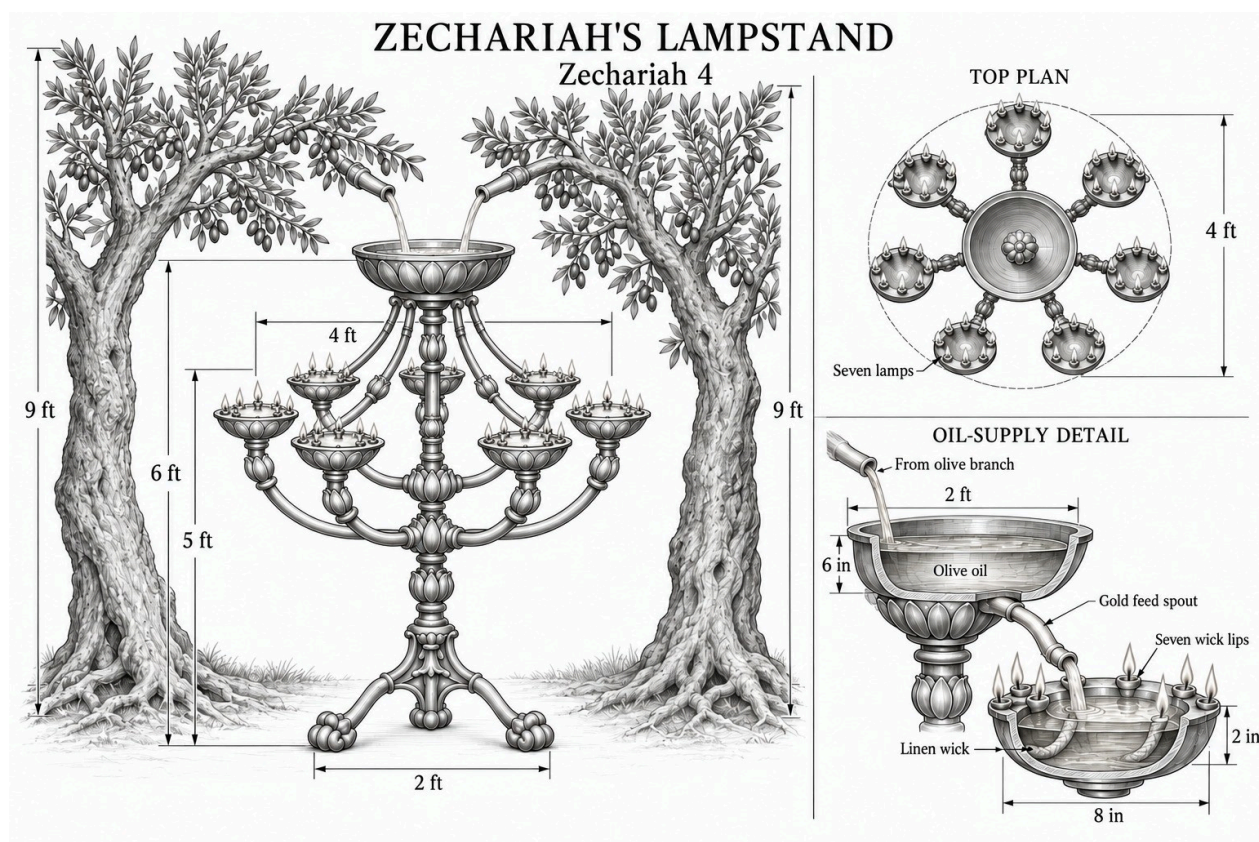
In 538 BC the Persian king Cyrus let the exiles go home to rebuild the house of the LORD (Ezra 1:1–4). They laid the Temple's foundation with trumpets and a great shout (Ezra 3:10–11), and then the work stopped for years (4:24). In 520 BC, the second year of King Darius, God sent the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to the governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua, and the building began again (Ezra 5:1–2; Haggai 1:1).

On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the seventh day of the Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:34), Haggai brought the builders this word: "Work, for I am with you," and "My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not" (Haggai 2:1, 4–5). Four months later, in February 519 BC, Zechariah received a night of visions (Zechariah 1:7). The lampstand is the fifth of the eight.

Zechariah saw a lampstand fed straight from two olive trees

Zechariah 4:1–3, 11–12.

Zechariah saw "a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it" (4:2). The bowl sat on top, above the lamps. Seven lamps stood on the lampstand, "with seven lips on each of the lamps," spouts for wicks, which makes forty-nine flames. Excavators at Tel Dan, in the far north of Israel, found a clay lamp like that from the 9th or 8th century BC: one bowl on a pedestal, with seven spouts around its rim for seven wicks. An olive tree stood on each side of the bowl (4:3). Two branches of the olive trees hung beside two golden pipes, and through the pipes "the golden oil" poured out (4:12). The Hebrew text calls the oil simply "the gold."



