

Lampstand Vision

Zechariah 4

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Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Trees

Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. ² And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. ³ Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." ⁴ So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?"

⁵ Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts.

⁷ 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' "

⁸ Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁹ "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know

That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

¹⁰ For who has despised the day of small things?

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."

¹¹ Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" ¹² And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"

¹³ Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

¹⁴ So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

v1-3 – What was Zechariah shown in this vision?

A lampstand of solid gold: God gave Zechariah a vision of the golden lampstand that was meant to stand in the temple. Since Zechariah and his people were there to rebuild the temple, it made sense that God spoke to them in images related to the temple.

Seven pipes to the seven lamps ... two olive trees:

Zechariah saw something that was never in the temple...two olive trees that supplied the seven lamps with oil through seven pipes.

- The lampstand Zechariah saw in his vision was fed straight from the trees.
- Zechariah saw a lamp that would never go out because of the constant supply of oil.

What does the unending supply of lamp oil tell us?

That human maintenance of the lamps was unnecessary... God provided the oil.

What did the oil represent?

Olive oil is typically a depiction of the Holy Spirit...

1 John 2:27 – the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you

Our anointing as believers in Christ is the imagery of oil and is experienced in the presence of the Holy Spirit who helps us understand God's Word.

Why is oil a good representation for the Holy Spirit?

- Oil lubricates, there is little friction and wear among those who are lubricated by the Spirit of God
- Oil heals and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times (Luke 10:34); the Spirit of God brings healing and restoration
- Oil lights when it is burned in a lamp; where the Spirit of God is there is light
- Oil warms when it is used as fuel for a flame; the Spirit of God provides warmth and comfort
- Oil invigorates when used to massage; the Holy Spirit invigorates us for His service
- Oil adorns when used as a perfume; the Holy Spirit adorns us and makes us more pleasant to be around

- Oil polishes when used to shine metal; the Holy Spirit wipes away our grime and smoothes out our rough edges

What was the significance of the seven lamps?

The number seven represents completion in Scripture so applied to the lamps supplied by the Holy Spirit it represents the complete, seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit...

Isaiah 11:2 – *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.*

1. *rest upon* – He gives us rest, fruit of the Spirit
2. *wisdom* – He helps us apply God's Word
3. *understanding* – He helps us to know God's Word
4. *counsel* – He helps us recognize the best path
5. *might* – He empowers us
6. *knowledge* – He helps us to know God
7. *fear of the Lord* – He helps us respect God.

v4-5 – Why did the angel rebuke Zechariah for requesting an explanation of the vision?

God provides His people with enough information and reasoning capacity to figure things out on our own with the help of the Holy Spirit.

v6-7 – What was the explanation the angel gave?

It was a message for Zerubbabel, the civic leader of Jerusalem who had the responsibility to finish the work of rebuilding the temple.

- The work had stalled (15 years), and Zerubbabel needed encouragement to carry on the work.

How should this vision encourage Zerubbabel?

That God was with him in the building of the temple. Though the available human resources looked insufficient to the task, God's endless resources would make it possible.

What had discouraged Zerubbabel?

A great mountain: The work of rebuilding the temple was so massive it seemed like a great mountain.

- The great mountain may have literally been the mountainous pile of rubble at the temple site.

What was God's solution to the great mountain discouraging Zerubbabel?

God would remove the mountain and make it like a plain.

Have you had mountains in your life that God has made into a plain?

I recall having customer problems at TI that were impossible for me to resolve so I prayed for help. God

delighted in removing these obstacles in ways I didn't even anticipate so I'd know had to be from Him.

What is the significance of the capstone that Zerubbabel would lay?

This is a prophecy that Zerubbabel would finish the temple reinforced even more explicitly in verse 9. The capstone is laid at the end of the building project.

How is grace related to the laying of the capstone?

Grace is unmerited favor from God... it is God who will make the completion of the temple possible.

- Zerubbabel will finish the temple and declare it was God's grace enabling them to do it.

What principle related to grace applies here?

Grace is not just limited to our salvation in the past (justification) and the future (glorification). It is on-going in the here and now (sanctification).

