

The hand with seven stars

The work of the five-fold ministry is symbolised in the book of Revelation as the hand of Christ toward the lampstand churches. As it was with Moses and Aaron, the hand of Christ orders the body of Christ in the same way.

It is the authority and initiative of the hand that gives significance to the seven stars. The seven stars in Christ's hand are providing the ministry of the seven Spirits of God. And the anointing of the seven Spirits of God on the head of Christ causes His face to shine in four aspects. The ministry of the seven Spirits of God enables the seven stars in the right hand of Christ. In the days of Moses, the Lord's mighty hand ordered the nation of Israel, at the door of the tabernacle, under the four faces. These four faces are representative of the practical administration of kingship, of priesthood, of the prophetic ministry, and of headship in the firstborn.

Kingship is the authority of the word of life that is ministered. Those who are born into the kingdom of God can find access in and out to the throne of grace 'to enquire before the Lord'.

Priesthood is our participation in the offering of Christ, ministering continually to the Lord and to one another. By this order we can present ourselves as a living sacrifice.

Prophetic ministry is exercised where we share the testimony of Jesus Himself by the spirit of prophecy in our midst. The proclamation and application of present truth are the evidence of prophetic ministry.

Firstborn ministry is evident when the headship of family order and church order are enabling sons and daughters to be born of God, carried on eagles' wings to the Father.

References:

Isa 63:12 Exo 15:6,12
 Num 1:52 Exo 29:42
 Deu 33:2 Psa 80:17
 Psa 78:54 Psa 118:15
 Rev 2:1

Further Study

Psa 20

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

The hand of Christ

The hand of Christ is now building the temple of living stones in the same way that the hand of Zerubbabel restored the temple in Judah. 'The *hands* of Zerubbabel have *laid the foundation* of this temple; his hands shall also *finish* it...For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the *eyes of the Lord*, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.' We know that Zerubbabel led the work of rebuilding Judah as a lampstand nation. The measuring line was in his hand. 'The seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel, *these are* the eyes of the Lord'. The book of Revelation shows us that 'these seven' in his hand are the same eyes of the Lord. They are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

The prophetic picture from Zechariah to Revelation is that the seven Spirits are ministered by the seven stars in the hand of Christ. Jesus addressed the overseers of the church in Sardis as, 'He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars'. The seven stars are ministering the seven Spirits.

Jesus Christ is walking among the lampstand churches. He is laying the foundation and will finish the building by His hand. He who has begun the work will complete it, because He is the Pioneer, the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is ordering the church of the firstborn under four administrations. The hand that is building the church is holding the seven stars who are ministering the seven Spirits of His anointing. These are the layers which complete the prophetic picture.

References:

Zec 4:9-10

Rev 3:1

Php 1:6

Heb 12:2, 23

Zec 1:20

Zec 3:1

Further Study

Isa 41

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 5

The mystery of the *stars*

A 'star' is a corporate messenger in the lampstand church. The mystery of the *stars* is the revelation of the overseers and deacons among the *churches*. According to Jesus' letters, each star is responsible for the lamps on the lampstand. The star is a body of overseers and deacons who administer the oil and light of the seven Spirits of God from the hand/bowl.

The account of the stars begins with the promises to Abraham and the number of his offspring. However, it is from Daniel's prophecy, even before Zechariah's vision of the lampstand, that the star proposition is directed more specifically. Daniel refers to overseers with *insight*, who shine brightly in the expanse of heaven, like *stars*, forever and ever. The apostle Paul speaks of his insight in the *mystery*. The seven stars are a major part of this *mystery*. Insight in the mystery is what identifies the seven stars in the right hand. Those with this insight are active ministries in the heavenly places. In the expanse of heaven, like stars, they lead many to righteousness. The stars with *insight* begin to emerge during the time of the trampling of the sanctuary, when the transgression that causes desolation is active. These stars are subject to sword, flame, captivity and hypocrisy, but they receive 'a little help'.

Daniel accounts that some of these stars will fall, until the time of the end, to cause purging and refinement amidst God's people. John refers to Jesus as the One who has the seven stars in his right hand. We are aware also that the Scripture refers to both wandering stars and fallen stars. A star, in the physical heavens, is a burning lamp with a particular orbit. We read in the book of Jude that when a star *wanders* from its orbit or falls, it is like a burning lamp that is reserved for everlasting blackness.