In Exodus the people brought the oil, and the priests filled the lamps. In Zechariah's vision, living trees feed the lampstand, and the supply comes from God.

The angel explained the lampstand by the Spirit of God

Zechariah 4:4–14; Ezra 6:14–15.

Zechariah asked what these things were. The angel answered with the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (4:6). The mountain in Zerubbabel's way would become a plain. He would bring out the top stone to shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" The hands that laid the Temple's foundation would finish it (4:7–9). The seven lamps are "the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth" (4:10). When Zechariah asked about the trees, the angel called them "the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (4:14). The Hebrew text says "the two sons of fresh oil."

This is the Bible's strongest connection between the lampstand's oil and the Spirit of God. The lamps burn on oil God supplies, and God's own explanation of the vision is "by My Spirit." The Temple was finished in March 515 BC, on the third day of Adar in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15).

Part IV. What happened to the lampstand in the centuries before John?

Antiochus IV took the lampstand in 169 BC, and the Maccabees replaced it in 164 BC

1 Maccabees 1:20–24, 54; 4:36–59; 2 Maccabees 10:1–8; John 10:22–23.

The Temple finished in Zechariah's day had one lampstand, as the tabernacle had. In 169 BC Antiochus IV, the Greek king of Syria, came back from Egypt, marched into the sanctuary, and took the golden altar, "the lampstand for the light," and all its utensils (1 Maccabees 1:20–21). Two years later an "abomination of desolation" was built on the altar of burnt offering, and sacrifices were offered on a pagan altar set on top of it (1:54, 59).

Judas Maccabeus and his brothers retook Jerusalem and cleansed the Temple. They made new holy vessels, brought a lampstand into the sanctuary, and lit its lamps, and the lamps gave light in the Temple again (4:49–50). On the twenty-fifth day of Chislev, in December 164 BC, they dedicated the altar with eight days of rejoicing and decreed that the days be kept every year (4:52–59). Second Maccabees says they kept the eight days the way Israel kept the Feast of Booths (10:6). Josephus, writing in the first century, says the Jews called the festival "Lights" (*Antiquities* 12.325). The Babylonian Talmud later tells of one sealed jar of oil, enough to light the lampstand for a single day, that burned for eight (Shabbat 21b). This is Hanukkah.

Jesus was in the Temple at that feast. "It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon" (John 10:22–23).

The Roman general Pompey saw the lampstand in 63 BC and left it in place

Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.72.

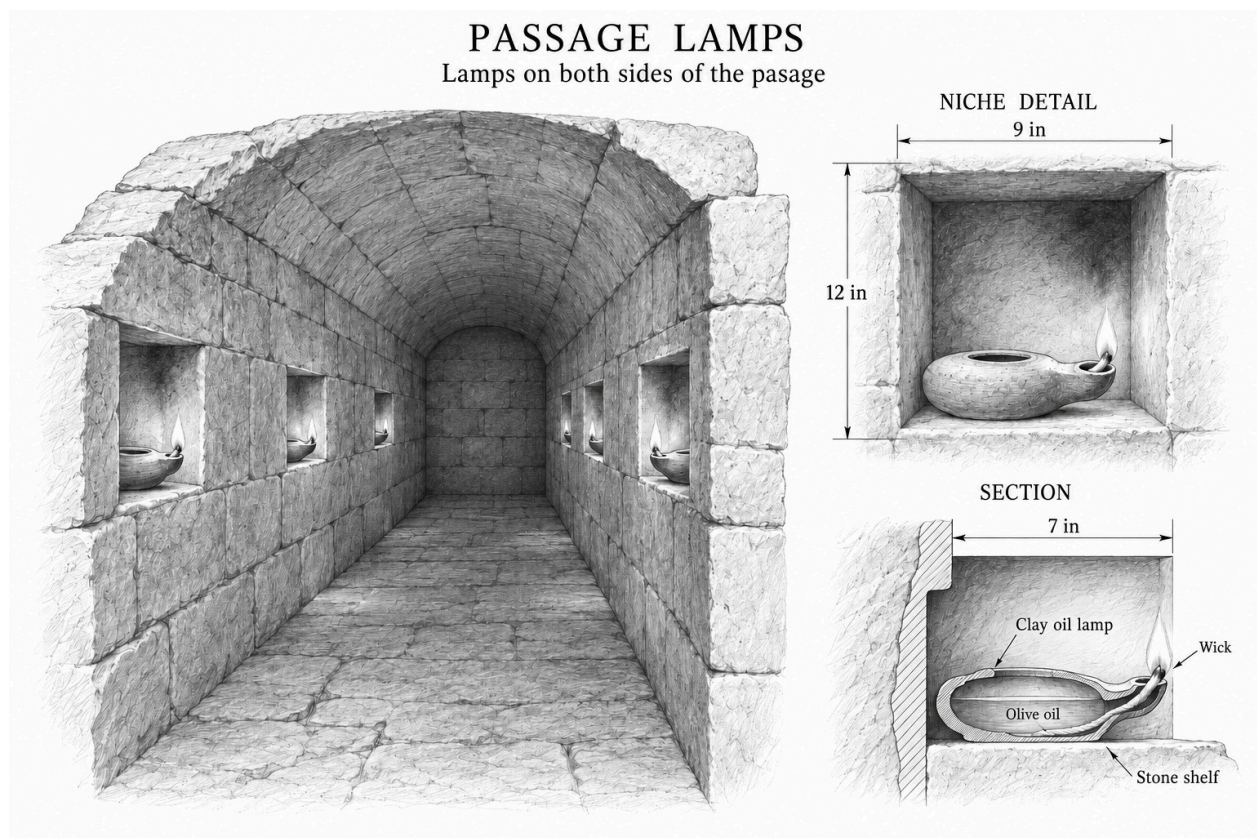
In 63 BC the Roman general Pompey took Jerusalem, went into the sanctuary, and saw what only the high priests could lawfully see. Josephus lists what he found there: the golden table, the holy lampstand, the vessels for pouring, a great quantity of spices, and two thousand talents of sacred money. "Yet did Pompey touch nothing of all this," Josephus writes. The next day Pompey ordered the Temple cleansed and its offerings resumed.

