

Zechariah Chapter 4

Verses 4:1-14: The fifth vision, the golden “candlestick” and the “two olive trees:” The work of God (the rebuilding of the temple), would be accomplished through God’s leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel, who would be enabled to perform their tasks by the Spirit of God.

The vision indicates that future Israel will be a blessing to all the nations of the world through an abundant supply of the Spirit of God as the result of the coming of the Messiah, who will unite the offices of priest and king in Himself.

Zechariah 4:1 "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,"

“As a man that is wakened”: Once again the interpreting angel comes to awaken the prophet out of spiritual exhaustion from the holy trauma of the previous vision (Dan. 10:9).

It appears that Zechariah had gone to sleep, after his last vision, and the angel comes and awakens him. Zechariah is about to have his fifth vision.

Zechariah 4:2 "And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all [of] gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which [are] upon the top thereof:"

“Seven pipes to the seven lamps”: The lampstand is the 7 branched kind used in the tabernacle, with the addition of a bowl on the top of it in order to maintain an abundant supply of oil and spouts to carry the oil to keep the 7 lamps burning. The picture is of an abundant supply.

Zechariah’s lampstand differed from modern menorahs in four ways, because it had:

- (1) A bowl;
- (2) Pipes;
- (3) Olive trees; and
- (4) Two golden spouts.

The Hebrew text is explicit: there were seven pipes leading from the bowl to each of the seven lamps, a total of 49 pipes. The thought conveyed is that there was an abundant channel to convey the abundant supply of oil stored in the “bowl” to each of the “seven lamps.”

This "candlestick of gold" symbolizes the container for the Light of the world. It was made of pure gold, because it was in the presence of God. The church shines the Light to the world. Jesus is the Light.

Rev. 1:20 "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

We have already mentioned that seven means complete. We must note, from the Scripture in Revelation above, there was a candlestick in each church. The Light of Jesus is in all the churches who believe Jesus to be the Light of the world.

The seven is speaking of perfection. There is nothing wrong with the Light. The "seven pipes" speak of a perpetual burning of the Light.

Rev. 4:5 "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and [there were] seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

All of this about the candlesticks and the lamps has to do with the Light of God and the Spirit of God in the churches.

Zechariah 4:3 "And two olive trees by it, one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof."

"Two olive trees": Olive oil was used in those days to fuel the lamps. The two olive trees supply oil to the bowl. The graphic picture is of limitless oil, supplied automatically without human agency, flowing from the trees down to the bowl, down to the lamps.

We will see from the following Scriptures, that the "two olive trees" are the natural branch (physical Israel), and the grafted in branch (spiritual Israel), the church.

Rom. 11:24 "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural [branches], be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Rev. 11:4 "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

Zechariah 4:4 "So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What [are] these, my lord?"

"What are these": Zechariah wanted to know the meaning of the two olive trees. Because of Zechariah's priestly background, his query surprised the interpreting angel (verse 5). His question goes unanswered until later (verse 14).

He is saying, "What are the two olive trees"?

Zechariah 4:5 "Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord."

"Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me": Either to upbraid him with his ignorance and stupidity; or rather to quicken his attention, and that of others, to the interpretation of it he was about to give him.

"Knowest thou not what these be?" Art thou ignorant of the design of them? or knoweth thou not what is meant by them?

"And I said, No, my lord": He made an ingenuous confession of his ignorance, joined with great respect unto, and veneration of, the angel that conversed with him.

It is as if the angel thought that Zechariah should have known who they were.

Zechariah 4:6 "Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

"This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel": The purpose of the vision was to encourage Zerubbabel to complete the temple rebuilding, to assure him of divine enablement for that venture and the endless supply for the future glory of Messiah's kingdom and temple.

The lampstand pictured Israel fully supplied by God to be His light then and in the future. It must be noted that the church has temporarily taken this role presently (Eph. 5:8-9; Rev. 1:12-13, 20), until Israel's salvation and restoration to covenant blessing and usefulness (Rom. 11:11-24).

"Not by might . . . power, but by my Spirit": Neither human might, wealth, or physical stamina would be sufficient to complete the work. Only an abundant supply of the power of the Holy Spirit, pictured by the "bowl" (verse 2), would enable him to carry out the task. And enable Israel in the Messiah's kingdom to be a light again to the world by the operation of the Spirit (Ezek. 36:24).

The power is in the Spirit of God. Zerubbabel will not be able to win by worldly power or might, but by the Spirit of God within him. The work of Zerubbabel (whom we discovered was a type and shadow of Jesus), is through grace, not through personal effort.

Zechariah 4:7 "Who [art] thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel [thou shalt become] a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it."

"Who art thou, O great mountain": Because the outcome is guaranteed (verses 6, 9), any mountain like opposition will be leveled by God to become like a flat surface. No obstacle will be able to stop the completion of the temple in Zerubbabel's time or in the final kingdom of Messiah (Ezek. Chapters 40 to 48).

"The headstone": The final stone of the building will be put into place, signifying its completion.

"Grace unto it": This blessing signifying shouts of joy and thanksgiving came to pass (Ezra 3:11-13), over the completion of the temple. Contrast this attitude with that of the people seeing the unfinished temple (Hag. 2:3).

The problems that faced Zerubbabel looked as high as a mountain, but with the help of the Spirit of God working through him, they could be flattened out as a plain.

Matt. 21:21 "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this [which is done] to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done."