References:

Php 1:1
Eph 3:4
Jud 1:6
Dan 11:33, 35

Further Study

Jud 1

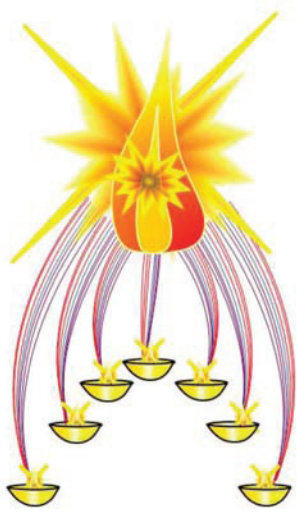
Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6



Corporate messenger: overseers and deacons

The star supplies the fullness
of the Spirit to every branch



Stars shining with insight in the mystery

There are two mysteries in the Revelation of Jesus Christ to John. One is the mystery of the seven stars, and the other is the mystery of the seven lampstands. These are not the same thing but they are directly connected. The mandate of the stars in the kingdom of heaven relates to the oil and light of the seven Spirits of God coming from the hand. This light is the Spirit, not just an effect.

Daniel himself was armed with the seven Spirits of God when he stood as an accountable messenger before Belshazzar, the ruler in Babylon. As the lampstand lit up the message of judgement, written on the wall by the hand of God, Daniel stood as a messenger beside the lampstand. In this way, Daniel illustrates the role of the star. It was Daniel who looked down through the ages to the Feast of Tabernacles and saw the Son of Man coming with clouds. The book of Revelation begins with the Son of Man coming with clouds.

At the close of his revelation, Daniel was instructed to seal up the book until the time of the end. Jesus Himself will open the sealed book. However, before this event, the book of the seven letters must be fulfilled with the seven overcomings of the seven lampstand churches.

Jesus picks up the symbol of the *stars* from the book of Daniel. As our Great High Priest, His words are written and sent to the seven stars of the churches. John wrote to the angels (*angelos*, the messenger, star) of the churches. These groups of men with insight into the mystery of Christ are to shine in the heavens and lead many to righteousness, despite being subject to sword and flame. However, many stars will fall when the powers of the heavens are shaken in the time of the end.

References:

Dan 4:8 Dan 7:13
 Rev 5:5-7 Dan 12:4
 Mat 24:29 Mar 13:25
 Rev 2:1, 8, 12
 Rev 1:7, 11, 20

Further Study

Dan 5

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

The fellowship of one Spirit

The light is the Spirit of the Lord that reveals the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three Persons of the Godhead do not reveal Themselves. We can rejoice because the same Spirit of the Lord is now among and upon *us* in a lampstand church. This is His promise of 'My Spirit among you'.

When we are born of the Spirit, we are born by the power of the same seven Spirits of God that reveal the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each according to His name. The light of the seven Spirits of God brings the revelation of the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each One has His own sovereignty and initiative as Lord. This Lordship is the sovereign expression of each name in the fellowship of Their covenant. As Paul says, when we are 'joined to the Lord', we are 'one Spirit' with Him. When we are born of the Spirit, then we can participate in the *same fellowship*, by the *same* seven Spirits of God, each according to *our* own name.

We know that the Father has set Jesus Christ *far above* every dominion and every name, thus reordering the heavenly places. He has made Him Head over all things to the church, which is His body. The body of Christ was placed above the angelic orders. The angels' role in serving those who were the heirs of salvation was unchanged. However, Christ was to 'Head up' all things in Himself, both in heaven and on earth. He was to be the Head of an administration by which He would speak from heaven. His own head and hair, eyes, feet, voice and face would be expressed in His body, the church. His administration would be applied by His own hand, holding seven star-messengers.

References:

Col 1:18 Heb 1:14
Act 10:3 Act 12:7
Act 27:23
Rev 1:1
Eph 1:10, 20-23

Further Study

Eph 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 8

God has appointed messengers

Paul says that ‘God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers’. While Paul focuses on the administration of the body, Peter has written about our priesthood in the temple of living stones. Those who are obedient to the word will be built together as a spiritual house. We must hear and be obedient to the present truth spoken to us by those messengers who are ‘moved by the Holy Spirit’.

Paul, Peter and John all highlight the place of *messengers* within the administration of the Spirit. Paul speaks of gifted ministries given to the body. Peter speaks of those who bring present truth by the Holy Spirit. John’s view is of star-messengers given to the lampstand churches. The message is the same. Those who are sent as messengers to the *body* of Christ, who bring present truth to build the temple, belong to the stars of the *lampstands*.

