

VII. The Golden Lampstand

13-Jan-08 Zechariah 4:1-14

Theme: Jesus Christ pours the Holy Spirit into the church, empowering His people to shine as lights in the world.

Key Verses: Zechariah 4:6-7 ⁶So 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!””

Review

Last week, we studied the fourth Night Vision of Zechariah, “The Cleansing of Joshua.” The high priest of Israel was standing before the Angel of the LORD, clothed in filthy garments, with Satan the Accuser standing at his right hand, demanding that God execute justice and judgment upon Joshua and the rest of Israel whom he represented. In a beautiful Old Testament picture of the mercy and grace of God, Jesus Christ does not execute justice, but instead grants justification. He rebukes Satan for His attack, which is unwarranted due to the eternal election by God of His people. But God does not only elect His people, He acts in history to save them, snatching them like brands out of the fire.

The polluted clothing of Joshua is stripped off at the command of the Lord, and he is richly robed in festal garments, signifying the righteousness of Jesus Christ being imputed to him. Furthermore, at the request of Zechariah, the high priestly turban is placed on Joshua’s head, indicating that he is now fit for service and able to perform his duties, including coming into the presence of God on the Day of Atonement.

Joshua is admonished by the Lord to walk in His ways and to keep His commands. Active obedience is always required of God’s justified saints – we have been saved to serve Him. As a reward for faithful service, Joshua is promised heavenly access, both in the observance of his priestly duties and ultimately in his eternal destiny.

Zechariah closes this vision with a three-fold description of the Messiah and His atoning work as pictured in the cleansing of Joshua. Jesus Christ is the Suffering Servant of God, the one who is both priest and sacrifice, the mediator between God and man who secures salvation for His people. He is also the Branch of David, the royal king who sits on His throne forever. Thus, Zechariah is presenting to us the image of Messiah as both priest and king. The final image that Zechariah gives us for Jesus is the stone that takes away sin in a single day. He is “Holy to the LORD”, the Holy One of Israel, the One whose righteousness is imputed to us. What a great Savior!

Introduction

In the first three Night Visions of Zechariah, we saw how God was at work in Israel among the nations of the world. God promised to deal with the nations at ease while He returned to His people in mercy. The central Night Visions – the fourth and fifth – are the heart of this visionary sequence. The big question last week in the fourth vision was: How can sinful and unclean people approach God? The answer came in the vision of “The Cleansing of Joshua,” which is a picture of justification. Messiah takes away our sin and provides His own righteousness to us.

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A logical question proceeds from the previous vision. Now that we have been justified, what do we do now? How can we follow God's admonition to "walk in My ways" and to "keep My command" (3:7)? Where does the power come from to lead a godly life? In other words, once we are justified, how do we become sanctified? The fifth Night Vision – "The Golden Lampstand" – addresses this concern.

Chiastically, this vision is paired with the one that precedes it. The previous vision focused on Joshua, the high priest, who is a sign or type of the Messiah to come, the Messiah who is both priest and king. In this vision, the Davidic governor Zerubbabel is prominent, pointing once again to the Messiah, in whom both the priestly and kingly offices are combined.

Exposition

A. The Fifth Vision (4:1-5)

1. Awakened (4:1)

¹Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep (Zechariah 4:1).

Somehow, between the fourth and fifth visions, Zechariah loses consciousness and has to be awakened by the interpreting angel. This statement seems to indicate a break between the first set of four visions and the remaining four visions. Jordan believes this signifies a "transition from death to life, from wrath to grace." The Apostle Paul often uses "resurrection" language to signify our salvation. For example:

¹²...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses... (Colossians 2:12-13).

Now that we have had the vision of justification, of forgiveness of sin and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have a symbolic resurrection of the prophet from sleep to wakefulness. This prepares us for the vision on sanctification which follows newness of life.

2. Vision (4:2-3)

²And 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. ³Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left" (Zechariah 4:2-3).

After being wakened by the interpreting angel, Zechariah sees the next vision, a vision of a beautiful golden lampstand or *menorah* in Hebrew. The *menorah* is the lampstand that was situated inside the holy place of the tabernacle to give light to the priests while they performed their duties. In Solomon's temple, there were ten lampstands to enlighten the larger volume of that space (1 Ki. 7:49). Because of the golden lampstand's connection with the holy place, it seems as if this vision, like the preceding one, takes place within God's holy temple.