The Temple standing when John wrote was the one Herod the Great rebuilt

John 2:20; Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.216–217; Mishnah Tamid 1:1.

Herod the Great began rebuilding the Temple about 20 BC, and the work went on for decades. At Jesus' first Passover it had been under construction for forty-six years (John 2:20). Josephus, himself a priest, describes its Holy Place as holding three things "very wonderful and famous among all mankind, the candlestick, the table, and the altar of incense" (*Jewish War* 5.217). He explained the seven lamps as the seven planets. Revelation gives Jesus' own explanation of His lampstands: "the seven lampstands are seven churches" (1:20).

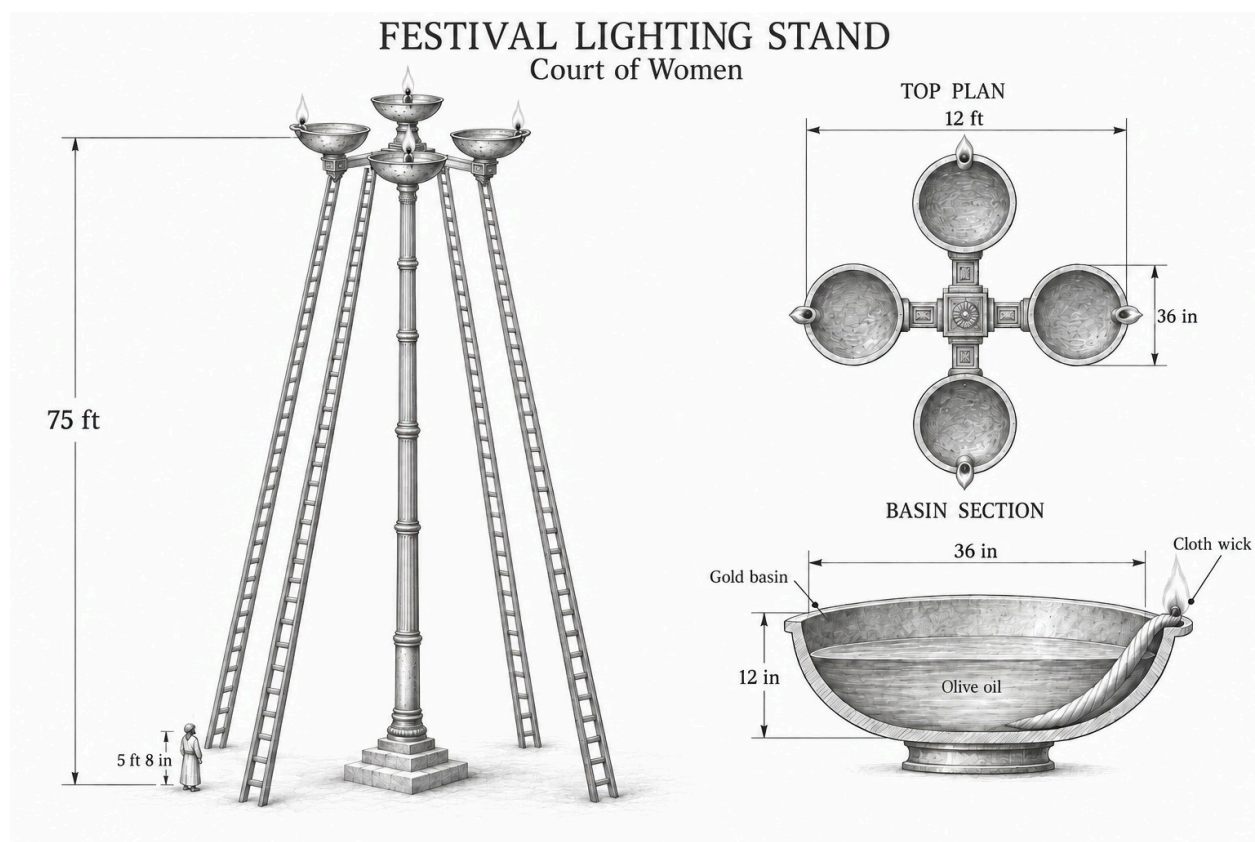
Lamps lit the Temple's working passages too. The Mishnah describes a passage under the Temple buildings with lamps burning on both sides. A priest who became unclean during the night walked through it to the chamber of immersion (Mishnah Tamid 1:1).