What ‘the Spirit says’ through messengers is the *particular* ministry of oil that is required. The overseers and deacons are required to steward this oil to each lamp of the lampstand. This ministry may also need to bring adjustment; for example, to a loveless church, a tried church, a suffering church, a corrupt church, a dying church, a persevering church, or a lukewarm church. This defines the mandate of a star. In Jesus’ hand, a star is a corporate body of overseers and deacons who have insight in this mystery. They bring this light *to* a lampstand, and can be this light *in* a lampstand. A star has no role apart from the hand of Christ and apart from a lampstand. A star becomes a ‘wandering star’, reserved for blackness, if it exercises a mandate of its own, apart from the appointed orbit. We can be assured that there is an administration by which this work will be completed in our lives.

References:

1Co 12:28
 1Pe 1:14
 Deu 17:12
 Rev 1:20
 2Pe 1:12, 19, 21

Further Study

Rom 13

1Pe 2:5-7, 13
 Tit 3:1
 Eph 4:7, 11
 Jud 1:11-13

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 11

Fellow bondslaves of Christ

John was one of the *twelve* apostles charged with drawing the Jewish nation, and indeed the whole house of Israel, into the new covenant. However, when John met the ascended Christ, he fell at His feet like a dead man. The right hand of Christ raised and ordained him to the administration of His right hand. John was to activate a seven-star initiative toward the Gentile churches. His first charge was to send the seven letters to the seven stars in lampstand churches in Asia. John was directing the star-messenger, as part of the hand, even though he was also one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. He became a fellow bondsman 'in the Spirit'. John joined the mandate of all his fellow bondslaves, even ones who lived beyond his own time.

Jesus was calling each star to repent and 'hear what the Spirit says'. In this way, each star was sent by the hand of Christ to adjust the lamps and lampstands. The star was to be the vessel of ministry in the lampstand, bringing the oil of seven Spirits and multiplying grace to every branch of the lampstand. This mandate of the star-messengers in the hand, appointed by Christ, continues to the time of the end. They are to be part of the voice from heaven, proclaiming the word of present truth, as a lamp shining in a dark place.

The messengers of Christ will face conflict by sword and flame, as it was in Daniel's time. Nevertheless, the stars are to hold the mystery of the faith like the brightness of the heavens. They are to maintain the light of present truth, causing the Morning Star to arise in men's hearts. Messengers are illuminating the Scriptures as present truth, not dealing in private interpretation. They are to lead many to righteousness; that is, to present continual righteous offering in God's household.

References:

Psa 80:17 Rev 17:1
 Rev 19:10 Rev 22:6-9
 Rev 3:3, 19 Dan 12:4
 2Pe 1:19 2Co 4:4-6
 Rev 2:5, 16, 22
 Rev 1:10, 11, 17

Further Study

Mal 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 12

Present truth

The *role* of a 'star' is to be the corporate messenger of 'present truth', causing *truth* to be *present* with us. Messengers apply the Scriptures to our lives, here and now, and so enable the Scriptures to be *confirmed* by the Holy Spirit. They cause the truth to be present with us. They declare *present* truth as the particular ministry of the seven Spirits of God that is being taught to us by the Holy Spirit. However, star-messengers must not become engrossed in a local programme, or the ministry of the Spirit is in danger of being absorbed into an independent culture. These overseers should be walking and ministering to lampstands and their branches. Otherwise, some groups will grow at the expense of others. This is what Jesus meant by losing first love. The 'first love' of covenant fellowship is destroyed when overseers cease to walk *with* the five-fold ministry of Christ.

The local assembly must receive walking overseers as coming from the hand/bowl. The star is a separate administration to the lampstand itself. The local cluster assembly - that is, the cup, bud and flower - must not close the door to the star messengers, like the overseers in the lampstand of Laodicea. If the doorkeepers within a local congregation do not continue opening the door to the messengers of Christ, they cease to receive the oil of seven Spirits. The congregation becomes introverted and loses its capacity to reflect the light of seven Spirits in its fellowship.

The proper *effect* of the star messenger is that the *Morning Star* rises in men's hearts. The *work* of the star is to proclaim the 'more sure word' that will bring a 'light in a dark place'. The word of present truth is the vehicle of the oil, of the ministry of the Spirit in the lampstand. In this way, the word of present truth becomes a 'light to our path'.

