

Message #7**Zechariah 4:1-14**

Tomorrow morning is Christmas. I don't know how yours was, but when I was a boy, my parents made Christmas the best. We would go to bed Christmas Eve and in our living room was a Christmas tree and that was it. But when we got up Christmas morning, it was like another world. We each had a stocking with our name on it with all kinds of things in it and there were presents under the tree. It must have taken mom and dad hours to do that for five children.

Now the night before Christmas, we could not sleep. We were lying in bed with one thought, when can we get up and go down into that living room. Usually our parents would make us wait until about 6AM, but at about 4AM we would ask if we could go down and open our socks. It was a fun night.

I don't know if you could call what happened to Zechariah a fun night, but there was no night like it that he had ever experienced. He had gone to bed and we know from **Zechariah 4:1**, he had gone to sleep. He went to bed, went to sleep, but Zechariah kept getting waked up by God and in one night he got eight visions. He had never seen anything like this; he had never had a night like this:

Vision #1 - Man among myrtle trees—God is with Israel, Jerusalem and her land.

Vision #2 - Four horns and craftsmen—God will crush and smash powers that are against Israel.

Vision #3 - Man with Measuring line—God will make Jerusalem His capital city, Israel His honored nation and Palestine Israel's holy land.

Vision #4 - Joshua the high Priest—In pure elective grace, God will remove the sin of Jerusalem and Israel's land on one day through Jesus Christ.

What a night, but it wasn't over yet because God woke up Zechariah and gave him **vision #5**. This vision was a vision of the golden lampstand and the two olive trees.

IT IS THE SOVEREIGN GRACE AND POWER OF GOD THAT GUARANTEES THAT GOD'S NATION, ISRAEL, AND GOD'S PEOPLE, THE CHURCH, WILL ACCOMPLISH GOD'S WILL.

This text is much needed today. You see, not too many really believe **verse 6** that says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." Israel thinks she will succeed because of her political maneuverings and great military success. She thinks she will be able to negotiate some peace settlement that will enable her to be recognized as the great nation of God. Many churches think the same thing. In fact, I just recently got a mailing from a man that goes to churches to help them form a strategy to become great. He teaches that by implementing his marketing philosophy, the church can really make its mark. Zechariah gets a vision that says just the opposite. This vision says God is the One who accomplishes His will. Our success does not lie in our might, or our marketing or our power; it lies in a dependency on the Lord.

Now this chapter breaks down into four main parts:

PART #1 – Zechariah receives a vision of a lampstand and two olive trees. **4:1-3**

As we said, Zechariah received eight visions from God in one night. Apparently there was a gap of time between the fourth vision in chapter three and the fifth vision of chapter four because Zechariah had gone back to sleep. He had already had four intense visions.

This had already been an exhaustive evening and yet according to **verse 1**, the angel woke Zechariah up again. He must have said, “Well here we go again.” By the way, we may observe he is awake for this. So this is not some sleepy time dream. He is awake and alert. He really sees these things.

Now the angel woke up Zechariah and asked him what does he see. According to **verses 2-3**, as Zechariah looked at things, he saw a solid gold lampstand with a bowl on top of it with seven lamps and he also saw two olive trees by the lampstand.

Now according to **verse 2**, the lampstand (menorah) he saw had the following characteristics:

- 1) It was made of solid gold.
- 2) It had a bowl on top.
- 3) It had seven lamps on it with seven spouts on each lamp.

So what Zechariah sees here is a bowl for oil with seven channels or pipes that run to each of the seven lights or lamps.

So the oil flowed by gravity from the bowl on top into the channels and up to lamps through the pipes that fed it.

Now according to **verse 3**, the two olive trees were standing beside the lampstand, one on each side.

What we may observe is it is not specifically stated what this lampstand actually is, but it certainly has to do with the lampstand that would be ultimately in the Temple. This lampstand is very similar to the one that was made for worship during the time of Moses (Exodus 25:31-37). Once the Temple was completed, one of the items in the Holy place would be this lampstand.