At the Feast of Booths, great lampstands lit all of Jerusalem

Mishnah Sukkah 5:1–4; Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52b; Mishnah Middot 2:5.

During the Feast of Booths the Temple had a second set of lampstands, the biggest lights in Jerusalem. The Mishnah, written down about AD 200, describes them. On the night after the first day of the Feast of Booths, the priests and Levites went down into the Court of the Women, where golden lampstands stood with four golden bowls on top of each (Mishnah Sukkah 5:2). A teacher quoted in the Talmud gives their height as fifty cubits (Sukkah 52b): 75 feet at an 18-inch cubit, or 86 feet at a cubit of 20 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Each had four ladders. Four young men of the priestly families climbed with jars holding 120 logs of oil and filled the bowls. The wicks were torn from the worn-out trousers and sashes of the priests. The Mishnah says every courtyard in Jerusalem shone with that light (5:3).



Under the lamps the city celebrated all night. Men known for their piety danced with burning torches, tossing and catching them, and sang praise. Levites stood on the fifteen steps between the Court of the Women and the Court of Israel with harps, lyres, cymbals, and trumpets. A balcony was built around the court so the women could watch from above (Middot 2:5). At dawn two priests blew the trumpets, and a procession went down to the Pool of Siloam to draw the water that would be poured out at the altar. At the east gate the procession turned around to face the sanctuary and said that their fathers in this place had stood with their backs to the

Temple and bowed to the sun (Ezekiel 8:16), "and we, our eyes are to God" (5:4). The Mishnah's verdict: whoever never saw the rejoicing at the Water-Drawing never saw rejoicing in his life (5:1).

At that feast Jesus promised the Spirit and called Himself the light

John 7:2, 37–39; 8:12, 20; Haggai 2:1–5.

John sets two of Jesus' great sayings at the Feast of Booths (7:2). "On the last day of the feast, the great day," Jesus stood and called the thirsty to come to Him and drink, and He promised rivers of living water flowing from the heart of whoever believes in Him (7:37–38). John explains: "Now this He said about the Spirit." The Spirit had not yet been given, "because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39).

Still in the Temple, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (8:12). John places those words "in the treasury" (8:20), and Josephus places the Temple's treasuries in the Court of the Women (*Jewish War* 5.200), the court of the great lamps.

More than five hundred years earlier, on the seventh day of the same feast, Haggai had told the builders, "My Spirit remains in your midst" (Haggai 2:1, 5).

Jesus used the household lamp as a teaching tool

Matthew 5:14–16; Mark 4:21; Luke 11:33; 12:35; Matthew 25:1–13; John 5:35.

"You are the light of the world," Jesus told His disciples (Matthew 5:14). People set a lamp "on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house" (5:15). In Matthew, Mark, and Luke the stand is a *lychnia*, a lampstand (Mark 4:21; Luke 11:33). The purpose Jesus gives is that people see your good works and "give glory to your Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

He told His servants to "keep your lamps burning" while they wait for their master (Luke 12:35). In the parable of the ten virgins, all ten had lamps, and the wise took flasks of oil with them. The foolish had to say, "our lamps are going out" (Matthew 25:8). And He called John the Baptist "a burning and shining lamp" (John 5:35).

A few years after John wrote, Rome took the lampstand away

Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.387–389; 7.148–150, 158–162; Procopius, *Wars* 4.9.

