

# JESUS IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS

## Introduction

About 6.000 years ago, the earth was without form, and void. Darkness covered the planet, everything was submitted to obscurity. But God commanded, with His creating might, that there be light and there was light. God also created the sun, the moon and the stars. Light from the sun shone on the planet and gave life to all vegetation, to all the animals and to the human beings. The whole earth depends on light, without it we would perish.

### I. The obscurity of sin

Man and woman were created by God and their nature was so perfect that light shone forth from their bodies and covered them as a garment. Satan tempted Eve and made her fall into temptation, Adam fell subsequently. When both disobeyed God, the garment of light surrounding them disappeared. Sin made them both realize they had lost their garment of light. They understood that the light was a symbol of God and His holiness and the fact of being in harmony with their Creator.

Now, because of sin, they were subject to darkness. On that day, the sun was shining just like any other day, but to them everything appeared as in obscurity. They experienced how terrible it is to possess a heart without light, full of spiritual darkness. They began to feel shame, fear, uncertainty and they reproached each other bitterly. They were full of anxiety.

### II. The light of grace

Both sew for themselves two small aprons with fig leaves in order to cover their naked bodies. They had the impression that they had been abandoned and that soon God's justice would unfurl over them to destroy them. However they heard something from God that gave light to their lives. These were prophetic words spoken to the serpent who had induced them into sin (Gen. 3: 15).

Now they were assured that in spite of the fact they had fallen in sin and deserved death, Someone would pay their debt, dying in their stead. When China was a great empire, there was a time when it was allowed to buy a 'substitute', who would die in the stead of the condemn to death. In same manner, Adam and Eve, being guilty, would be able to accede to the possibility of eternal life thanks to a 'substitute', the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book of Revelation describe Him as the faithful witness (Rev. 1: 5), who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. The First and the Last, the Morning Star, the hidden manna, He who lives forever (Rev. 1: 18). John, in his gospel describes Him as ‘the Light of the world’ (Jn. 8: 12). The prophet Isaiah wrote about Him as follows: ‘Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’ (Is. 9: 6). John the Baptist named Him, ‘the Lamb of God’ (Jn. 1: 29). The apostle Peter teaches us that the human race was redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, ‘as a lamb without blemish and without spot’ (1Pet. 1: 18-19).

When man fell in sin, he became Satan’s friend and God’s natural enemy. But God promised He would send His Son Jesus Christ, seed of the woman, to crush Satan’s head so humanity may receive again the light of God in his soul. Adam and Eve would have to die physically, but through the faith they layed upon the Lamb of God, they would rise again one day to live eternally.

### III. The light of the first sacrifices

God taught Adam the sacrifice system of animals, as a symbol of the true sacrifice of Christ, with the objective that he would learn an important lesson that Paul resumes with these words: ‘For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 6: 23). ‘...without shedding of blood there is no remission’ (Heb. 9: 22).

Thus, each blood sacrifice represented ‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’ (Jn. 1: 29). They sacrificed their lambs at the gate of Eden to obtain forgiveness for their sins. Cain and Abel learnt about the divine system which could free their souls from eternal death. However, the biblical record tells us that Cain did not offer a lamb but the fruits of the earth, while Abel obeyed the divine command.

God accepted Abel’s offering but not Cain’s. Cain took envy of his brother and killed him. In Cain’s offering there was no substitute, no death and so there was no atonement for sin. This means there was no genuine repentance.

Abel put his hands over the animal and confessed his sins. There was a transfer of sin to the animal, symbol of Christ. The death sentence was transfered to the animal and Abel received forgiveness for his sins. The blood of the animal was a warrant that the demands of the Law had been satisfied.

Let us remember the case of that king who had promulgated a law that said that if someone in his kingdom was found having committed an offence, he would be condemned to lose two eyes. The first to be found having transgressed the law was the king's own son. The king did not ignore the law, he complied with all justice, but he did it by taking out one of his own and one of his son. The extraction of two eyes was a warrant that the demands of the law of the kingdom had been fulfilled.

God did the same. When He was faced with the fact that Adam, His son, had converted himself into a transgressor of the law of the universe, God decided to give up His Son Jesus Christ. God suffered with His own Son.

This is what a father did also. He sent his son to sleep in the attic as a punishment. The place was dark and full of old things. The child feared this part of the house. But he had committed a misdeed that required an exemplary punishment. The child cried when he heard what was waiting him; the father, however, went up to the attic that night and layed down next to his son. He did not leave him alone even in the accomplishment of justice.

