

ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

VI: God's Promise To Witness His Truth To The World Through Israel

(Zechariah 4:1-14)

I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. The fifth vision in Zechariah 4:1-14 of a set of eight visions predicts God's use of Israel as a witness of His truth to the nations in the Messianic Kingdom. We view the passage for our insight and edifying application:

II. God's Promise To Witness His Truth To The World Through Israel, Zechariah 4:1-14.

- A. Where the fourth vision had focused on Israel's religious leader, Joshua the high priest, this fifth vision appropriately focused on Israel's civil governor Zerubbabel. (Ibid., fn. to Zechariah 4:6-7)
- B. The angel speaking with Zechariah alerted him to a fifth vision in which Zechariah saw a gold candlestick with a bowl of olive oil suspended over it and seven pipes flowing from the bowl down to each of the seven lamps on the candlestick, making forty-nine pipes in all, and they supplied each of the lamps with abundant fuel. In addition, two olive trees stood on either side of the candlestick supplying the olive oil lamp fuel for the bowl that was suspended over the lampstand, Zechariah 4:2-3. (Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 71)
- C. When Zechariah asked the angel what these objects signified, the angel merely responded, "Knowest thou not what these be?" to which Zechariah in turn responded, "No, my lord," Zechariah 4:4-5 KJV.
- D. The angel's lack of explanation implied that Zechariah was to discern the vision's typology by starting with the obvious, i. e., that the candlestick represented the temple candlestick that usually was kept burning by the work of humans that provided its fuel of olive oil. (Ibid., p. 72) However, the suspended bowl, ample pipes and olive trees in the vision indicated *supernatural* provisions for the sustainment of the lampstand's lamps.
- E. Thus, the angel explained the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, that not by human might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord would the great mountain or obstacle of the task of completing the temple be achieved, Zechariah 4:6-7a. That figurative mountain would become a figurative plain and Zerubbabel would bring forth the last top-stone with shoutings by Israel's people of "grace, grace" unto it, Zechariah 4:7b; Ibid., p. 76.
- F. The angel also said that Zerubbabel's hands that had laid the temple foundation would complete it so that Israel would know that the Preincarnate Christ from Whom this message had come, would fulfill His plans for Israel, both near-term and long-term in the Millennial Kingdom, Ibid., p. 77; Zechariah 4:8-9.
- G. The angel's critique of despising the day of small things countered the criticism of those who saw Solomon's great temple and derided the less impressive temple built by Zerubbabel, Zechariah 4:10a; Haggai 2:3. The "seven eyes of the Lord" (v. 10b) recall the seven eyes on the stone in the fourth vision (Zechariah 3:9a) that typify God's omniscience, meaning God is ever aware of the value of His people's work for Him, Ibid., p. 79.
- H. The prophet Zechariah then asked the attending angel about the identity of the two olive branches of the two olive trees that were beside the golden pipes that were pouring out the golden olive oil from themselves into the bowl reservoir that was suspended above the candlestick, Zechariah 4:11-12; Ibid.
- I. The angel again cryptically responded by asking Zechariah, "Knowest thou not what these be?" to which he replied, "No, my Lord," Zechariah 4:13, essentially a repeat of their conversation back in Zechariah 4:5b.
- J. Finally, the angel climactically announced that the olive branches were "the sons of oil," men "consecrated to their offices by anointing with oil . . . and characterized by the operation of the Spirit in their official capacity as God's representatives of the people," Zechariah 4:14a; Ibid., p. 80. They stood by as servants waiting on their Lord "of all the earth," a reference to God's rule of the world in the Millennial Kingdom. (Ibid., p. 81; Zechariah 4:14b) In the Great Tribulation, Israel's high priest and governor will testify to the world of Christ and His coming Kingdom (Revelation 11:1-14), the high priest Joshua and the governor Zerubbabel were those witnesses in Zechariah's era, but in the Millennial Kingdom, the offices of priest and king would be united in Christ, and by Him Israel would be a light, a witness of God's truth, to the world! (Ibid., p. 81-82)

Lesson: Though Zerubbabel's work to rebuild the temple seemed insignificant and difficult for him when others compared it to the former great temple of Solomon, Zerubbabel's ministry would be accomplished by the Holy Spirit's power that would also be profusely provided for Israel through her Messiah in the Millennial Kingdom.

Application: May we be encouraged to know that if our ministry assignment from God seems insignificant and hard to accomplish, if we perform it in reliance on God's power, it is destined for great fruitfulness and blessing.