

## ***“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit”***

### ***Zechariah 4:1-14***

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Introduction: Most, if not all, Christians believe that our God is omnipotent. However, these same Christians (including us?) have doubt as how an individual, church, or nation can gain access to this power. In this fifth vision of Zechariah, he sees a golden candlestick (lampstand). Zerubbabel, the governor & Joshua, the high priest, are struggling with the task of completing the Temple in the face of a hostile, pagan society. There is also pessimism among their own people. The Lord gives Zechariah this vision in order to encourage Zerubbabel & Joshua by the promise of the Spirit of God which will enable the task to be completed. The key verse of the chapter (even the whole book) is 4:6, with the phrase, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.*” I call your attention this morning to the analysis of this vision & then the application of this vision. Ask yourself, “Am I indwelt by the Spirit & daily seeking to be filled with the Spirit?”

#### I. The **analysis** of the vision (4:1-5; 11-14)

##### A. The **context** of this vision (:1)

1. Sleep induced by the overwhelming visions Zechariah had already seen?
2. “He fell exhausted into such a deep sleep that the divine messenger had to rouse him to mental alertness” (Wisdom). Compare Daniel 10:8-9.

##### B. The **content** of this vision (:2-5; 11-14)

1. The “**Menorah**” >
  - a. “*Candlestick*” or lampstand – representing the Temple candelabrum.
  - b. The “*candlestick*” is first found in Exodus 25:31-40.
  - c. The seven-branched “*candlestick*” is today the official symbol of Israel – a “Menorah.”
  - d. This “*candlestick*” is different – It has seven pipes going from each bowl to each lamp (49 pipes); each lamp fed by two olive trees (assuring a continuous supply of oil to keep the lamps burning without the work of a priest).
2. The “**messengers**” >
  - a. Zechariah sees 2 olive trees on either side of the “*candlestick*.”
  - b. Zechariah asks, “*What are these, my lord?*” (:4) & again in verse 11.
  - c. Zechariah receives an answer in verses 11-14, “*...These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*”

Summary: Most interpreters identify them as representing Zerubbabel & Joshua, who “in their official capacities as God’s channels through whom the Spirit of God manifests His power & grace to the whole nation (Feinberg). [Compare the 2 witnesses of Revelation 11:4.]

#### II. The **application** of the vision (4:6-10)

##### A. The **proclamation** by God to Zechariah (:6)

1. “*Not by might*” – the word “*might*” refers to military strength (contrast the military might of David or Solomon to the remnant which had no such might).
2. “*Nor by power*” the word “*power*” speaks of one’s individual strength (alluding to that of Zerubbabel – mindful of his inability to finish the Temple’s building).
3. “*But by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts*” – what no army can do, the Spirit of God can accomplish (cf. Haggai 2:5, “*...so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not*”).

Summary: We can choose to do the work of God by trusting our own strength & wisdom, or by borrowing the world's resources, or we can seek & depend upon the Lord's power. Wiersbe concludes, "Only work done through the power of the Spirit will glorify God & endure the fires of His judgment (I Cor. 3:12-15)." See stanza one of #67, "All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down" in *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*.

B. The promise to Zerubbabel (:7-10)

1. The **opposition** to Zerubbabel (:7a, "*O great mountain*") >
  - a. "Discouragement among the people, opposition from the enemies around them, poor crops, an unstable economy, people not obeying God's Law – problems not too different from those the people of God have faced throughout the centuries" (Wiersbe).
  - b. Perhaps the problem of past failure in the work or the problem of the seeming insignificance of this Temple (cf. Ezra 3:10-12) or the problem of man's inability (or insufficiency) to do the work.
2. The **completion** by Zerubbabel (:7b-9) >
  - a. The mountain shall "*become a plain*" – completely removed.
  - b. The "*headstone*" (or capstone – last stone placed in the building) will be laid with "*shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it*" (or "God bless it!" – shouts of joy & thanksgiving – "May the grace of God abide in this His house").
  - c. "*The hands of Zerubbabel...*" shall finish the work (compare the promise in I Chronicles 28:20 & the promise found in Philippians 1:6).
3. The **application** from Zerubbabel (:10) >
  - a. "*For who hath despised the day of small things?*" – again see Ezra 3:10-12, including the unbelief of their enemies at the "*small*" beginnings of the restored Temple.
  - b. A rhetorical question meaning, "No one who hopes to accomplish, or does accomplish, anything great, despises the day of the small things" (Keil).
  - c. "Bible history is the record of God using small things... (see Wiersbe, p. 456).
  - d. "*They are the eyes of the LORD*" – cf. 3:9, again speaking of God's knowledge & omniscience; "His complete awareness & control of all that happens on earth" (Chisholm).
  - e. "*The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel*" – "The people are encouraged as they see Zerubbabel on the job with the plumb line in his hand, making sure the walls are straight" (Wiersbe).

Conclusion: "How timely this message is for our day with its complex & manifold committees, boards, drives, plans, organizations, contests, budgets, sponsors, rallies, groups, & much more. These can never avail in themselves to bring about the accomplishment of the task God has entrusted to us; since it is from first to last a spiritual work, it must be by the omnipotent & unfailing & unerring Spirit of God. The arm of flesh fails; He never does" (Feinberg). As Zechariah reveals this vision in that day, Zerubbabel & all the people are encouraged by the promises of God. Oil is often used to symbolize the Holy Spirit, & so here the "*candlestick*" with the continuous flow of oil speaks of the unfailing supply of the Spirit of God. "The weakness of the human instrument is totally negated when the instrument works through the Lord & in behalf of the Lord" (Wisdom). Both the Tabernacle & Temple lampstand pointed to the role of the nation of Israel to be light in a spiritually dark world. Believers today are to shine in the darkness of our world, but we must depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to bear witness to Christ & His Word. Christ is the Light of the world & He exhorts us, as lights, to shine by our walk & witness the glorious Gospel of Christ. Just as a simple "plumb line" seems to be a small instrument in one's hand since just about anyone can handle one, yet: "There are no 'small places' or 'small ministries,' & there are no 'big preachers.' But we do have a great God who can empower & bless servants who are dedicated to Him. He can cleanse us & He can empower us, so let's trust Him & do His work!" (Wiersbe).