- It is insanity to think that salvation is by grace alone and your future is guaranteed by grace but you must live your life now through only human power.

v8-10 – How else was Zerubbabel encouraged?

His hands shall finish it: When the work is done by God's Spirit there are not only resources to begin the work, but also to finish the work. God is a finisher...

Philippians 1:6 – *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*

What were the small things that were despised?

Part of the discouragement of the workers on the temple was that it was small compared to the previous one destroyed by Babylon...

Haggai 2:3 – *Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?*

Since they were not even attempting something as grand as Solomon's temple, it was easy to think, "what's the point?"

Should we despise small things?

No, many great things have started small. Indeed, this temple will get big... Herod is going to renovate it to the point where the disciples of Jesus commented on its grandeur thus launching His Olivet Discourse.

- In many of God's choice workers He uses a season of small things. Those days are not punishment; they are days of priceless shaping and preparation, not days to despise.
- Satan tempts us to despise the day of small things because he sees the great things God brings out of them.

Who were the seven that rejoiced to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel?

The seven are the eyes of the LORD mentioned in this same context... it represents the complete omniscience of God.

- It brings joy to God seeing His anointed completing the work He set out for him (Zerubbabel).

What is the principle here that we may apply in the here and now?

It pleases God when we execute what He has called us to do... we can sense this in our spirit and it results in our having joy as well (the fruit of the spirit).

v11-14 – About what did Zechariah request clarification?

What are these two olive trees: Zechariah understood the message of encouragement to Zerubbabel, but he didn't exactly understand how it connected to the vision of the olive trees and the lampstand.

Why did the question shift from trees in verse 11 to branches in verse 12?

These are the two anointed ones: In Zechariah's day, the two anointed ones were Zerubbabel and Joshua. It seems that they were not the entire trees, but two olive branches from the trees, probably one branch from each tree. The trees themselves may represent the kingly and priestly offices in Israel.

Is there a significance to God calling two men to work together?

It certainly is a pattern with God...

- Moses and Aaron
- Joshua and Caleb
- Elijah and Elisha
- Peter and John
- Paul and Barnabas
- Calvin and Luther
- Whitefield and Wesley
- Moody and Sankey

And we have the two witnesses during the Tribulation, probably Elijah and Moses (Revelation 11:3-13).

- Revelation 11:4 specifically says of these witnesses:
These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

Why was Zerubbabel and Joshua referred to anointed ones?

The two anointed ones had work to do and it would be so supplied by the Spirit of God that they would be like the olive trees with a continual supply of oil for the lamps on the lampstand.

- The term “anointed ones” is literally sons of oil. In Hebrew idioms the son of something is radically characterized by that thing.

What was the point of this vision given to Zechariah?

The point of this vision, and its accompanying oracles, was the Lord's ability to bring a seemingly impossible project to completion through His anointed servants, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and ultimately through the Messiah.

What are the chief features of God's message to Zerubbabel and Joshua?

1. the insufficiency and inadequacy of all human strength and resources;
2. the all sufficiency of the power of the Spirit of God for the accomplishment of the work of God;
3. the unceasing, abundant, and inexhaustible supply of this power at their disposal;
4. the assurance of the obliteration of all hindrances to the building;
5. the heartening hope of the completion of the work by the one commencing it;
6. the importance of the entire work of building as a prefiguring of the future activity of the Messiah;
7. the delight of God in the construction of the temple;
8. privilege of both Joshua and Zerubbabel as the way the testimony of God is transmitted to the people;
9. the ministry of the Messiah in seen in both the religious and civil offices

What applications do we see from our discussion today?

- If God is not in an endeavor that is attempted through human effort alone, it will fail.
- To be successful, we should get on-board with what God is doing
- God supplies what we need to accomplish what He is calling us to do including the removal of impossible barriers.
- As the building of the temple prefigured the future activity of the Messiah, so do developments in the world today... we have a unique opportunity to represent Him during a critical time in history.
- We sense God's delight when we execute what He has called us to do.
- We should never dismiss the small beginnings as being from God.
- As Joshua and Zerubbabel were privileged to share the message of God with people, so are we...
Revelation 5:9-10 – You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God