References:

2Pe 1:12 Rev 2:4, 28
 Rev 22:16 Psa 119:105
 2Pe 1:19 Rev 3:20
 2Co 4:5-6 Joh 8:12
 Pro 6:23

Further Study

Mat 25:1-13

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

Stars – bringing a lamp

Stars are messengers who bring the ministry of the Spirit and light our lamps. True messengers never claim to be custodians of *all truth*, with authority to interpret the Scriptures. In fact, they don't interpret the Scriptures at all. Rather, they minister in weakness and fear, so that their ministry is a demonstration of 'Spirit and power' and not of human wisdom. Their word and preaching do not depend on human capacity whatsoever, either in the speaking or the hearing. Their communication is 'in Spirit', using words 'which the Holy Spirit teaches'. Without viable stars, lampstands will be removed, just as Jesus warned.

As stars are coming to the lampstand, we receive them in the flower as a lamp. Then we can be integrated into that lamp so that the flower reflects the light. The critical point is this. The star, coming to the lampstand, becomes the lamp *in* the lampstand. This is how Paul grew the churches as lampstands. As we are planted in Christ, growing up as the clusters of almond branches, we are to receive a star into the flower. This is how the lamp comes to the lampstand. The light of the star lamp that shines forth is not our own light. It is the light of the seven Spirits of God. Believers are not shining their own light. They are the planting of the Lord so that *He* will be glorified.

The star from the hand of Christ brings the lamp to the lampstand of believers. While the star is within its sphere, bringing the lamp to the lampstand, it is a *star*. When the star comes *into* the lampstand, it is a *lamp* with its light being reflected by the flower. This is how Paul brought the ministry of the Spirit to a new city. He grew a lampstand from the base as believers laid down their own lives as firstfruits.

References:

1Co 1:1-3
Col 2:5
Rev 2:5
Isa 61:3

Joh 4:23
1Co 4:10-13
2Co 10:10
2Co 13:4

Further Study

1Cor 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

The star becomes the lamp



The star coming to the lampstand



becomes the lamp *in* the lampstand



1. The hand brings a star to the lampstand



2. The star becomes a lamp in the flower



3. The lamp is reflected by the flower

True messengers

Paul and his ministering company laid down their lives in the same way in each place. Because of this, the believers who received them as true messengers were ready to risk their necks and die with the messengers. They joined Christ's offering. The suffering of Christ was their conflict in establishing firstfruit assemblies of believers. While many continued in this faithful relationship, others turned away to their *own* light. They became false messengers, false apostles, taking the place of those who were sent by Christ. They transformed *themselves* into angels of light, turning against Paul and becoming enemies of the cross. However, those who receive the lamp will show forth the true light. They will shine as lights from the very first day of their participation in the gospel.

The lamp of the seven Spirits of God rests upon believers in their growth, from the cup, to the bud, and then finally as a flower, in a local area. The flower represents a local assembly of believers. The branch is a group of three cluster assemblies. The star-messengers will establish a lamp in the flowers of a branch.

Paul did this by living in the city for a time. Then he continued to minister by letters, and by sending faithful brethren, after he moved on. The book of Acts records that Paul and his ministering company visited many places for the second or third time. The lamp of the Spirit does not *belong* to the flower, as if the local church could be the source of its own light. However, the ministry of the star can be placed in, and reflected by, the flower. The churches were not *local* independent churches. Rather, they belonged to a whole lampstand church in their city-region.

References:

Php 1:30
2Ti 1:5
Php 1:5
Act 19:10
Act 15:41

Further Study

Act 18

Php 3:18

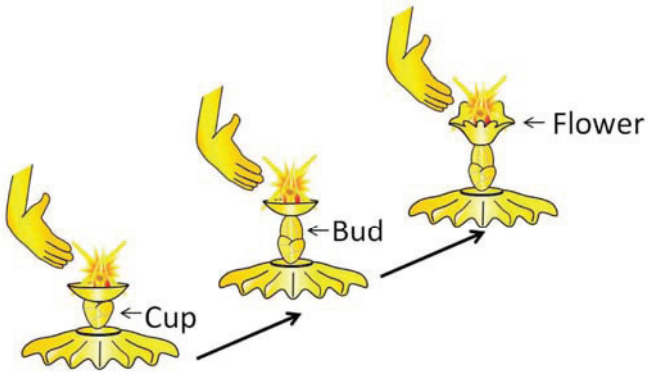
Php 2:15

Rom 16:3-4

1Co 7:17

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 15



Growing up to become firstfruits by
receiving the ministry of the Spirit

Receiving administration

The Corinthian church began by *receiving* the administration of Paul and the *star-angelos*. However, that church began to turn away from the administration of the Spirit to an administration of the flesh. More than this, they accepted false workers who were self-ordained instructors and not ministers of the Spirit. These false messengers had become the source of their own light, and they did not reflect the light of the seven Spirits of God. They were trading, coming with convincing words of human wisdom.

