

ZERUBBABEL THE GOVERNOR KING (Zech. 4:1-14)

When God chose Israel, they were to be His witnesses by their lifestyle and by their testimony, **Is. 43:10** Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen. However, they were not always faithful, and God used Nebuchadnezzar to chastise them. After their chastening, God brought them back to Jerusalem from 538 BC onwards, and in the prophecy of Zechariah (520 BC) He promised to restore them as a nation and rebuild their temple and city. His promises related to both a nearer fulfilment within the post-exilic period, and a future fulfilment concerning the Messianic Kingdom.

We are now at the beginning of this fourth vision. Zechariah is exhausted (v.1), and along comes the interpreting angel to ‘give him a nudge’. He wasn’t sleeping, for it was a vision ... but he was so ‘drained’, he was *as* a man that is wakened out of his sleep (v.1). ... Then the angel asked him what he saw (v.2), and as he looked, he was taken aback, for ² 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: ³ And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. ... The candlestick had a base, and from the base rose seven candelabras, - the regular menorah (Ex. 25:31-40). On the top of this menorah, though, was a bowl out of which seven pipes flowed to each of the seven candelabras, which means there were forty-nine pipes in total. ... And to the right and left of the menorah were two olive trees. ... The oil flowed from the two olive trees into the large bowl on top of the menorah, and down each of the seven pipes into each of the seven candelabras ... and that was how this menorah in Zechariah’s vision was kept lit, that is, from the oil from the olive trees. ... This is different from what normally happened in the wilderness the temple, because normally the priests lit the candles, otherwise they would have burnt out (Lev. 24:3). Instead, in Zechariah’s vision the oil from the two olive trees provided the light.

As a priest and prophet, Zechariah ought to have understood, however, he enquired, ⁴ What are these, my lord? And the angel replied, ⁵ Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. The angel then explained to the prophet how there was no human source at work, as there had been previously in the wilderness when the priests lit the candles. Instead, God was producing the life in the olive trees to produce the oil to produce the light in the candlesticks, 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. ... Symbolically, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was as the oil keeping the light of the menorah burning.

What does it mean though? ... The menorah lampstand represents the tribes of Israel as a united people under God, - they have their source in Him for He chose and protected them. And the light in the lamp shining out over the nations is lit and kept lit by Jehovah. A large menorah stands outside the Knesset Parliament in Jerusalem, and the menorah and the two olive trees are the official symbol of the nation of Israel. Isaiah had prophesied the Jews would be as ‘a light unto the Gentiles’ (**Is. 49:3** Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified ... ⁶ ... I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth), as indeed they have been and are, for as 0.2% of the world’s population God has constantly used them as ‘a light unto the Gentiles’. ... And the Christian interpretation is essentially the same as the Rabbinical teaching in their presentation of Jerusalem as “the light of the world”.

So, God’s promise through Zechariah was He would restore the nation, rebuild the temple, rebuild the walls, preserve His people, introduce the Messiah, and through Him they would become ‘a light to the nations’. ... Israel will ‘shine’ (cf. Is. 2:2-4) in full fellowship with the Messiah, Who will be the source of their ‘light’, **Lk. 2:32** A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel ... **Jn. 8:12** I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life ... **Lk. 1:79** To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way

of peace. ... And the forty-nine channels coming out of the bowl over the menorah symbolizes the unlimited power from the Holy Spirit, as Joel prophesied, **Joel 2:24** I will restore *las in a covenant* to you the years that the locust hath eaten ... **26** And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise *[halal, shine]* the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed *[disappointed, unsatisfied]*. **27** And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. **28** And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit *[ruach, Gen. 1:2]* upon all flesh. ... God will continually pour into the nation of Israel, - the lampstand, - so that the light becomes gloriously brilliant, as a witness to their Messiah.

