

Zechariah 4:1-14

The Vision of the Golden Lampstand

The prophet Zechariah continues to speak of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest as types of the Messiah.

They represent two aspects of Messiah - Zerubbabel of the royal line of David as King and Joshua in Jesus' priestly ministry as High Priest.

But these two figures are also placed in circumstances that seem to prevent them from exercising their proper roles.

Zerubbabel is of the royal lineage and heir to the throne, but is a king without a kingdom. The Promised Land is under Persian control, and he is merely governor.

Joshua is a High Priest, but without a Temple to minister in. God's House remains mostly in ruins.

So God sends Zechariah a vision of encouragement.

Zechariah 4:1-3 - "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 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: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof."

The Lampstand was a central piece of furniture in the Holy Place of the Temple. It is described in **Exodus 25:31-36**.

- **Exodus 25:31** - "And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same."

The six arms, as well as the central shaft, resembled the branches of an almond tree, with ornamental knobs, ending in a stylized flower at the top.

- **Exodus 25:33-36** - "Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold."

A Mystical Light

The light that shown from the Lampstand was understood to represent the mystical, primordial *Ohr HaGanuz*—the hidden, divine light of creation - that preceded the creation of the sun and moon in Genesis 1 - the life-giving light of the Torah.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path" (**Psalms 119:105**)

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (**Proverbs 6:23**).

The rabbis said the light of the Lampstand represented the light of Messiah.

"And God saw the light that it is good." This teaches us that God foresaw the Messiah and his activities even before the creation of the world. (Pesikta Rabati ch. 37)

- **Daniel 2:22** - "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him."

"Abba said: 'And the light dwells with Him' (**Daniel 2:22**) alludes to the royal Messiah." (Bereshit Rabbah 1:6)

The Lamp's light is fulfilled in Jesus, who fulfilled the Law and is the "Light of the world."

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." (**John 1:4-9**)

"For Christ is the end (*telos* - its aim, goal, termination, conclusion) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (**Romans 10:4**)

But what specifically about the Lampstand was the vision telling Zechariah?

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."

might = *hayil* - mostly referring to armies and collective power

power = *kōah* - usually meaning individual human strength

The rebuilding of the Temple - (and prophetically the building of the spiritual Temple, the kingdom of God, the church) - would not depend on how many people you enlisted or how strong or powerful the individuals were. The work would be accomplished in the power and ability of the Holy Spirit.

The project before them seemed impossible. But God promises again that it will be

completed.

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.'"

The headstone is the capstone, the keystone without which everything falls apart. As the foundation stone was the first, the headstone is the last stone put into place. This is most clearly seen in the triangular stone that sits at the top of an arch.

As we saw before, Christ is both the foundation and the chief cornerstone of his new Temple, and we are living stones within it.

God repeats the promise that they will complete the work on the Temple:

Zechariah 4:8-9 - "Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 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."

The Day of Small Things

Faced with such an overwhelming project, the accomplishments of a single person on a single day would have seemed trivial and discouraging. But a journey doesn't happen without a first step.

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."

We talk about this verse on Hanukkah. The conception of Christ was a "day of small things" and happened on a tiny biological scale as the Spirit hovered over Mary.

The "plummet" was a string tied to a lead weight. It was the way a builder checked for and maintained straight lines and true angles in construction.

The term is found in Isaiah 28, but in relation to measuring moral disobedience leading to the destruction of Jerusalem:

- Isaiah 28:16-17 - "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste [or panic]. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place."

God put their deeds to the test, as measured by the plummet, and they were found to be perverse and crooked.

But now the plummet line would make sure the living stones in the rebuilding of the Temple would maintain their righteous perfection.

But if this work was to be finished, how would the Spirit accomplish it?

An Intricate System of Pipes

In the Temple, it was the daily job of certain priests to trim the wicks of the Lampstand, and fill the seven lamps with oil (a symbol of the Holy Spirit).

But in this vision, the lamps are continually supplied with oil without human effort.

See **verse 2** - "seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof "

All told there are 49 channels or pipes with echoes of the Jubilee Year and the 49 days from Passover to the eve of Pentecost. Forty-nine represents perfect perfection. 7 X 7.

The supply of oil (or the Holy Spirit) is continual and effortless and comes from the two olive trees on either side.

The priests no longer have to daily trim the wicks and pour the oil, in the same way the High Priest no longer has to offer for sin every year on Yom Kippur because Christ has become the offering for sin "once for all" (**Hebrews 10:10**). He fulfilled it all.

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

The anointed ones are Zerubbabel and Joshua. The King and the High Priest were both anointed to office.

But prophetically, the two are one - the Messiah, the Branch. He is the source of the Spirit:

- **John 3:34** - "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for He gives the Spirit without measure."

The Two Witnesses

John's description of the Two Witnesses in the Book of Revelation (11:4), who are also described as "standing before the God of the earth" are a recollection of the two Olive trees in Zechariah. Like the combined picture of Joshua the priest wearing a kingly crown, and the Branch - the Messiah is pictured, preaching and prophesying through his faithful believers.

- **Revelation 11:3-4** - "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

Their powers recall those of Moses and Elijah.

- **Revelation 11:6** - "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

They will be martyred, but in the end their enemies will acknowledge them. The martyrs of the church throughout history are included.

The bottom line is that God's plans do not depend on our own strength, power or might. He accomplishes His mission through His Spirit. And the Spirit is given without measure by Jesus, the Messiah.