Coming after the working of Satan, they became his ministers. At the end of the second letter, Paul appealed to the Corinthians a 'third time'. He was not seeking to justify himself. He was urging the church to prove that Christ was in them. He was saying, 'We *have* the lamp of administration, and we want this lamp to be placed among you, as the flower. Prove that Christ is in you by accepting *us* as an administration among you. Christ will be in *your* midst, just as His power is surely with *us*.'

Without this, the local church will be disqualified. Like Corinth, they will have no light to reflect. For the light of the star to become the light of the lampstand, it is essential that the lamp is received and hidden in the flower. Without a *star*, there will be no ministry of the seven Spirits of God and the lampstands will be removed. The gospel relies on an administration of the seven Spirits of God to enlighten every man to the light of life that is his destiny. This is the purpose of the lampstand. This is the whole Christian message.

References:

1Co 2:12 1Co 4:7, 15
2Co 11:13 2Co 10:12
Rev 2:5 Joh 1:9
2Co 13:1, 5, 7 Joh 1:9

Further Study

2Co 10

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 18

Losing the administration of the Spirit

As it was with the seven churches to whom John wrote, Christ is calling the stars to repentance. The same corruption that was permitted in the seven churches is being tolerated in the church in our day. Christ's messenger administration is being rejected, just as was the case in Corinth. Local leaders, either self-appointed or installed by organisations, have taken the pre-eminence in ministering to their local congregations. These assemblies have become autonomous and self-resourced. If they *do* receive the hand and the star as the messenger ministry, they only do so to *add* to their resources. Local leaders have lost the vital connection to Christ and His administration of the seven Spirits of God. By transforming themselves into messengers, as if they possess the light, they have become false and deceitful workers.

As it was in Laodicea, many local leaders have closed the door to the star-*angelos* ministry. Fleshly corruption has led to the very depths of Satan. Many have a name that they live, but they are dead. Among others, there are divisions and factions within the church. They are like a 'synagogue of Satan', who *say* they are genuine but are *not*.

This was Paul's contention with a number of the New Testament churches. They began in the Spirit, having received the lamp administration. However, over time, they behaved as if the word of God had originally come from them. They rejected Paul and the need for a seven/five administration. Further to this, they allowed false workers to court them and to impose a different administration.

The hand and star messengers, who have been sent with an administration from the Father and with grace from the Son, can travail in birth to see Christ *formed* in us. They are not instructors, but fathers.

References:

Rev 2:24 1Co 14:36
Gal 1:6 Gal 4:19
1Co 4:15 Rev 3:20
Rev 3:1, 9, 17, 20

Further Study

2Co 11

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 19

False workers

False workers with a false gospel cannot deliver our sonship to us. They are not messengers because they show forth their own light and not the light of the seven Spirits of God. They transform themselves, by virtue of their own 'light', into ministers of light. Their message is a theological proposition based on words, reason and religious endeavours. They use flattery, condemnation and ceremony to appeal to those who are driven by shame. Many people have a self-made religion coming from messengers of Satan. By this, they seek something better for themselves.

They are called 'ministers of Satan' because they replace the order of Christ with an alternative. These ministers use tradition, argument, commentary and interpretation of the Scriptures as the basis of their authority. Like many of the patriarchs of the historic church, they corrupt the four 'faces' of Christ's order. They replace overseeing authority with those who are appointed by democratic vote, rather than by the 'mind of Christ'. They replace priesthood and offering with ceremony and sacraments. They replace the spirit of prophecy and present truth with liturgy, performance and creeds. They replace relationship in families from house to house, with patriarchy.

Those who gather to them are called 'the synagogue of Satan'. Jesus uses this expression to identify, in the strongest terms, those who form a church within the church. These false workers have a different gospel and an alternative mode of ministry. Jesus continues to warn His lampstand churches that these false groups will always be present. They say they 'are' when they are 'not'. Nevertheless, He has *not left Himself without witness* and He can establish His strength in the midst of Babylon. He can maintain a remnant people as a witness to His 'Spirit among us'. He did this with Joseph and the seventy in Egypt, who grew amidst affliction, from seventy in number to be like the stars of heaven.