The sacrifice of animals represented the sacrifice of Christ and brought back the light of God to the heart of the repented one.

#### IV. The light of the Sanctuary

Adam's descendence were slaves in Egypt. On the eve of their liberation, they had light in their homes, while darkness had fallen over the egyptians. Egypt was a nation with obscure practices, spiritism, much debasement, superstition and idolatry.

God brought His people from the slavery of Egypt and guided them for forty years in the wilderness. The system of sacrifices had been left aside for quite a while. It was necessary for the Lord to remind His people of the importance to trust in the Lamb to come.

And this was how God commanded to return to the sacrificial system and for this they were to build a sanctuary. God ordered Moses to build it according to the model he had been shown. This means that a sanctuary exists in heaven. The sanctuary was in three parts: the courtyard, the Holy and the most Holy. When it was built, the glory of God (the Light) filled the holy tabernacle (Ex. 40: 34).

If Israel wanted the presence of God to remain with them, they had to sacrifice animals, one in the morning and another one at sunset. Sinners had to present themselves at the sanctuary with an animal according to their social position. The blood of the sacrificed animal was brought into the Holy by the priest and was sprinkled on the curtain that divided both parts. And so the demands of the broken law were satisfied.

The holy 'Shekinah' was above the mercy seat. It was the manifestation of God, a great light revealing His presence. In the Holy was a lampstand with seven branches which was always alight. This was a symbol of Christ, who was permanently in the midst of His people and who will ever be with them.

## V. The light of the world

The moment came when Christ became flesh in Maria, was born and accomplished the mission to bruise Satan's head and redeem mankind from the condemnation of the law. This happened when Jesus died on the cross without having committed a single sin.

During His ministry, Jesus taught that no one could go to the Father but through Him (Jn. 14: 6). He taught that He is the way, the truth and the life. He taught that He is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. He taught that anyone, black, white, short, fat, Russian, Chinese, Equatorian, Peruvian, Turk... poor, rich... anybody could go to Him and receive rest for his soul (Mat. 11: 28). He brought consolation to the world, love, forgiveness, freedom from the chains of sin. John taught that He was the life and light of men (Jn. 1: 4-9).

When Christ came it was a time of spiritual darkness, He was to bring the gospel but they did not accept His ministry (Jn. 1: 11). However to those who did receive Him, He gave them the right to become 'children of God' (Jn. 1: 12).

Those who came into contact with Him and accepted Him as their personal Saviour, received light into their lives. John the aggressive one, converted into the disciple of love. Peter, proud, rugged and impetuous, when converted was asked by Jesus to feed His sheep. Mary broke her alabaster flask and annointed Jesus' feet. The robber at the cross was filled with faith and even pleaded for a place in heaven. You and I have also been reached by this light.

## VI. Jesus in the midst of His church

Today, Christ can enlighten your extinct life. For when He died on the cross He was a substitute for you and me. Your sin and mine, He took on Calvary. That place was meant for you and for me. But He occupied it in His love. He endured the insults, the jeerings and the indifference of mankind, and He, who had come to save it, became the victim.

He came to cure and He became the stricken One. He came to bring us light and darkness surrounded Him. He came to quench the thirsty and suffered the most terrible thirst on Calvary. All of this for love. But Christ died, rose again and ascended to heaven. The Bible shows us that He walks among the seven lampstands (Rev. 1: 9-15).

The seven lampstands (ver. 20), are seven churches, the people of God. They are of gold because the church is precious to the eyes of Christ, it is His special treasure.

Jesus is seen in the midst of the church. There cannot be a closer relationship than this. He is in the midst, always with us. He has seven stars in His hand. These are the ministers of His people, teaching that He guides His people, takes care of them and protects them.

## CONCLUSION

Come to Christ, you have nothing to fear by His side. Come to Christ, He understands your life perfectly. Come to Christ, no problem is so great that He cannot solve it. Come to Christ, there is no sinner, as refractory as he may be, who will not find in Christ forgiveness and peace.

Peter did something terrible, however Christ's gaze full of forgiveness, brought him bitter tears. Peter repented and the death of Christ on the cross redeemed him of all his sins.

Do you want to come to Christ today, and accept His sacrifice on Calvary? May God help us to trust deeply in the expiatory sacrifice of His Son and not to forget that He is in our midst, always by our side.

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