His Presence The Priority

Studies in the Book of Zechariah
Part 3



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— Zechariah 4:6 (ESV)

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ZECHARIAH 4:6

Review

The Problem

Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build [the House of God] and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia. - Ezra 4:4-5

The Solution

Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God were with them, supporting them. - Ezra 5:1-2

The book of Zechariah is a series of visions and prophecies given from God to the Jews who were once exiles in Babylon but who have now returned to Israel to rebuild the House of God.

What are these visions and prophecies intended to encourage the people to do?

Open up to Zechariah 4.

Welcome to what might be the most bizarre and confusing vision in the whole book!

(Take a moment to pray that Jesus would speak to us through this chapter and that He would tell us about Himself and how we can respond to Him).

Read vs 1

Zechariah was already in a vision. A vision of heaven. In the previous vision, he was watching Joshua the High Priest having his shame covered by the Lord (which we will look at in another session). But now he is awakened from that vision into another vision.

Read vs 2-3

What do you call a lampstand with 7 lamps?

(A menorah)

What is over the menorah?

(A golden bowl) (If you're reading the NLT, the original language doesn't say the lamps were around the bowl. That is just a guess on the translators' part)

What were beside the menorah, on either side?

Re-read vs 2 in the NET (New English Translation).

If you click on the note next to the word "seven" in a digital Bible, you will see that in the original language, according to the Masoretic and Qumran manuscripts, it says 7 and 7. That is confusing. Perhaps it means that 7 pipes come from each side of the bowl. Perhaps a pipe from each side provided fuel to each one of the lamps. If that is the case, a potential meaning of it may become more clear by the end. But regardless, the objective right now is to visualize the picture God is painting. Feel free to reference the imperfect picture on the cover of this booklet.

Read vs 4-5

Can you relate?

Read vs 6-7

Here the angel explains the purpose of the vision but not yet how the trees and lamps represent that purpose. What is the purpose?

What is Zerubbabel (the governor) tasked with?

What mountain did he have to face building it?

What mountains do we have to face building the House of God?

By what means does God say the building of the house of God will be accomplished?

In what ways do we try to build the house of God in our own strength and power and not by the Spirit? Be specific.

How well does that work?

Can the Spirit accomplish what He sets out to do?

What does God say will become of the mountains that stand in Zerubbabel's way?

Isaiah 40:1-5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

5

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Could the final fulfillment of Zechariah 4:6-7 be referring to the same thing as this Isaiah passage?

What mountains stand in the way of us building the house of God today?

What is this cap stone or top stone in Zechariah 4:7?

(The completion)

What message is being conveyed by saying Zerubbabel will complete it?

How often should we shout, "Grace, Grace to it!"?

(Whenever the Lord finishes what He's authored in someone's life)

Read vs 8-10

What does it mean for us to not despise the day of small beginnings?

How do our weaknesses and the many obstacles against us work to bring glory to God through this process of trusting Him with the building of the house of God?

Why will people rejoice to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand?

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him…

How many people does God need to say yes to building the House of God before He intervenes with Holy Spirit power?

Verse 10 indicates His eyes landed on Zerubbabel to give strong support.

Will His eyes land on us?

Note: So far, we still don't have the answer to what the trees, the lampstand, and the bowl represents.

Read Zechariah 4:11-13

Finally! Let's get some answers! What in the world does all this mean? But before we read the answer, let's consider the new information we've been given. What are the olive trees doing?

(Pouring out golden oil. Olive oil)

In the original language, the word branches is actually "tufts" which could indicate a cluster of olives.

This verse speaks of two golden tubes. Maybe there are two funnels that are catching the oil from the olive trees and dumping it into the bowl.

Now for the answer. What are the trees that pour out oil into the fuel bowl for the menorah?

Read vs 14

Who are the two people most of the book of Zechariah has been addressing thus far?

(Refer to Ezra 5:1-2)

Who are the two trees (most likely)?

Yes, the ones tasked with building the House of God!!

Usually when the bible mentions "anointed ones", it uses the word meschiach. But here, the original language uses the words, "sons of fresh oil"!!!! The distinction is significant.

Let's put it all together and try to make sense of it. But let's not forget the purpose of the message: not by might nor by power but by My Spirit.

Read Revelation 1:20

As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

What do the 7 lampstands represent in Revelation?

Churches! Jesus was addressing 7 different gatherings of believers. Any gathering of believers since the cross is a house of God. That's why there are 7 lampstands in Revelation.

How many houses of God existed on earth before in Zechariah's day?

(One)

What does the lampstand represent in Zechariah? (The house of God - the point of the book!)

Something to consider: the menorah in the temple was modeled after a tree. Could it be intended to be a call back to the Tree of Life in Eden, the original House of God on Earth?

Leviticus 24:2 says of the menorah in the tabernacle,

Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to keep the lamps burning continually.

How often is the lampstand supposed to shine light?

According to Zechariah 4:14, who will provide the oil to light it?

What does oil represent?

(Anointing, Holy Spirit, the manifestations of God)

What are the two "Sons of Fresh Oil" DOING that they might get anointing?

(Standing by the Lord, standing in the presence of God) (this can also be read as taking their stand by the Lord - which to me speaks of allegiance)

What is the significance of calling them sons of FRESH oil as apposed to sons of oil?

How does this relate to the parable of the 10 virgins?

What is the oil the Sons of Fresh Oil are getting from being in the presence of God fueling?

(The activity of the House of God, the light of God, the Glory of God, the manifestation of God on Earth)

Based on this chapter, what is the ABSOLUTE first step and most critical thing we can do (after repentance) to build the house of God?

(Stand in the presence of God) (the purpose of repentance)

How do we do that?

If church seems dull, how do we solve that?

If our marriage seems dull, how do we solve that?

After the Sons of Fresh Oil get the oil, what do they do with it?

What does that mean for us practically?

Final Note

We know from chapter 3 that Joshua and gang represent Jesus. We know that Joshua and Zerubbabel represent Kinghood and Priesthood. The oil from the Kingdom and the oil from the Priesthood are going into the same bowl and being distributed to the lampstand. Perhaps one set of pipes from each side of the bowl fuels each lamp, further making the same point. Even though the trees partially represent us, how is their full meaning found in Jesus?

(Jesus incarnate stood in the presence of the Lord just as He did before the incarnation. He took His stand by the Lord, meaning absolute allegiance to Him. He was anointed in the process of spending time with Him. He poured Himself out to the church to make her shine. He was crushed like olives to produce the oil. It is the anointing of His kingship and priesthood that makes the church shine)

The church can only function because of Jesus. Which is why might and power can't build it. Only the Spirit. As we emulate Jesus and get in the presence of God, we will become sons of fresh oil and be anointed to fuel the church.

The light of the church is the manifestation of the priesthood and kingdom of Jesus.