

## The Journey Through Zechariah

### Session 5 Chapter 4

#### I. Introduction:

- A. This is a very personal chapter to me. In this chapter we find at the beginning of the vision, a questioner asked of Zechariah **“What do you see?”** In our first session I referred to hearing the audible voice of the Lord, asking me that very same question, what do you see? This was the only time in my life I have ever heard anything audible from the Lord. That was the beginning of the Lord directing me to the book of Zechariah.
- B. This is also a very personal chapter to men and women all over the earth in the prayer movement and those establishing houses of prayer. In this chapter, Zerubbabel is being charged by the Lord to build the Temple, which the word of God calls the House of Prayer.

#### II. A Quick Review:

- A. The first three visions were meant to convey to the prophet, and through the prophet to the people, assurance that God had not forsaken the people of Israel. That the covenant of the Lord was still in tact, that God would stand against their enemies, that they were the apple of his eye, that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt on a much grander scale according to the measurements of God Himself, who would be their light, and defense, by a wall of fire around the city, and the glory of God in the midst of Jerusalem.
- B. In the first three visions, the Lord promised to manifest His zeal and mercy by returning to personally live in Jerusalem, to fill the temple with His glory, to take full possession of the land of Israel, and to draw all the nations to worship and obey the LORD (1:16; 2:10-12).

***“I am zealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal... I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house [the temple] shall be built in it.” (Zech. 1:14-16)***

***“I am coming and I will dwell in your midst... Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day...and I will dwell in your midst... And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land.” (Zech. 2:10-12)***

#### C. Reviewing The Purpose of Visions 4 and 5:

- a. These two visions focus on the two main leaders in Israel: **Joshua**, the high priest (Zech. 3) and **Zerubbabel**, the governor (Zech. 4). The spiritual condition and experience of the leaders in the kingdom impact and reflect the spiritual condition and experience of the people they lead.
- b. These two visions encourage the two primary leaders responsible for rebuilding the temple. This should also be an encouragement to any Kingdom work done around the earth.
- c. The Lord addresses the **two main obstacles** that hinder His people from enjoying their destiny. The first obstacle is **our sin** therefore He provides spiritual cleaning and renewal (Zech. 3). The next obstacle is **our lack of resources** therefore He gives supernatural provision (Zech. 4). In

other words, we need His grace for continued **spiritual renewal** and **supernatural provision**.

- d. The first obstacle to overcome is the lie that we **fail too much** to be used by God (3:1-5).
- e. The second obstacle to overcome is the lie that we **lack too much** to complete God's will (4:6-9).
- f. The message of Zechariah 3-4 is the revelation of God's grace to His sinful and weak leaders. The message is that God forgives and **cleanses our hearts**, even from our greatest sins (3). The message is that God provides for and **uses our work**, even in our smallest tasks (4).

### III. A Zechariah Chapter 4 Walk Through:

*1 "Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3 Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." 6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts. 7 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' " 8 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. 10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth." 11 Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" 12 And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" 13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." 14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."*

**Thought:** If you are like me when I read this chapter, I said, "I get the not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord, but what does this chapter really mean?" So let's break it down.

#### A. The Symbols in this vision:

*"Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" The angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." (Zech. 4:1-5)*

- B. In this vision Zechariah sees a lampstand that has seven branches with a bowl at the top and two trees on both sides. These two trees are dripping oil in the bowl. Keep in mind that this is a supernatural work of God, the bowl is supplying the lampstand. The lampstand speaks of the

temple work that represents the people of God that would shine forth God's light and truth to the ends of the earth. These trees are symbolic of those who inspire the people of God, that energize the people by the anointing of the Spirit, and they encourage the work of God and the people of God.

- C. Let's look at the graphic of the vision along with the scripture so we can better understand this vision and what it means.