References:

2Co 11:13 Rev 3:9
 Rev 2:2, 9 Act 14:16-17
 Deu 10:22 Gal 4:17
 Col 2:8, 18 1Ti 4:1-3
 Mat 24:11, 24
 Act 20:29-30

Further Study

2Pe 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

The development of an administration

The stars are in the hand of Christ as He walks through His lampstand churches. Without them, there will be no lamps and no lampstands. This is what the Spirit is saying to the churches today. 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' The Spirit is revealing present truth, and present truth is the supply of *oil*. This oil is poured out as the word of present truth that is spoken and proclaimed. This is why we are told to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. When we hear the message of present truth from star-messengers, we are hearing 'what the Spirit says'. Their message brings the supply of the oil of the seven Spirits of God. And these star messengers are mobilised by the hand of Christ as He walks among all the lampstands.

This administration of the Spirit from above will develop among us, as men and women come under the hand of Christ when it is laid upon them. This was the case when the five-fold hand of Christ took hold of 'seven' deacons in the book of Acts. And this was certainly Paul's experience as the hand of Christ took hold of him.

The hallmark of the 'five' and 'seven' is that they establish the fellowship of present truth by the oil of the seven Spirits of God. They reveal the mystery of God in words that are taught by the Holy Spirit, comparing spiritual with spiritual. They are not merely gifted leaders who emerge in the normal course of church growth.

References:

Rev 2:7 Rev 3:6
Psa 80:17 Psa 139:5
Isa 6:6 Eze 1:3
Eze 3:14 Act 6:3
1Co 2:13-14 1Co 10:3-5

Further Study

Act 9

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

The growth of the lampstand

A lampstand church grows all the way from its base as the fruit of the light. This growth is the fruit of the light of the seven Spirits of God coming down from the throne of the Son. The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome, 'I have planned to come to you ... so that I may obtain some *fruit* among you, even as among the rest of the Gentiles'. Paul did not minister with persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He proclaimed, not in words taught by human wisdom, but 'those taught by the Spirit'. As we receive this same word, we will grow as the 'cup, bud, flower' in the branch of a lampstand. Each of these almond clusters in the lampstand represents a firstfruit assembly in the region of a lampstand church.

In the Ephesian lampstand, there were numerous assemblies and congregations of believers. So it is for us today. As we multiply growth into three clusters of cup to bud to flower, then the assemblies become a branch. Each branch has one lamp. This lamp provides the same light for each of the three flower assemblies. And each of the three flowers in the branch is capable of reflecting the same lamp light.

This is the pattern for the growth of a lampstand church in a region. It is important to note that there is only one star/lamp for a lampstand. This means that there is only one body of overseers and deacons in that lampstand. Each star overseer is part of the forty-nine pipes that supply oil to the seven lamps. We note that the fullness of the oil of the seven Spirits of God is directed to each of the seven lamps. In this way, the *seven* Spirits of God is supplied to each lamp, not *one* to each lamp. Every lamp has the fullness of the seven Spirits of God.

References:

Rom 1:13 1Co 3:6
Act 14:21-28 Zec 4:2
Act 18:26-27 Jer 1:11-12
1Co 2:4,12-13

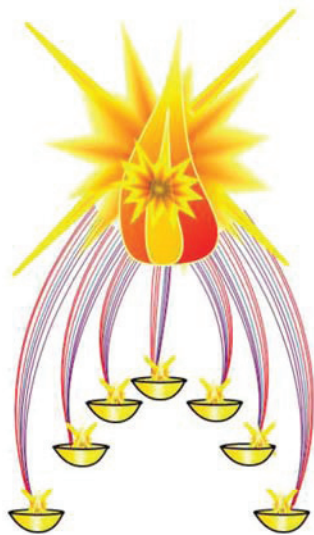
Further Study

1Co 1

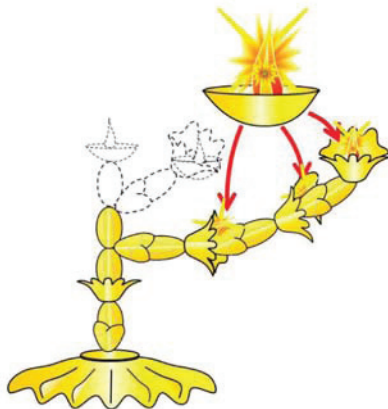
Daily Proverb

Proverbs 22

The star supplies the fullness
of the Spirit to every branch



One lamp for each branch



The overseers bring the lamp

The star overseers bring the lamp to the flower and they are responsible for the lamp. However, the believers must join themselves to the offering of Christ and grow up as firstfruits. To progress, the lampstand churches need both aspects of growth. The star-messengers must walk and bring Christ to the lampstand. The believers must grow up in the four aspects of the Melchizedek Order of kingship and priesthood. We are to be a kingdom of priests with a prophetic ministry and a firstborn inheritance as families. Lampstand assemblies will grow by the power of the Spirit as it is ministered from the bowl/hand. As believers, we are to grow up in weakness as the almond branches, living by the power of God.