In AD 70 Titus took Jerusalem and the Temple burned. A priest named Jesus son of Thebuti, promised his life, handed over from the Temple wall "two candlesticks, like to those that lay in the holy house," along with tables, bowls, and cups of solid gold, the veils, and the garments with their precious stones (*Jewish War* 6.387–389).

In AD 71 Vespasian and Titus held their triumph in Rome, and Josephus describes the Temple's treasures carried through the streets. The golden table came first, and then the lampstand: "its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it to a great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position." Its lamps "were in number seven" (7.148–149). Vespasian then built a Temple of Peace in Rome and laid up in it "those golden vessels and instruments that were taken out of the Jewish temple, as ensigns of his glory" (7.158–162). After Titus died in AD 81, his brother Domitian built an arch for him beside the Forum. Its relief of Roman soldiers carrying the lampstand still stands.



The Vandals sacked Rome in AD 455 and took the Temple treasures to Carthage. In 534 the general Belisarius brought them to Constantinople and displayed them in his own triumph, and the emperor Justinian sent them to the churches of Jerusalem (Procopius, *Wars* 4.9). The record ends there.

With the Temple gone, the menorah became the emblem of the Jewish people. It was carved in synagogues, painted in tombs, and stamped on lamps. In 1949 the new State of Israel adopted the menorah of the Arch of Titus, with an olive branch on each side, as its national emblem.

Part V. What does Revelation do with lamps and lampstands?

John saw seven lampstands where Exodus and Zechariah had one

Revelation 1:11–13, 20.

I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. When I had turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the middle of the lampstands I saw One like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to His feet, with a golden sash around His chest. (1:12–13)

Exodus gave Israel one lampstand with seven lamps, and so did Zechariah's vision. John sees seven lampstands. Jesus explains them Himself: "the seven lampstands are seven churches" (1:20). They are the churches of the seven cities in 1:11: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Each church, in its own city, is a whole lampstand.

The One among the lampstands is dressed like the priest who tended them

Revelation 1:13; 15:6; Exodus 27:21; 28:4.

The robe "reaching to His feet" is one word in Greek, *podērēs*. It is the Greek Old Testament's word for the high priest's robe (Exodus 28:4). The golden sash sits high, "around His chest," the way a priest wore it. The angels who come out of the heavenly sanctuary in 15:6 wear golden sashes the same way.

In the Holy Place, the priest's work at the lampstand was to keep its lamps burning "from evening to morning before the LORD" (Exodus 27:21). Jesus stands among His churches in that priest's clothing. The letters show what His care looks like. He knows each church's works, its labor and endurance, its tribulation and poverty, its love and its failures (2:2, 9, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). He commends and He corrects. He calls to repentance. He promises life to the one who conquers.

He walks among the lampstands, as God promised to walk among His people

Revelation 2:1; Leviticus 26:11–12; 2 Samuel 7:6–7; Deuteronomy 23:14; 2 Corinthians 6:16.

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One Who holds the seven stars in His right hand, Who walks in the middle of the seven golden lampstands, says these things: (2:1)

The Law gave Israel this promise: "I will make My dwelling among you," and "I will walk among you and will be your God" (Leviticus 26:11–12). The Greek Old Testament's word for that walking is built on the same verb Revelation uses in 2:1. God told David that since the Exodus He had been "moving about in a tent for My dwelling," and again the Greek Old Testament says He was walking about with Israel wherever they went (2 Samuel 7:6–7). "The LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp" (Deuteronomy 23:14).

Paul quotes Leviticus 26 about the church: "we are the temple of the living God," and God has said, "I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them" (2 Corinthians 6:16).

Jesus walks among the lampstands as Adam glorified, in the garden of God

Revelation 2:1, 7; 22:2; Genesis 2:8–9; 3:8, 22–24; Ezekiel 28:12–16; Exodus 25:31–36; Zechariah 4:3.

The Ephesus letter opens with Jesus walking among the lampstands (2:1) and closes with the tree of life "which is in the paradise of God" (2:7). The Greek Old Testament uses those same two words, walking and paradise, where Adam and Eve hear the LORD God "walking in the garden" (Genesis 3:8). The Hebrew of Genesis 3:8 has the form of the verb that means walking about, the same form as God walking among His people in Leviticus 26:12, Deuteronomy 23:14, and 2 Samuel 7:6.