***"There is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left... What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains [flows]? These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." (4:2-3, 12, 14)***

- a. Lampstand
- i. Bowl on the top
  - ii. Seven Lamps
  - iii. Seven pipes
  - iv. Olive trees
  - v. Receptacles



- b. The **lampstand** in the holy place of the temple was the main feature in the vision. Zechariah saw a seven-branched lampstand (menorah) with a bowl on its top (4:2b) to receive the oil that came from two olive trees. At the end of each of the seven branches of the lampstand was a burning lamp with a pipe connecting to the bowl (4:2c). Two olive trees stood next to the lampstand (4:3). Two olive branches dripped oil into receptacles (extensions) of the two golden pipes (4:12) that enabled the oil to flow to the bowl on top of the lampstand. The two olive branches are symbolic of two anointed leaders who God used to keep the lamps aflame (4:14).
- c. The message of this vision was to give Zerubbabel assurance that he would successfully mobilize the people and overcome all the obstacles to complete the temple through the Spirit's help. The message was that the Lord will bring a seemingly impossible project to completion by using His servants (Zerubbabel and Joshua), who He will anoint and give supernatural help to. This message is applicable to any ministry assignment that God has given to any of His people.
- d. Zechariah 4 also speaks of God's promise to give Israel supernatural help to fulfill her national calling to be a lampstand of truth to the nations (Isa. 60:1-3; 62:1-2). It presents Israel in her mission to bring light to the nations under Messiah, her king-priest. After Israel as the priestly nation has been cleansed from defilement, she will enter into her priestly calling to fulfill God's original purpose in her as the bearer of truth to the nations (Zech. 3-4).
- e. The vision has three parts: the symbolism related to the golden lampstand (4:1-5), two prophetic oracles (4:6-7, 8-10), and the explanation of the two olive trees (4:11-14).
- f. Zerubbabel made financial provision for full-time singers to minister to God night and day. ***In the days of Zerubbabel...Israel gave the portions [money] for the singers. (Neh. 12:47)***
- g. **This is exactly what God did as soon as we heard Neh. 13:10.** I was awakened at night with a voice in my head getting louder and louder saying ***"My House will be called a House of Prayer!"*** When it startled me, I got up and turned to the scriptures — Isaiah 56:7 and Matt. 21:13. Then I heard in my spirit man, "Turn to Neh. 13:10-12." This is what it said: ***"I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. So I contended with the rulers, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their place. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse."***
- h. **Very Important Truth: What are these:** Zechariah needed help understanding the visions, so he asked the interpreting angel for insight. He asked, ***"What are these things?"*** seven times (1:9, 19, 21; 4:4, 11, 12; 6:4). He asked it three times in this vision (4:4, 11, 12). This gives us a model to follow as we read this book. If we pause to dialogue with the Spirit by asking Him to show us what He sees and feels in each part of this book, He will surely teach us many wondrous things. ***"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth." (Jn. 16:13)***

- i. **What do you see:** The interpreting angel asked him if he understood what he saw (4:2a). The angel knew the symbolism was such that he may have been able to understand it if he concentrated on it (because Zechariah understood the symbolism of the temple). Zechariah looked carefully to describe to the angel everything that he saw (4:2b-3).
- j. **Lampstand:** The Hebrew word for lampstand is *menorah*. It symbolizes God's people being witnesses of the light of God's presence and truth. Being made of solid gold speaks of its direct relationship to God's person and purpose.
- k. **Seven lamps and pipes:** The lampstand had seven lamps branching out from it (4:2c). Each of these lamps had its own pipe that was connected to the bowl on top of the lampstand. The seven pipes were conduits through which oil flowed to the seven lamps. The number seven symbolizes the abundance and fullness of God's light.
- l. **Two olive trees:** The two olive trees stood to the right and left of the lampstand (4:3). The lamp in the temple burned olive oil continuously; it never went out (Ex. 27:20).

#### D. Zechariah 4:6-7

***"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain and he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"***  
***(Zech. 4:6-7)***

- a. The interpreting angel now answers Zechariah's question, "What are these?" (4:4) with two oracles (4:6-7, 8-10). The angel explains the olive trees in light of God's command to Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple. The two oracles have the same basic message: to assure Zerubbabel that he would complete the temple with the supernatural help of the Spirit.
- b. The Lord promised to give Zerubbabel supernatural help to overcome the obstacles to doing His will, and assured him that He valued his work even when it seemed small and difficult (4:6-10). We are to have confidence that God values and uses our work and will help us to be diligent. This applies to any assignment in building the kingdom amidst mountains of opposition.
- c. **Not by might or power:** The terms *might* and *power* speak of human ability and resources. Zerubbabel was not to put his hope in the political or military might of Persia as his primary resource, nor in the financial power of his own people. Human power will never be sufficient to remove the mountains of opposition. This is not meant to demean the value of human effort, but to emphasize its limitation. The Lord requires our effort, but without the Spirit's help it will be insufficient to establish the Lord's purposes.
- d. **By My Spirit:** The work of the Spirit was Zerubbabel's primary resource in rebuilding the temple. The work was bigger than their best efforts. A common lie that we must guard against is that we lack too much or will not have enough resource to complete

God's will.