As we grow up in Christ, we must join Him in continual offering. When we are planted in the likeness of His death then we will stand up in resurrection life and come forth as a certain firstfruits. In this way, we can grow up in Christ as the firstfruits of His offering. We are growing up, within the offering of Christ, to firstfruits. As the cluster grows, the *cup* represents the test of wayside ground. When we are born of the incorruptible seed, we must understand the word or the birds of the air will destroy the seed. As we grow to be the *bud*, we face the trials of stony and thorny ground. We will need to endure tribulation, persecution and the cares of this world that choke the seed. We grow as almond branches when we present *our* members as instruments of righteousness to obey and fulfil His will.

References:

1Pe 2:9 Rom 12:1
 Heb 12:1, 23 Jer 1:11
 Rom 6:5 Eph 4:14-16
 Mar 4:4-7, 20

Further Study

2Pe 1

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 25

Sowing our lives into the offering of Christ

As we are refined as the gold of the lampstand, we are motivated by love and by the power of the Spirit. We can sow our lives into the offering of Christ. As we die daily and live by the resurrection life of Christ, we are able to bear fruit in ourselves, in others, and together with others. As we come back from the dead with Christ as a certain firstfruits, we are His witnesses. However, we must not initiate our own good intentions. Instead, we must sow ourselves into His continual offering, ready to participate in His will in that particular work that has been ordained for us.

Through the Holy Spirit, we can arise as the flowers of the lampstand, showing forth the light of Christ and the aroma of His life. Now others can be born again by the testimony of the Spirit of God in us. We 'die daily' as we lay our lives down to be joined to Christ's offering. Christ's offering is the sum of all obedience. He learned this and became the Author of our journey of salvation, bringing the obedience of Christ to us. There is no other offering or obedience to be performed that is not already part of His offering. Our call is to 'fill up that which is lacking' in His sufferings. This means that there is a portion of His will and a portion in His cup that we are to drink in our time and place. So then, all our work, trial and tribulation are part of the offering and suffering of Christ. As we have faith in His blood, these sufferings are not ours, but *His*. This is the way of the seed. As we are raised with Christ and flower as sons of God, we are showing forth *His* testimony.

References:

1Co 15:31 1Pe 1:7
 Heb 5:8 1Co 15:36-37
 Col 1:24 Gal 6:8
 Php 2:15 2Co 2:14-16
 Eph 5:2

Further Study

Rom 6

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 26

Growing to firstfruits

The flower of the branch represents the sanctified believers whose lives have been planted in good ground. Having been born of the Spirit, with the incorruptible seed of zoe-life from the Father, we can lay our lives down and grow up as firstfruits. Then, as certain firstfruits, we are bringing forth the fruit of our own sonship. We are increasing daily, showing multiplication thirty-fold, sixty-fold or one hundred-fold. Our participation in offering and trial brings us forth as the gold of the lampstand.

The lampstand is the *almond* tree, with its cup, bud and flower, representing new creation life growing up in weakness. As we are growing up in our priesthood, we are becoming the gold of the lampstand. In the Scripture, 'gold' symbolises the proven divine nature of those who grow up in Christ. It represents the living soul (*psyche*) who has been transformed by new creation life (*zoe*). In Moses' tabernacle, the lampstand was made of one piece of gold. The golden lamps were made separately but from the same gold. This was to emphasise that the lamps belong firstly to the ministry of the Spirit from above. The lamps never belong to the flowers, even though they are placed in the flower.

The gold in the flowers and the gold in the lamps is the same gold, thus symbolising the same new creation life. When the lamp is in the flower, each lamp is shining light in a different way. The gold of the lamp is shining *to* the lampstand itself. But the flower is reflecting the light of the lamp and shining light *to the world*. By making this distinction, we recognise that the lamp stars always belong to the hand of Christ. In this way, the lamps are the meeting point between the new creation life that is growing up, and the administration of the Spirit that is coming down.