Ezekiel uses that form three times. Fire moves "to and fro among the living creatures" (Ezekiel 1:13); a young lion "prowled among the lions" (19:6); and the third time is in Eden. His lament over the king of Tyre sets the king in "Eden, the garden of God," covered with precious stones, "an anointed guardian cherub" on God's holy mountain: "in the midst of the stones of fire you walked" (Ezekiel 28:12–14). The Greek Old Testament calls that garden "the paradise of God," the phrase of Revelation 2:7, and puts him "in the middle of" the fiery stones, the phrase of Revelation 1:13 and 2:1. Then unrighteousness was found in him, and God cast him from the mountain of God and destroyed him "from the midst of the stones of fire" (28:15–16). Adam too was driven out of the garden, and cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:22–24).

Jesus is Adam glorified, walking in power in the garden-paradise of God. He walks in the middle of the lampstands and their fire, and the tree of life is His to give: "To him who conquers I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (2:7).

The lampstands belong in that garden. The tabernacle's lampstand was hammered in the form of a flowering almond tree, with cups like almond blossoms along its branches (Exodus 25:31–36). Zechariah's lampstand stood between two living olive trees (Zechariah 4:3). The holy city has the tree of life again: "On this side of the river and on that was a tree of life" (Revelation 22:2).

He can move a lampstand out of its place

Revelation 2:4–5.

But I have this against you: you have left your first love. So remember where you have fallen from, and repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I am coming to you, and I will move your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent. (2:4–5)

Each lampstand has its place, and Jesus can move it. A congregation can lose its place as His lampstand. The same sentence that warns Ephesus also calls it back: remember, repent, and do the works you did at first.

The Spirit speaks to the lampstands, burns before the throne, and goes out into all the earth

Revelation 1:4; 2:7; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; Zechariah 4:10.

Every one of the seven letters ends the same way: "Let him who has ears hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). The One Who speaks to Sardis is "the One Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars" (3:1).

In the throne room, "seven torches of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God" (4:5). The Lamb has "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (5:6). That is Zechariah's lampstand again: its seven lamps are

"the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:10).

The seven spirits are the Holy Spirit in the fullness of His work. Before the throne He burns like seven torches. From the Lamb He is sent out into all the earth. On earth, the churches to whom He speaks are lampstands.

The two witnesses are two olive trees and two lampstands

Revelation 11:3–4; Zechariah 4:3, 11–14.

God's two witnesses in Revelation 11 are "the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the Lord of the earth" (11:4). The words come from Zechariah 4, where the olive trees are the two anointed ones "who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (4:14).

The holy city has the Lamb for its lamp

Revelation 18:23; 21:2–3, 22–25; 22:3–5.

Babylon's sentence includes her lamps: "the light of a lamp will never shine in you again" (18:23).

The holy city is the opposite picture. "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them" (21:3). "I saw no sanctuary in it, for her sanctuary is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (21:22). "The glory of God lit her, and her lamp is the Lamb" (21:23). "The nations will walk by her light" (21:24). "They have no need of lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will shine on them" (22:5).

The lampstand in the Holy Place burned in a room only priests entered. In the city, all God's servants "will see His face, and His Name will be on their foreheads" (22:4).

Part VI. The Spirit, the oil, the Presence of God, and the lamps

God has always intended to live among His people

Genesis 3:8; Exodus 25:8; 29:45–46; 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–11, 27; Ezekiel 10:18; Haggai 2:5; John 1:14; Revelation 21:3.

The story of the lampstand sits inside a larger story, God living among His people. The LORD God walked in the garden (Genesis 3:8). At Sinai He said, "let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst" (Exodus 25:8), and "I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God" (29:45). When Moses finished the tabernacle, "the glory of the LORD filled the

tabernacle" (40:34). When Solomon finished the Temple, the glory filled that house too, and Solomon confessed that "heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You; how much less this house" (1 Kings 8:10–11, 27).

The glory left that house before Babylon burned it (Ezekiel 10:18). To the builders of the next one, God said, "My Spirit remains in your midst" (Haggai 2:5). Then "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). John's word for "dwelt" is the word for pitching a tabernacle. Revelation ends with that promise kept: "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them" (21:3).

The lampstand stood in that story, in the room nearest the Presence, burning before the LORD all night, every night.

The Temple had one lampstand because God's presence was in one place

Deuteronomy 12:5–14; Exodus 27:21; 1 Kings 7:49.

The Law gave Israel one place to worship with offering and sacrifice: "the place that the LORD your God will choose ... to put His name and make His habitation there." Israel was to bring its burnt offerings and sacrifices to that place (Deuteronomy 12:5–6). "Take care that you do not offer your burnt offerings at any place that you see" (12:13).

The Temple was where Israel had to worship, because that is where God's presence was. The lampstand burned in that place, "before the LORD" (Exodus 27:21). Even Solomon's ten lampstands all stood in the one Holy Place of the one house (1 Kings 7:49). The number of lampstands changed, and the place stayed the same.

Jesus opened the new age of worship in spirit and truth

John 2:19–21; 4:20–24; Hebrews 10:11–18; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:5–6.