Zechariah is also being shown the two olive trees on either side of the menorah (v.3). Their meaning is later developed in v.14, **Zech. 4:14** Then said he *[the interpreting angel]*, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. ... Historically, there were only two people in Israel allowed to be anointed, - the king and the priest. In the immediate setting, the 'two anointed ones' were Zerubbabel (the descendant of King David) and Joshua (the high priest). And, in this chapter, God specifically informed the king Zerubbabel, Not by might *[by a strong collaboration of powerful forces or armies]*, nor by power *[of a single individual or earthly ruler or king]*, but *lit will be* by my *[Holy]* spirit *[alone]*, saith the LORD of hosts (**Zech. 4:6**). ... The work is God's, and *He* will do it! ... Just as the Holy Spirit moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2) at the dawning of creation, the Holy Spirit would inaugurate this miracle ... as when the Red Sea was opened (**Ex. 15:8** And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap ... **10** Thou didst blow with thy wind), and when the Spirit breathed into the dry bones (Ezekiel 37), and as when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in the upper room at Pentecost (Acts 2) ... God promises He will *breath* upon Israel!

Then, all the great mountains of obstacles and problems, God promises Zerubbabel will be flattened as a plain, and the king will recognize their

deliverance was of God, and there will be shouts of praise, Grace *[kindness, favour]*, grace unto it (v.7). ... The work, - which began with the laying of the first stone sixteen years earlier, but was hampered (536 BC), - will be completed from start to finish, and all the glory will be His for, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts (v.6). The temple will be the most glorious, and grand, and magnificent building ... *However*, the temple Zerubbabel built would not be as illustrious as Solomon's first temple ... and Zechariah's contemporary, Haggai, had already said to the people in the early days of the reconstruction work, **Haggai. 2:3** Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory *[Solomon's temple?]* and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? ... Ezra recorded a similar rhetoric, **Ezra 3:12** But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice. But by the time the temple was completed four years later, in 516 BC, Ezra records, **Ezra 6:16** the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and *the rest of the children of the captivity*, kept the dedication of this house of God *with joy*. ... Just as Zechariah had prophesied, he *[Zerubbabel]* shall bring forth the headstone *[the topstone, the final stone]* thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

However, the second temple was destroyed 586 years later in 70 AD, amidst great Jewish mourning and distress. Of course, the Jews in Haggai and Zechariah's era did not know of that horrible event which was to happen, but God did, and He continued the prophecy, **Zech. 4:9** The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house *[this second temple ... in 536 BC]*, his hands shall also finish it *[which he did in 516 BC]*, and thou shalt know that *the LORD of hosts* hath sent **me** unto you. ... The 'me' is the Angel of the Lord, Who is the Messiah. ... Zerubbabel is from the house of David who restored the second earthly temple, and the **Me** is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Who will build the third millennial temple.

God provides the power (v. 1-6), removes the obstacles (v. 7), and gives the promises (v. 8,9) ... He then enquires, **10** For who hath despised the day of small

things? (... describing the sceptics in Haggai 2:3). Warren Wiersbe comments, “Bible history is the record of God using small things”. However, these may be ‘small things’ in the eyes of men, but not as far as God is concerned ... The Lord then continued by referring to the ‘seven’, that is, the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth. who will rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. ... The Angel of the Lord is informing Zechariah God will rejoice when He sees the temple he is building completed ... and this would be the same temple the Lord Jesus would enter five hundred years later.

Then Zechariah comes back to the two olives on each side of the menorah (v.11). In v.3 and again in v.11, he asked, **11** What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? ... And as if he wasn’t receiving the answer quickly enough, he asks again, with a more precise detail, **12** What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? ... The interpreting angel responded, as he did before (v.4-5), **13** Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. The interpreting angel then explained how the ‘two anointed ones’ are standing by the Lord of the whole earth (v.14).

... In Zechariah’s day, the ‘two anointed ones’ were Zerubbabel and Joshua, - the king and priest. However, they foreshadow a greater for the conclusion of this chapter brings us into the future when Jesus the Messiah is “the Lord of the whole earth”. At that time, the role of priest and king will be merged in Him, for in Hebrews 7 the Lord Jesus is likened unto Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God (v.1). This would be elaborated upon, **Zech. 6:13** Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and *he shall be a priest upon his throne.*

“The Lord of the whole earth” is a Messianic title, referring to Christ, **Zech. 14:9** the LORD shall be king over all the earth ... It is also used by Micah (the Lord of the whole earth, Micah 4:13). While the earth is already the Lord’s for

He created and sustains it (Ps. 24:1), at a future date, He will return to reign, **Is. 2:2** the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. **3** And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **4** And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth His successive journeys run;
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore, til moons shall wax and wane no
more.”