Now the purpose of the lampstand was to “shine forth the light” in the sacred temple (Ex. 25:31). The lampstand’s job was to shine forth sacred light for the glory of God. This lamp was to be lit continually. This is what Israel is supposed to be as a nation. **Israel was supposed to be a national light for the glory of God to the international world that is in darkness.**

This lampstand is a national symbol for Israel even to this day. There is a 16 foot high bronze menorah lampstand that stands in front of the Israeli parliament building in Israel.

Israel is supposed to be the light of God to the nations of the world, and that is what this lampstand really says.

Now we have a tremendous application we may make to this to the Church Age because Jesus Christ specifically uses this very image in regard to a local church (Revelation 1:20). There are seven golden lampstands and they are the seven churches.

What that means is that the church is to be a sacred place that reflects a sacred light for God. This is the responsibility of the local church to shine forth a glorious, sacred light in the presence of God. We are to be a sacred place where God's Word is revered and God is worshipped.

There is a family channel on our TV that shows old black and white TV programs and I just enjoy watching that. One of the programs that they have on that channel is Perry Mason. Perry Mason was a fictitious defense attorney back in the early 60's. In one of the episodes we recently watched, Perry (Raymond Burr) and his secretary Della (Barbara Hale), who just died at the beginning of 2017, were sitting in a church waiting for a wedding to begin. In front of the church was a Jazz Band playing some prelude music and when the bride came in they played the wedding march. Now before the bride came in, Della said, "Doesn't it seem strange to see a jazz band playing in a church?" Mary was out of the room so I said you have to hear this. So I rewound it and played it. If you asked that question today, doesn't it seem strange to see a band playing in the church, the answer would be it is strange not to see a rock band in the church.

We are losing our sense of what the church is to be. It is to be a sacred place that reflects sacred light for the glory of God.

I want to make a critical observation here about Zechariah and about Bible interpretation. Zechariah simply and accurately observes what is here. He simply observes what is actually revealed, no more and no less. In **verse 2** the angel asks what do you see? In **verses 3-4**, Zechariah just makes honest, accurate observations.

That is the job of a Bible interpreter. The job is to precisely and accurately observe what is actually in a text. **Proper observation is a critical key to proper interpretation.**

PART #2 – Zechariah asks the angel for the interpretation of the vision. **4:4-7**

Zechariah has accurately seen what is here and then he basically says, "What does this mean?" Now more than likely what Zechariah has in mind by his question is not only to explain the meaning of the lampstand and olive trees, but he wants to know the significance of this vision.

Now **verse 5** says the angel kind of startles Zechariah by saying, well "don't you know?" Of course Zechariah doesn't know; who would? The angel knows he doesn't know, but this is designed to get Zechariah to say, "No, my Lord," I don't know.

No one will ever understand the deep things of God until they honestly admit to God they don't know. When you ask people questions, often they will say, "Well I read the Bible." Or "that person really knows the Bible." Most of the time they don't know the Bible. Zechariah knew he needed help and so he honestly says, "I don't know."

This is an important point to observe; God demands honest acknowledgment of our ignorance before He will grant accurate understanding. There is no pride here. Zechariah admits he doesn't know and he wants to know.

In **verse 6**, the angel starts developing the meaning of all of this. Zerubbabel was specifically singled out as the leader of Israel. He was the political leader, the governor of those who had returned from Babylon. He was the governor (Haggai 2:2). He was politically responsible for the work of rebuilding things such as the city and the Temple.

What God shows Zechariah in **verse 6** is that the project would succeed, but not by the strength of Zerubbabel, but by the sovereign power and might of God. Zerubbabel was God's choice of politician and God would enable him to succeed. He would not be successful by his own strength or power. This would all be accomplished by the power of God's Spirit. This would be a great encouragement to Zerubbabel, knowing God would accomplish His will.