A Samaritan woman asked Jesus which mountain was the right place to worship. He told her the hour was coming when "neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father," and when "the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4:21, 23). He spoke of His own body as the temple (2:19–21). After His one offering, "there is no longer any offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18).

His people are a holy priesthood who "offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Revelation says the same thing in its opening doxology: He "freed us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (1:5–6).

The Spirit has been poured out on God's people in Christ

Joel 2:28–29; Acts 2:1–4, 16–18, 33; John 7:39; 14:16–17; Matthew 18:20; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:19–22.

God had promised, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh" (Joel 2:28). At the Feast of Booths Jesus said the Spirit would come once He was glorified (John 7:39). At Pentecost it happened. "Divided tongues as of fire" rested "on each one of them," and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3–4). Peter explained that the exalted Jesus had received the promised Spirit from the Father and "has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (2:33).

The Spirit Jesus promised "dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17). So Paul tells a whole congregation, "you are God's temple and ... God's Spirit dwells in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16). The church is being built into "a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). Jesus Himself promised, "where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20).

The church is the place where the Spirit of God dwells. Wherever Christ's people are, the Spirit of God is.

The oil is the Spirit, and Jesus holds the supply

1 Samuel 16:13; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 1 John 2:20; Exodus 27:20; Zechariah 4:6; John 16:7; Acts 2:33; Revelation 3:1; 5:6.

In Scripture the Spirit comes with the anointing oil. When Samuel poured the oil on David, "the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). Jesus read Isaiah in Nazareth and said of Himself, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me" (Luke 4:18). Peter preached "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). "Christ" means Anointed. God has "anointed us" and "given us His Spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:21–22). John tells believers, "you have been anointed by the Holy One" (1 John 2:20).

A lamp burns as long as it has oil. In the tabernacle, the people brought the oil for the light (Exodus 27:20). In Zechariah's vision, the trees fed the lampstand, and God explained the vision: "by My Spirit, says the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). The churches' light is the Spirit's life in them.

Revelation puts that supply in Jesus' hands. The One Who walks among the lampstands is "the One Who has the seven spirits of God" (3:1). The Lamb's seven eyes are "the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (5:6). In the Holy Place, the priest poured in the oil the people brought. Jesus sends the Spirit Himself (John 16:7; Acts 2:33).

The lamps are there to give light

Exodus 25:37; Numbers 8:2; Matthew 5:14–16; Philippians 2:15; Ephesians 5:8; Revelation 21:24.

God set the sanctuary's lamps "to give light on the space in front of it" (Exodus 25:37; Numbers 8:2). A lampstand holds lamps up so that their light reaches the room. Jesus used the same picture of His disciples: "You are the light of the world," set on a stand so that the light reaches everyone in the house, and people who see it "give glory to your Father Who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14–16). Paul tells the Philippians that they "shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15), and the Ephesians that "now you are light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8). In the holy city, "the nations will walk by her light" (Revelation 21:24).

One story runs from Eden to the lampstands, and Jesus perfects every failure in it

Genesis 1:26–28; 3:8; Zechariah 3:8; 4:6–9; 6:12–13; Leviticus 9:23–24; Exodus 40:34; 2 Chronicles 7:1–2; Acts 2:1–4; Ezekiel 28:12–16; Hebrews 2:5–9; Galatians 4:1–2; Revelation 2:1, 7; 3:12, 21.

One strand runs through everything in this supplement. It begins in the garden, where the LORD God walked with the man He made to have dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26–28; 3:8). It runs through the renewal after the exile, when Zechariah saw the lampstand fed by the Spirit, heard that the house would be finished (Zechariah 4:6–9), and received the promise of the Branch who would build the temple of the LORD (3:8; 6:12–13): the promise of the Messianic Age. It runs through Pentecost and the pouring out of the Spirit. And it comes to rest in Revelation, with Jesus walking among many lampstands, all of them fueled by the Spirit. The story holds together as literature and as theology.

Pentecost was the dedication of a new house. When the tabernacle's service began, "fire came out from before the LORD," and the glory of the LORD filled the tent (Leviticus 9:24; Exodus 40:34). When Solomon dedicated the Temple, "fire came down from heaven," and "the glory of the LORD filled the temple" (2 Chronicles 7:1). At Pentecost a sound came "from heaven" and "filled the entire house," fire rested on each one of them, and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2–4). The Greek of Acts 2:4 uses the same verb for that filling as the Greek Old Testament uses when the glory filled the tabernacle and the Temple. This time the Presence filled the people.

The "Third Temple" that premillennial teaching is waiting for has been here all along. It is the Church. Jesus promises, "I will make him who conquers a pillar in the sanctuary of My God" (Revelation 3:12).