References:

Mar 4:8 1Pe 1:23
 1Pe 1:7 Jas 1:12, 18
 Exo 25:31 Job 23:10
 2Co 5:17 Gal 6:15
 2Pe 1:3-4 Luk 11:33

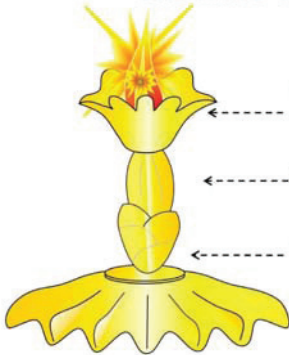
Further Study

Mat 5

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

GROWING UP TO FIRSTFRUITS



**Certain
firstfruits**

showing multiplication
bringing forth fruit of sonship
established as good ground

Trial

preparing to bear fruit
endure tribulation
test of stony and thorny ground

Seed

understanding the word
born of the incorruptible seed
test of wayside ground

The growing of a lampstand

For a lampstand to grow, Christ must lay His hand upon various vessels, as He did with Paul and with John. He then sends them to *minister the Spirit*. They are messengers, the angelos, in the hand of Christ. The hand of Christ represents His ministry as a Master Builder, as a Craftsman. He ordains overseers and deacons to be the star in His hand. Then the star comes to the flower to be the lamp *for* each branch. The purpose of the lamp is to give light to the area 'in front of it'.

The corporate star has the task of distributing oil to the churches. This oil is the capacity by which we can proceed to lay *our* lives down and bring forth the fruit of *our* sonship. In this way, we can grow up to become firstfruit believers, households and assemblies. As the cups, buds and flowers of the almond branch, we can grow in priesthood and become a kingdom of priests.

At every stage of growth, Christ sends oil, as the ministry of the Spirit, to those who are growing *up* to firstfruits. The lamp is the vessel with oil, fire and light. The church is called a lampstand because believers make up the branches that hold up the lamps. We know that the church, as a lampstand, was lit with tongues of fire when the Holy Spirit came upon the one hundred and twenty disciples on the Day of Pentecost. After the believers were scattered from Jerusalem, many lampstand churches then grew up as the apostles and overseers walked with Christ through the region.

References:

Pro 8:30 Zec 1:20
Rom 16:5 1Co 16:15
Jas 1:18 2Co 3:8
Act 1:15 Act 2:3

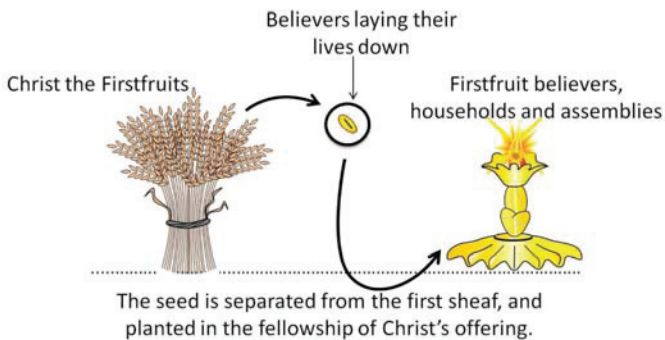
Further Study

Heb 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28

Becoming certain firstfruits



Christ is coming to the lampstand

In each of the seven letters, Christ describes the reason He is coming to each particular star. He is coming with a sword, with eyes of fire, feet like brass, with the key of David. In each case, Christ was nominating a particular ministry grace from His hand. He addressed the various lampstand issues, using symbolic language. He referred to Balaam, the Nicolaitans and to Jezebel! His promises to the overcomers were also described in symbolic language as the tree of life, hidden manna, a white stone and the morning star. Each star is sent by the hand of Christ to adjust the lamps and lampstands. This ministry may also need to bring adjustment to a loveless church, a tried church, a suffering church, a corrupt church, a dying church, a persevering church, or a lukewarm church – if we take the seven churches as an illustration.

In practical terms, the star must become the vessel of ministry that is required to direct the local assemblies. The star has to be adjusted to become the shining lamp. Jesus is calling each star to repent and ‘hear what the Spirit says’. The oil to each lamp is seven-fold, coming by seven pipes. The oil coming to the whole lampstand is by forty-nine pipes. This equates to the number of days between the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Pentecost. We learn from this that a ministry of oil is required for the church to be truly pentecostal, filled with the Spirit, with tongues of fire, a true lampstand church. The oil is the same for all lampstands. What ‘the Spirit says’ through messengers is the *particular* ministry of oil that is required in a *particular* lampstand. The overseers and deacons are required to steward this oil to each lamp of the lampstand.

References:

Rev 3:3, 7, 19 Deu 16:9-10
Hos 9:10 Act 17:30-31
Luk 12:45, 46
Rev 2:3,5-12,14-18,20,22,28

Further Study

Mat 21

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 29