The *menorah* of the tabernacle was a stylized almond tree (Ex. 25:31-40). It had a central golden shaft with ornamental knobs, blossoms, and flowers. The lampstand had three branches coming out of each side of the central "tree trunk", each branch holding a bowl of oil as a lamp, with a seventh lamp on it, presumably at the top of the central shaft. Each lamp was a small bowl with

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a crimp in its rim, where the wick was held in place. One end of each wick was dipped in oil, and the other end was lit, fueled by the oil. The traditional view of the *menorah* is that these side branches curved upwards so that the seven lamps were all at or near the same level. This is the way the *menorah* is pictured on the Arch of Titus, constructed in Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This is the oldest surviving picture of a Jewish *menorah*. However, some scholars believe that the *menorah* branches went straight outward rather than curving upward.

The description of the golden lampstand here in Zechariah is different from the *menorah* of the tabernacle in several important aspects. First, this lampstand had a “bowl” on top of it. From the context, it appears as if this bowl was rather large, serving as an oil reservoir for the lamps. Second, the configuration of the lamps is different. Nothing is said about side branches off the central shaft of the lampstand. Rather, the idea is of seven lamps around the central oil reservoir.

Third, there is this confusing language about “seven pipes to the seven lamps.” The Hebrew literally says “seven and seven channels,” which taken distributively suggests 7x7 or forty-nine lights. Most commentators believe that each of the seven lamps had seven channels or conduits supplying oil from the central reservoir. Further, each lamp had seven crimps and seven wicks, for a total of forty-nine lights.

This description of Zechariah’s golden lampstand reminds me of a little poem:

As I was going to St. Ives, I met a man with seven wives,
Each wife had seven sacks, Each sack had seven cats, Each cat had seven kits,
Kits, cats, sacks, and wives, How many were going to St. Ives?

The end of this poem could be paraphrased as “channels, lamps, crimps and wicks, how many lights were there lit?” In the case of the St. Ives poem, the answer is “one,” but in the case of the golden lampstand, it is “forty-nine.” Clearly this lampstand was more glorious than the traditional *menorah*!

The other very unusual feature about this golden lampstand is the two olive trees which flank it. The position of the olive trees is actually above the lampstand, rather than beside it, since the Hebrew word usually means “above” rather than “next to.” Notice also that the trees are linked to the bowl, which sits on top of the lampstand, again indicating that the trees are above the lampstand itself.

What is the function of these olive trees? That is made explicit in the second half of this vision (4:11-14), but it should be clear by inference already: the olive trees supply a continuous stream of olive oil to the reservoir, so that the lamps can burn continuously. Unlike the *menorah* of the tabernacle or temple, which had to be tended by priests who trimmed the wicks and resupplied the oil, this lampstand shines endlessly because of the free flow of oil.

3. *Meaning (4:4-5)*

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

After seeing this very beautiful and glorious lampstand, Zechariah asks the interpreting angel what it means. Interestingly, the angel never really answers his question. In the oracles which follow, the vision of the lampstand is applied, but not explained. Now Zechariah was not completely ignorant of the symbolism of the vision. He almost certainly had an understanding of

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the main elements of the vision – the lampstand and the olive oil. So his question likely had to do with how these elements applied to the current situation, and that is question that the angel answered. But before we move forward to the application of the vision, we need to make sure that we also understand the symbolism of the vision.

Let's start with the golden lampstand. This is a fairly clear picture of the church, the people of God. The lampstand is a "stylized tree" – remember, the *menorah* in the tabernacle is described as an almond tree. As we discussed in the first Night Vision regarding the myrtle trees, trees are often used as symbols of God's people (*e.g.*, Ps. 1:3). But lest we have any doubt about this symbolism, remember the first vision of John in the book of Revelation. In that vision, he saw the glorified Christ standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12-16). What are these lampstands? Well, the text leaves no doubt: "the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20b). Thus, John sees Jesus Christ standing in the midst of His church, in the midst of the golden lampstands.

