

The Gospel of Zechariah

The night visions (Zechariah 4)





Redemptive History





Darius: Chronology of the Persian Period¹

Persian King	Dates	Biblical Correlation	Context
Cyrus	539-530	Declaration of Cyrus (539) Return of Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 1-3)	Stirred up to rebuild the temple
Cambyses	530-522	Rebuilding at Jerusalem stopped (Ezra 4)	Discouraged and afraid to rebuild
Darius I	522-486	Haggai and Zechariah prophesy (520) Temple completed (516) (Ezra 5-6)	Rebuilding of the Temple begins again
Xerxes	486-464	Story of Esther (Esther 1-9)	
Artaxerxes I	464-423	Return of Ezra (458) (Ezra 7-10) Return of Nehemiah (445) (Nehemiah 1-2) Prophecy of Malachi (433)	

1. Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament, John H. Walton, 1994, p. 70



... in that day

In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.” (Zechariah 3:10 ESV)

- Zechariah 2:11
 - And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. (Zechariah 2:11)
- that day
 - ultimate fulfillment of the “already” in the “not yet”
- under his vine and under his fig tree
 - a land at piece
 - points the coming of the Gentiles into the covenant, the “already”
 - points to the final consummation, the “not yet”



... in that day

In that day, declares the LORD of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree.” (Zechariah 3:10 ESV)

- Revelation 12:7-12
 - Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the **accuser** of our brothers has been thrown down, who **accuses** them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!” (Revelation 12:7-12 ESV)



Zechariah 4 (ESV)

4:1 And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he 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. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.” Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”



Joshua and Zerubbabel

- Returned with the exiles (Ezra 2:2)
 - Joshua - high priest
 - Zerubbabel - governor
 - leaders of the community
- Zerubbabel
 - descendant of Jeconiah - last king of Judah
 - not rule in Judah as king - Jeremiah 22:30
- partner visions - Zechariah 3 and 4
- don't miss the Gospel here



woke me

- vision transition
- different from behold, I looked up, or he showed me
- caught up in the last vision
- awakened to pay attention to the next

And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. (Zechariah 4:1 ESV)



lampstand

And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.
(Zechariah 4:2 ESV)

- what do you see?
 - describe the vision
- visions steeped in temple and Jerusalem imagery
 - Zechariah 1 - my house; measuring line over Jerusalem
 - Zechariah 1 - altar with 4 horns
 - Zechariah 2 - wall of fire around Jerusalem, glory in her midst (temple)
 - Zechariah 3 - the high priest and the courts (temple)
- lampstand (or menorah)
 - Exodus 25:31-40
 - 3 branches on each side off a center piece
 - 7 lamps on it
 - made of gold
 - give light in the holy place
 - pattern shown on the mountain (reflect the heavenly)



lampstand

And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.
(Zechariah 4:2 ESV)

- lampstand (or menorah)
 - bowl - reservoir for olive oil
 - lamps - fed by the bowl
 - lips - spouts with wicks
 - 7 lamps with 7 lips - 49 lights
 - brighter than any earthly menorah
 - 7 symbol of perfection
- symbolism
 - light in the holy place
 - God's presence in the tabernacle or temple
 - Holy Spirit's presence
 - Revelation 1 - seven lampstands are the seven churches
 - lampstand - Holy Spirit's presence in the churches

And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left. (Zechariah 4:3 ESV)



olive trees

- continuous fuel
 - earthly lampstand would be extinguished when the fuel is empty
 - two trees provide continuous supply of fuel



what are these?

And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” (Zechariah 4:4-5 ESV)

- a question with a question
- angel acts as if Zechariah should know
- why?
 - Zechariah may not be asking about the lampstand
 - recognizable as a menorah
 - it may be the source of oil he is curious about
- what could keep the lamp always lit?
- what could establish the temple indefinitely?



by my spirit

Then he 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. (Zechariah 4:6 ESV)

- again, symbol without solution, but the answer is to come
- the trees point to the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel
- not by might - points to military power
- not by power - points to strength
- by my Spirit - the trees, the fuel for the temple's establishment, are by the Holy Spirit



become a plain

Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’” (Zechariah 4:7 ESV)

- harkens back to Isaiah 40:4

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.

- a new Exodus for the people returning from Exile to Jerusalem
- Yahweh will remove all obstacles from Zerubbabel’s path
- top stone - the completion of the work
- grace to it! - shouts of joy over its completion and meaning



complete it

- Zerubbabel led the founding of the temple
- two year delay
- under the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah, he will finish it
- testimony of Zechariah's role as prophet
- small things - Ezra 3:12
 - old men wept at the lack of glory of the new temple
 - but they will rejoice at the temple completion
- plumb line - "tin stone"
 - show the walls of the temple are built right
 - people will rejoice at its completion

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. (Zechariah 4:8-10a ESV)

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD,
which range through the whole earth.”
(Zechariah 4:10b ESV)



seven eyes

- angel returns to interpreting the vision
- Zechariah's focus was the trees, but the angel returns to the lampstand
- seven - perfection, complete
- eyes - Yahweh, from the temple, watching out over the whole earth
 - not just Jerusalem or Judah
 - all the nations
 - calling of the nations



two olive trees

- Zechariah again asks his question, more clearly
- and again, he asks
- angels surprise?
 - do you not know?
 - no, my lord
- focus on the answer
- making us wonder as well
- importance of the answer

Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.”
(Zechariah 4:11-13 ESV)

Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:14 ESV)



two anointed ones

- answer given and we have more questions
- word of the Yahweh to Zerubbabel
- focus of passage on Zerubbabel
- obvious answer seems to be that one is Zerubbabel
- most likely the other, Joshua
- parallel visions
- implication - Joshua and Zerubbabel are instrumental in the ongoing establishment of the temple

Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Zechariah 4:14 ESV)



how?

- 4:6 - by my Spirit
- Joshua and Zerubbabel don't speak in these visions
- Zerubbabel not even “present” in this vision's images
- they are the conduits who do God's work
- but, it is the Holy Spirit who is the instrument of that work
- image
 - Zerubbabel - davidic line; office of king, but line cursed
 - Joshua - priestly line; restored to office
 - king and priest feeding the lampstand
 - point to Christ (Revelation 21:23)