- e. **Mountain:** This speaks of the many obstacles that stood in Zerubbabel's way. There were four main obstacles: the **Samaritans'** political and civil opposition (Ezra 4:1-8; 5:6-17); **Israel's** spiritual lethargy, compromise, fear, and strife (1:2-4; 8:10; Hag. 1:2-4, 9); an **economic crisis** that was intensified by drought and agricultural failures (Hag. 1:1-11), and the **desolation of Jerusalem**—the city still lay in ruins, lacking civil infrastructure, and needing the rubble from the former temple to be cleared, etc.
- f. **Shall become a plain:** The heap of rubble from the destruction of Solomon's temple 70 years earlier was completely removed as Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple. **"Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" (Zech. 4:7)**
- g. **Shall bring forth the capstone:** The capstone was ceremonially put in place when the temple project was finished. Zechariah received this word on February 15, 519 BC (1:7) and he completed the temple about three years later in March 516 BC (Ezra 6:15).
- h. **Shouts of grace:** Zerubbabel was to pray, or speak, grace over the temple project each day as part of his participation in the mountains of opposition being removed.

#### E. Zechariah 4:8-11

***"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."***

- a. Verses (4:8-10) assured Zerubbabel that he would finish the temple. When he finished the temple, it would be clear that God had spoken through Zechariah (4:9).
- b. ***"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. (Zech. 4:9)*** Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the temple twice. The first time was in their second year. The second time was after a sixteen-year delay. After the temple was finished, "you" or Zechariah will know that the Lord (the Father) sent "Me." The passage does not clarify the antecedent of the pronouns "you" or "Me." I think it is saying that Zechariah would know that the Angel of the Lord (Jesus) was sent to him. The Angel of the Lord (Jesus) used the phrase "He sent Me" three times in the third vision (2:8, 9, 11), "Me" seems to refer to Jesus, who is the Angel of the Lord in the book of Zechariah (1:11-12; 2:8-9, 11; 3:1).
- c. **Plumb line:** A plumb line is a tool that is used during the early stages of a construction project when the foundational structure is being put in place. When Zerubbabel took hold of the plumb line, he took the responsibility and ownership of building the temple. In this hour, God is giving grace to people who have the spirit of Zerubbabel, who will accept the responsibility to build the house of prayer. They take ownership and work

hard, regardless of how small the task or how little recognition they receive. They have the Psalm 132 vow burning in them, and will be diligent through difficulty and the mundane.

- d. **God's eyes:** "These seven" refers to God's eyes, signifying His omniscience. The "seven eyes" of God's omniscience run through the earth. Nothing is hidden from God. His eyes see our enemies, needs, obstacles, efforts, tears, love, and the value of our work.
- e. **Do not despise the day of small things:** The Lord values our work even when it is small, and He desires diligence from His leaders in hard and small ministry assignments. Many despised the smallness of the work on the temple as insignificant (Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3). Haggai's message four months earlier, on October 15, 520 BC (Hag. 2:4), called them to be strong and to work diligently instead of despising the work and quitting.

***"Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel...and be strong, Joshua...and be strong, all you people of the land...and work; for I am with you," says the LORD of hosts. (Hag. 2:3-4)***

#### F. Zechariah 4:11-14

***"Then I answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?' 12 And I further answered and said to him, 'What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?' 13 Then he answered me and said, 'Do you not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' 14 So he said, 'These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.'"***