Ezekiel's cherub belongs in the same story. The anointed guardian cherub in the garden of God (Ezekiel 28:13–14) was placed there as a temporary helper, until man was mature enough to rule in his own right. He subverted everything instead, and mankind lost the right to have dominion. Scripture gives the world to come to man: "For it was not to angels that God

subjected the world to come," and then, "we see ... Jesus, crowned with glory and honor" (Hebrews 2:5, 9). The heir "is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father" (Galatians 4:2).

Jesus is the man who has reclaimed the right to rule. He is both the King and the better Guardian Cherub, walking in the middle of the lampstands in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:1, 7). He gives the one who conquers "a place to sit with Me on My throne, as I also conquered and sat down with My Father on His throne" (3:21). Every failure in the history of creation is recapitulated better in the Person of Jesus Christ: perfected and glorified.

Every church is a lampstand because the Spirit is wherever Christ's people are

Revelation 1:12–13, 20; 2:1; 5:6.

In the Temple there was one lampstand, in one Holy Place. It stood where God's presence was, in the one place where Israel could bring its offerings and sacrifices.

In John's vision each church is a lampstand, and Jesus walks among them. The Spirit has been poured out on the people of God in Christ, so the Spirit of God is wherever Christ's people are. That is why the church in Ephesus and the church in Laodicea are each a whole lampstand, and why the One Who walks among them knows each one by its city and its works.

The lampstand was the furniture of Israel's sanctuary. Most people today know it as the emblem of Judaism. In Revelation it stands for the churches of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Himself makes the identification: "the seven lampstands are seven churches" (1:20).

And the lampstands look ahead to the city whose lamp is the Lamb (21:23), where God's servants see His face (22:4) and the Lord God Himself shines on them (22:5).

A timeline of the lampstand

When	What happened	Where to read it
At Sinai	God shows Moses the pattern; Bezalel makes the lampstand	Exodus 25:31–40; 31:1–11; 37:17–24
In the days of Eli	The lamp of God burns at Shiloh; the LORD calls Samuel	1 Samuel 3:3
About 960 BC	Solomon's Temple, with ten golden lampstands	1 Kings 7:49
9th–8th century BC	A seven-spouted lamp on a pedestal at Dan	Tel Dan excavations
Late 8th century BC	In Ahaz's day the lamps are put out; Hezekiah restores them	2 Chronicles 28:24; 29:3–7

When	What happened	Where to read it
586 BC	Babylon burns the Temple and takes the lampstands	Jeremiah 52:19
539 BC	The handwriting on the wall opposite the lampstand	Daniel 5:5
October 520 BC	"My Spirit remains in your midst," on the seventh day of Booths	Haggai 2:1–5
February 519 BC	Zechariah's vision of the lampstand and the olive trees	Zechariah 1:7; 4:1–14
March 515 BC	The rebuilt Temple is finished	Ezra 6:15
169 BC	Antiochus IV takes the lampstand	1 Maccabees 1:20–21
December 164 BC	The Maccabees light a new lampstand; eight days of Dedication	1 Maccabees 4:49–59
63 BC	Pompey sees the lampstand and touches nothing	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i> 14.72
About 20 BC	Herod begins rebuilding the Temple	John 2:20
Jesus' ministry	Living water and the light of the world at Booths; Jesus in the Temple at Dedication	John 7:37–39; 8:12, 20; 10:22–23
Pentecost	The Spirit poured out	Acts 2:1–33
Before AD 70	John's vision of seven golden lampstands	Revelation 1:12–20
AD 70	Titus takes Jerusalem; lampstands handed over	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 6.387–389
AD 71	The lampstand carried in the triumph at Rome	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 7.148–150
AD 75	The Temple's gold laid up in Vespasian's Temple of Peace	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i> 7.158–162
After AD 81	The Arch of Titus shows the lampstand in the procession	The Roman Forum
AD 455	The Vandals take the Temple treasures to Carthage	Procopius, <i>Wars</i> 4.9
AD 534	Belisarius displays them at Constantinople; Justinian sends them to Jerusalem	Procopius, <i>Wars</i> 4.9
1949	Israel adopts the Arch of Titus menorah as its emblem	

Josephus is quoted from William Whiston's translation. The Mishnah and Talmud are cited from Sefaria's William Davidson edition. Photographs: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Open Access (323173, 241656, 248087); a Herodian lamp in the Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, photographed by Gary Todd (CCO); the seven-spouted lamp from Tel Dan, from the Center for Online Judaic Studies, after *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March–April 1985; the Arch of Titus relief, photographed by Laurel Lodged (public domain). The graphite drawings were made for this supplement.