NUMBERS: MOVING FORWARD AS GOD'S PEOPLE
Part II: God's Sanctifying His People, Numbers 5:1-10:10
E. God's Will That We Correctly Understand Scripture
(Numbers 8:1-4 et al.)

I. Introduction

A. "The principal lesson of Numbers is that God's people must walk by faith, trusting His promises, if they are to move forward" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Numbers: Theme," p. 206), so avoiding spiritual stagnation to move forward in our walk makes Numbers a timeless book for God's people!

B. We thus view Numbers 8:1-4 on God's will that we correctly understand Scripture to move forward:

II. God's Will That We Correctly Understand Scripture, Numbers 8:1-4.

A. God directed that when Aaron lit the 7 lamps of the lampstand in the Holy Place of the tabernacle, he was to aim its lamps toward its **front** (lit. "face," ***paneh,*** Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 206), Num. 8:1-2 NIV. This positioning would illumine the table of shewbread that stood directly across from the lampstand and also shed some light on the altar of incense that stood off to the side of the lampstand in front of the veil to the Holiest of Holies.

B. Aaron obeyed this directive (Numbers 8:3), and Numbers 8:4 recalls that this lampstand was hammered out of a single talent of pure gold by an artisan in obedience to God's command to Moses in Exodus 25:31, 39.

C. To appreciate the significance of this directive to Aaron, we note the typology involved in it all (as follows):

1. The lampstand had decorative cups, buds and blossoms likened to those of an almond tree. There were 3 almond flower-shaped cups on each branch of the 6 side branches that extended out from the center branch where the center branch had 4 cups, making 22 flower-shaped almond cups in all. These cups typified the 22 letters of the ancient initial Hebrew alphabet that existed in Moses' day (Exodus 25:31-35)!
2. Since the Scriptures of Moses era then utilized those 22 Hebrew letters, we know the lampstand that gave light represented the Hebrew Scriptures that were known to reveal God's truth to man, cf. Psalm 119:105.
3. The fact that the lampstand was beaten out of a single talent of pure gold by an artisan (Exodus 25:39) indicates Scripture's unity, and the gold represents deity, pointing to the divine inspiration of all Scripture.
4. The almond tree pattern for the lampstand (Exodus 25:34) signified the living nature of Scripture's divine inspiration, that it is alive and powerful as Hebrews 4:12 claims since the Hebrew word for "almond" is ***shaqed,*** meaning "hasten" or "wakeful" as the almond's blossoms appear long before its leaves, giving it a reputation of being a "wakeful" tree when other trees are dormant (Zon. Pict. Ency. Bib., v. One, p. 108)!

D. Applying this information to God's Numbers 8:1-2 order to Aaron, God wanted teachers of His Word rightly to handle His Word that their hearers might be spiritually fed the truth and relate well to the Lord for blessing:

1. Aaron was to position the lampstand lamps to shine toward the front of the lampstand, causing its lamps to illumine the table of shewbread that stood directly across the room from the lampstand (Exodus 40:22-24).
2. Since the priests were God's messengers to teach the people Scripture (Malachi 2:7), Aaron as a priest who directed the lampstand's light to the table of shewbread taught the need for teachers to clarify the Scriptures to God's people that the people might spiritually be "fed" the truth as seen in the typology of the table of shewbread. Applied to our era, pastors and teachers must **correctly** expound Scripture that hearers might know what it **truly** says so they can be spiritually nurtured and obey the Lord, 2 Tim. 2:15.
3. Once God's people rightly understand His Word, are edified by it and obey it, they can then pray effectively to God, what the altar of incense in the Holy Place signified by its incense that permeated the veil to God's presence in the Holiest of Holies (1 John 3:22; Revelation 5:8 NIV, ESV)!

E. In practical terms for today, we note the following important spiritual dynamics regarding the use of Scripture:

1. We know from 1 Corinthians 2:12-16 that the Holy Spirit gives us believers discernment that we might understand the Scriptures (cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 510).
2. However, God also uses teachers to expound Scripture correctly if its ancient languages or customs must be explained for believers who do not know those languages or customs, 2 Tim. 2:15; Neh. 8:8 NIV, ESV.
3. Ultimately, if we personally desire to know God's truth, He will arrange for us to obtain it proportionate to our spiritual appetite to know it according to Mark 4:24-25.

Lesson: God directed Aaron to point the lamps on the tabernacle's lampstand toward the table of shewbread to teach the importance of the proper handling, exposition and "feeding" of His Word for His people's welfare.

Application: May we all strive toward the proper handling and understanding of Scripture for God's blessing!