- a. **What are these:** Zechariah persistently asked for an explanation of the olive trees. He asked for it three times (4:4, 11, 12). He changed the question slightly from asking about the olive trees to asking more specifically about the branches (4:12).
- b. **Do you not know:** Twice the angel asked him, "Do you not know what these are?" (4:5, 13). Finally, the angel answered him (4:14). The Lord usually does not give us deeper insight into various truths until we have cared enough to personally search it out in the Word.
- c. **Two olive branches:** He asked about the meaning of the two branches that supplied olive oil to the receptacles of the two gold pipes, which carried it to the bowl atop the lampstand (4:2). The picture is a little unclear since it uses a Hebrew term not used anywhere else in the Bible, which is translated here as *receptacles of the pipes*. It refers to a kind of extension protruding from the branches, connected to the two golden pipes that drained the oil into the lamp's bowl. The exact nature of the extensions is unclear, except that they were conduits for the oil to flow to the lamps.
- d. **Two anointed ones:** The two branches represent two anointed ones who stood beside or before the Lord (4:14). He showed the two anointed ones in their close relationship to the Lord. The term *anointed ones* is literally *sons of oil*. Five hundred years later, John

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received more insight into these “olive tree ministries” (Rev. 11:4). They will be end-time forerunners anointed to prophesy and do miracles and to “provide oil,” or inspiration and insight for many. ***“I will give power to My two witnesses [forerunners], and they will prophesy...These are the two olive trees ...standing before the God of the earth...These have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.” (Rev. 11:3-6)***

- e. ***Standing before:*** This is an official term for priestly ministry. The tribe of Levi was to stand before the Lord to minister to Him.
- f. The ***sons of oil*** can only function from a lifestyle of standing before the Lord. This is the only place to freely receive the oil; it cannot be earned or produced by our efforts.
- g. ***Golden oil:*** *Golden oil* signifies oil of the purest quality and value. Oil is a symbol of the Spirit. This oil is related to an earlier promise of the Lord releasing the anointing and activity of His Spirit (4:6). Both *Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) come from the word *anoint*.
- h. In the tabernacle, priests brought olive oil every morning and evening to supply the lampstand so it would burn continuously (Ex. 27:20-21; 30:7-8). They had to *produce* the oil by a process that included picking and crushing olives. Then they *hand fed* the oil into the lamps. Zechariah saw something unusual—there was no need to *produce* the oil or to *hand feed* it into the lamp; the olive trees dripped oil continuously into the bowl. The oil flowed automatically, continuously, and abundantly, indicating a supernatural work of the Spirit as promised earlier (4:6-7). The supply of oil was supernatural—no one crushed the olives to make oil, nor hand fed oil into the lamp. Rather, the two olive trees instantly produced oil. This never-ending supply of oil from the two olive trees symbolizes God’s continuous provision for us in the midst of human obstacles.
- i. The promise of the two olive trees was initially fulfilled by *Joshua and Zerubbabel*, who were anointed to serve God in the kingly and priestly offices. These were the only two offices in the Old Testament that were publically anointed for service in the Old Testament. These two men point to Jesus, who combined both offices, as the ultimate *son of oil* (6:12-13; Ps. 110:2-4).
- j. These two *sons of oil* were entrusted with the Spirit’s anointing to *finish* and then *sustain* the work related to the temple by mobilizing and inspiring the workers, and by receiving supernatural provision and direction to see God’s purposes for the temple prosper.
- k. The Lord responded to the difficult work of building the temple (4:10) by releasing supernatural help and inspiration through His anointing on Zerubbabel and Joshua. Israel’s blessing was deeply connected to the faithfulness and anointing of their leaders. God’s leaders are to be channels through which the people (symbolized by the lampstand) are inspired by the Spirit (symbolized by the oil that fueled the lamps).



**IV. Summary:**

The promise of the two olive trees, initially fulfilled by Joshua and Zerubbabel, will have a greater fulfillment in the *two witnesses*. I believe there will be many *lesser "sons of oil,"* who will live in the same spirit, all pointing to Jesus, the ultimate *son of oil*.

In Jesus' final teaching before the Upper Room, He exhorted His end-time leaders to cultivate oil before the Bridegroom God (Mt. 25:1-13). Jesus widened His invitation to be sons of oil, calling all who would hear to live as *wise virgins*, by taking the time and effort to acquire oil (Mt. 25:8).

The message of Zechariah 4 is about the certainty of the activity of the Spirit to build the *temple*; it is relevant to Israel specifically and to the Church in general, as they function within a culture of prayer. This message is a great encouragement to all who are serving in a house of prayer, and to those who desire for their lamps to be full.