Jesus is the head of the church. He is the stone that the builders rejected, that became the chief corner stone. I believe this headstone is speaking of Jesus. It is by grace you are saved.

Matt. 21:42 "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"

Zechariah 4:8 "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,"

"Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying": As follows, which is a confirmation of the angel's interpretation of the vision.

This is a break in the previous message.

Zechariah 4:9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you."

"Me": This is the Angel of the Lord (see note on 1:11), the Protector, Deliverer, Defender of Israel, sent to bring this to fulfillment in the future. He will come as Messiah to set up worship in the temple in His kingdom.

The temple being built under such adverse circumstances symbolizes the establishment of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. God promises Zerubbabel he will see it finished. It is several years in the building. This encourages me. God will see us through to the finish on the things we have started for Him.

The Spirit that God places within us seems a little thing, and our talent to do the job seems even smaller, but God can, and will, make great things of that small beginning. The church, that we know today, began with just Jesus and 12 apostles.

Zechariah 4:10 "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel [with] those seven; they [are] the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

“The day of small things”: Though the rebuilding of a temple smaller than Solomon’s may have been discouraging to some (Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3), the Lord announced that His pleasure was upon this work, and that His omniscient care was watching over and taking pleasure in its completion.

He said in effect, “Don’t despise what God is pleased with.” This was only a picture of the glorious restoration when Messiah comes to reign. That temple will make all others pale by comparison (Ezek. Chapters 40 to 48).

God is the all-seeing eye. There is not one thing on this earth that happens that He is not aware of. Zerubbabel and these people thought they could not finish the temple nice enough to please God. They did not realize that God was not so interested in the expensive things of the temple, as He was in their faithfulness to build it.

Little is much when God is in it. God made something very beautiful out of their humble beginnings.

Zechariah 4:11 "Then answered I, and said unto him, What [are] these two olive trees upon the right [side] of the candlestick and upon the left [side] thereof?"

"Then answered I, and said unto him": To the angel that talked with him (Zech. 4:1).

"What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?" (In Zech. 4:2), they are said to be on each side of the bowl. The mystery of the candlestick being explained to Zechariah by the angel, the prophet desires to know the meaning of the two olive trees that were on the right and left of it. One on one side, and the other on the other side.

Zechariah 4:12 "And I answered again, and said unto him, What [be these] two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden [oil] out of themselves?"

Zechariah desires to know what are the two olive trees. Zerubbabel and Joshua, this prince and this priest, were endued with the gifts and graces of God's Spirit. They lived at the same time, and both were instruments in the work and service of God.

Christ's offices of King and Priest were shadowed forth by them. From the union of these two offices in his person, both God and man, the fullness of grace is received and imparted. They built the temple, the church of God. So does Christ spiritually.

Christ is not only the Messiah, the Anointed One himself, but he is the Good Olive to his church; and from his fullness we receive. And the Holy Spirit is the unction or anointing which we have received. From Christ the Olive Tree, by the Spirit the Olive Branch, all the golden oil of grace flows to believers, which keeps their lamps burning.

Let us seek, through the intercession and bounty of the Savior, supplies from that fullness which has hitherto sufficed for all his saints, according to their trials and employments. Let us wait on him in his ordinances, desiring to be sanctified wholly in body, soul, and spirit.

The "golden oil" symbolizes the Holy Spirit, which is distributed to those churches we mentioned earlier. The church carries the Holy Spirit of God to the unsaved world.

Zechariah 4:13 "And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these [be]? And I said, No, my lord."

"And he answered me, and said": That is, the angel answered to the prophet's questions.

"Knowest thou not what these be?" And I said, No, my lord (See Zech. 4:5).

The purpose in this question is to show that wisdom, and the ability to interpret parables, comes from God.

Zechariah 4:14 Then said he, These [are] the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

“The two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth”:

The context clearly favors identifying them as Joshua, the High Priest (a descendant of Eleazar), and Zerubbabel (a descendant of David), the governor, who will be the channels through whom God will manifest His light.

Together, they foreshadow the Messiah, in whom these two offices are combined (6:13; Psalm 110), and who is the true source of blessing to make Israel the light to the nations (Isa. 60:1-3). They had positions of responsibility in service to “the Lord of the whole earth,” a millennial term that points to the final kingdom (Mica 5:4).

Zechariah 4 Questions

1. What had Zechariah done after his last vision?
2. What did Zechariah see?
3. What does the "candlestick of gold" symbolize?
4. Why was it made of pure gold?
5. _____ is the Light.
6. There was a candlestick in _____ church.
7. Which churches have the Light of Jesus?
8. The "seven pipes" speak of the perpetual _____ of the Light.

9. What were the 7 lamps of fire burning before the throne?
10. What were the "two olive trees"?
11. What question did the angel ask him in verse 5?
12. The power is in the _____ of God.
13. Who is a type and shadow of Jesus?
14. His victory is through _____, not through _____.
15. _____ is the head of the church.
16. Whose hands had started the foundation of the house?
17. What does the temple being built in such adverse circumstances symbolize?
18. The Spirit that God places within us seems such a little _____.
19. Our own _____ seems even a smaller thing.
20. The church that we know today, began with whom?
21. Who is the all-seeing eye?
22. Little is _____ when God is in it.
23. What were the "two olive trees"?
24. The "golden oil" symbolizes the _____.
25. What is the purpose in the question in verse 13?
26. Who, or what, could the "two anointed ones" be?