

The Candlestick Was Not in the Ark

by Walter L. Wilson, M.D.

During the winter months, I had the privilege of teaching a Bible class of pastors who requested some messages on how to find Christ and the gospel in the Old Testament. It was an interesting class, and the men seemed to appreciate very much the help received in regard to the types and shadows found in the messages of the prophets. During the course of the lessons, we came to a discussion of the seven articles of furniture in the Jewish tabernacle.

The wonderful pictures of Christ seen in the various parts of the tabernacle filled the hearts of these preachers with new joy. Among the things discussed was the ark of the covenant found in the holy of holies behind the veil. This ark with the mercy seat upon its top presented many beautiful pictures of the Lord Jesus in His Deity, His humanity, and His sacrifice. I asked the question, "What was in the ark of the covenant? Who knows?" There was a long pause and no one seemed ready to answer. Finally the pastor of a large, well-known church arose, and said, "Since none of the other brethren seem willing to venture a guess, I will suggest that possibly the candlestick was in the ark." His reply was received with silence by the other members of the class. They did not know whether his answer was correct or not.

The ignorance which was displayed by this reply rather startled me, and it was with some difficulty that I restrained my feelings of amusement. An explanation was immediately given to the men, in which I called their attention to the fact that the candlestick was probably larger than the ark and was located in the holy place on the outside of the veil, and separated from the ark by the veil. We also observed that the purpose of the candlestick was to give light throughout the holy place, so that the priest could go about their service in attending to the altar of incense and the table of shewbread. This purpose could not be served if the candlestick had been inside the ark and covered over with the mercy seat.

At the close of the class, there was quite a discussion about how little had been taught in the seminary with regard to the

meanings of the figures, types and shadows of the Old Testament economy. A few days after this peculiar incident occurred, I was visited by this pastor who had made the peculiar reply, and he informed me that he had come to my office to find Christ. "Do you know," he said, "that after leaving the class the other day, I went home to my study and thought over the ridiculous answer that I had given to your question. It occurred to me that perhaps I was just as ignorant on other matters in the Bible. I started to give myself an examination on my own state and condition before God. I wrote down the questions on a sheet of paper and then wrote out the answers, as I subjected my soul to a thorough test. I was really alarmed at my ignorance of things which should be of prime importance. I came to the conclusion that I had had quite a religious experience without really meeting the Saviour and receiving eternal life from Him."

I looked at the gentleman in astonishment. I could see that his heart had been deeply touched by his condition and that his soul was filled with hunger for the truth of God and the light of Christ. He continued his story, saying: "How I ever got through the seminary and these several years of preaching without having eternal life, I cannot understand. I can see now that I learned only the mechanics of Christianity and have never felt the life-giving touch of the Lord Himself. I learned the theory, I embraced the theology, but now I want the Lord Himself. Do tell me how to meet Jesus Christ."

My heart was deeply touched by this appeal. The Holy Spirit had used that strange incident concerning the candlestick to reveal to my friend the darkness of his heart and the need of his soul. What a wonder-working person He is! What peculiar methods are used by Him for reaching hearts! Who would ever have thought of reaching the heart of this well-known and much-loved preacher through such an obscure passage as the one in Exodus concerning the candlestick and the ark. The Holy Spirit is sovereign and may use any part of His own Word to bring about His own results in His own way.

Soul-winners should let the Spirit of God fill their hearts and minds with all the Word, from Genesis to Revelation, that the soul can absorb. They should not confine their ministry to a few gospel verses. Every part of the Scripture has life in it, and is profitable for man's heart and mind. What part of the Word

should I use with this pastor? The question was running over and over in my mind as he sat there telling me his story. I sought to diagnose his case as he talked with me, and finally decided that he had learned the facts without appropriating them for his own heart. He had learned that the Lord Jesus came to save men, but had missed applying that salvation to himself.

I asked my friend when he had received the Lord Jesus as his own personal Saviour. "Have you really had a personal meeting with Christ, or did you just decide to live a Christian life and enter the ministry as a means of bringing blessing to others and of making a living for yourself?"

"Really, doctor," he said, "as I have examined my life in the last few days, I am convinced that such a meeting never took place. Christ has been to me a wonderful, historical character, a pattern of good men, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, but I have never yet met Him face to face, confessed to Him my need, and made Him my own Lord."

"Have you noticed John 1:12?" I asked. "It reads like this: 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.'" The preacher saw immediately the simplicity and the beauty of belonging to Jesus Christ personally, and at once accepted Him. The gift of Jesus Christ became a reality in his soul and the peace of God filled his heart. I followed this Scripture with another found in I John 5:12 — "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I read the passage to him slowly and with some emphasis on the word "*hath*." He saw the point readily and his faith was strengthened. "Yes, I see the point clearly, Dr. Wilson," he said; "Christ is my own now. I have met Him today and He has become my Lord and Saviour. Thank you so much for showing me the way to Him."

Have you, dear reader, personally made Christ Jesus your own? Have you met Him for yourself? Do you enjoy that blessed experience today?