As Stephen Miller said, **verse 6** is one of the "great verses of the Bible" (*Zechariah*, p. 181). This verse clearly shows we are frail and weak, in and of ourselves, but it is our God that has all power to do great things. Nothing is impossible for Him. This is a tough lesson for Israel, the world, the church and us to learn.

Verse 7 makes it clear that God would remove all obstacles, even a great mountain and God will bless Israel and bless Jerusalem and it will all be due to His grace. "Grace, grace to it." When God pronounces this grace blessing on a nation, church or individual, it is guaranteed to succeed no matter what the obstacle.

Now I think this has prophetic significance concerning the very moment that Jesus Christ will return and literally the Mount of Olives will become a valley (Zech. 14:4-5). Jesus Christ will be the top stone that will come and smash the mountain and for Israel it will be a stupendous moment of grace.

PART #3 – Zechariah is informed that God's presence and power guarantees success. **4:8-10**

In **verse 9**, Zechariah is informed that Zerubbabel would finish the project and he would finish the project because of the sovereignty of God. Zerubbabel would use his hands to lead and govern and build, but the Lord of hosts would see that the hands accomplished the project.

Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the Temple (Ez. 3:8-13), but was forced by the Persian government to stop construction (Ez. 4:1-5).

Ezra says that Darius ordered a search of the Persian archives and found Cyrus' original decree that permitted the Jews to rebuild the Temple so he reinstated the decree and actually contributed financial support from his own royal treasury (Ez. 6:1-12). It was completed in four years (March 516 B.C.) (Ez. 6:15).

Zechariah's prediction came true and the people knew he was a prophet of God.

Verse 10 informs us that when the project first began, it was small and some people actually despised the work. God's work does not typically start out big. God's work does not typically become a big work overnight. Yet God saw it as a great work. Little by little the work progressed.

Then, when they saw Zerubbabel start measuring things, they rejoiced.

The number seven here is the number of completion and here it refers to God seeing everything. God has perfect knowledge of everything. He sees all things completely. He sees how the work starts and He brings it to completion.

God's eyes watch over the entire earth and when He saw this city and this temple were being rebuilt, He was very pleased.

God is not pleased when He watches over people who do nothing. He watches over everything.

We decided to build a new sanctuary many years ago so we could all meet as one family. It did not happen overnight. We bathed it in prayer. We started a fund. Little by little the project developed and in 2014, the building was completed. This project has been monitored by God and it has been a project all due to His grace. "Grace, grace to it." As long as we have the focus to shine forth the light of God's Word, we will have His grace blessings.

PART #4 – Zechariah asks the angel for an interpretation of the two Olive trees. **4:11-14**

Now Zechariah wants to know about the olive trees and the angel informs him that these are two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.

These two had specifically been anointed by God to carry out His program on earth.

Now we may assume that there is an application that may be made to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest.

There have been many times in the history of the program of God where He sanctioned duos to accomplish His work on earth:

- 1) God used Moses and Aaron.
- 2) God used Joshua and Caleb.
- 3) God used Elijah and Elisha.
- 4) God used Peter and John.
- 5) God used Paul and Barnabas.
- 6) God used Luther and Calvin.
- 7) God used Scofield and Chafer.

However, we know from Revelation 11:3-5 that there will be an ultimate fulfillment that will take place in Jerusalem during the Tribulation, just before Jesus Christ returns.

There are some wonderful applications to see from this passage:

- 1) Jerusalem will be the glorious city of God and the Temple will be in Jerusalem for sacred worship because God will sovereignly see to it that this will happen.
- 2) God uses people on earth to carry out His work, and He is responsible for its success.
- 3) God will remove all obstacles so those doing His work may succeed.
- 4) God's places of worship are to be sacred places that shine forth the light of His Word.
- 5) Everything connected to God, whether Israel or an individual, is due to God's elective grace.