The golden lampstand is an apt symbol for the church of God, both Old and New Testament. First, the use of pure gold to make the lampstand is an indication of the value that God places upon His people. But more importantly, we are called to be a light to the world, shining forth in the darkness to proclaim the glory and majesty of God:

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

¹⁴Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:14-15).

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was supposed to be a light to the nations, bearing witness of the one true God. That mission has clearly expanded in the New Testament, as the lampstand of God, the church, is commissioned to go and shine the light of Jesus Christ throughout the dark world.

So, if the golden lampstand is the church, what is the oil, the source of energy that enables the church to shine forth in its evangelic mission? Again, the symbolism here is rather straightforward; oil is always used as a symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit of God:

¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah (1 Samuel 16:13).

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound (Isaiah 61:1; *cp.* Luke 4:16-21).

Anointing with oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual in power. David was anointed with oil by Samuel, and the Spirit came upon him. Jesus was anointed with the power of the Spirit of God to perform His messianic mission (*cp.* Acts 10:38).

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Thus, the vision of the two olive trees supplying a continuous supply of olive oil to the golden lampstand is a picture of the Holy Spirit empowering the church of Jesus Christ. In the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit was not freely given out, but only sparingly. The wonderful truth portrayed in this vision is that God was going to one day pour out His Spirit on all of His people, an occurrence prophesied by Joel and fulfilled at the Day of Pentecost:

²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. ²⁹And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28-29; *cp.* Acts 2:1-4; 14-18).

B. The Message (4:6-10)

In response to Zechariah's question asking how the vision of the golden lampstand applied to the current situation, he is given two parallel oracles. Each oracle says essentially the same thing, although in different ways: that Zerubbabel, the governor, will be successful in building the temple of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. As Kline points out, it is appropriate that this vision focuses on Zerubbabel, rather than Joshua, since temple building is a royal task (*cp.* Ez. 5:11), one that is intimately involved in the Davidic covenant, a covenant that centers on house-building (2 Sam. 7:4-16).

1. First Oracle (4:6-7)

⁶So 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!"'" (Zechariah 4:6-7).

How are Zerubbabel and the rest of the Jews going to complete the temple reconstruction project? "Not by might nor by power." That is, they could never succeed in their own human strength alone. Frankly, Zerubbabel didn't have much strength or resources anyway. He didn't have an army. Jerusalem didn't have a city wall to protect them. Zerubbabel was at the mercy of his enemies around him. From a human perspective, his situation seemed rather hopeless.

So how would they succeed? "By My Spirit." It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that this work would be accomplished. "This is not a reference to the regenerating work of the Spirit, but to His external acts" (Mackay). This is the message of the golden lampstand with the inexhaustible supply of oil. Nothing we do succeeds without the power and the blessing of God's Holy Spirit to equip us for the task and to enable us to complete it.

The temple construction project likely seemed as an overwhelming mountain to Zerubbabel, one that could not be surmounted. "He was fighting lethargy, smallness of vision, and lack of faith within Israel. Without, he was fighting the determined opposition and evil cunning of God's enemies" (Boice). All of these obstacles seemed like a giant mountain preventing Zerubbabel from moving forward.

But in addition to likening obstacles to a great mountain, it is likely in context that the mountain of opposition here refers to the Persian Empire. In Scripture, mountains can refer to world powers (*e.g.*, Babylon in Jer. 51:25), and they are also the locations where temples to pagan gods were built. God is in the business of bringing down the mountains of the nations with their idols, and exalting His own holy hill of Zion (*cp.* Is. 40:4). And through the power of the Holy Spirit,

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Zerubbabel would be able to overcome the mountain of opposition in front of him and flatten it like a plain.

How will Zerubbabel know when that happens? When the celebration begins as he places the final stone – the capstone – in the temple. This capstone is likely a stone at the top of an arch or gateway that symbolizes that the work is completed. Zerubbabel can take great comfort from this oracle, knowing that he will complete his lifework before he dies, and he will live to see God’s people rejoice and give thanks to the Lord.

To read of the fulfillment of this oracle, we need to turn back to the book of Ezra. In Ezra 5:1-2, God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of the Jews to restart the temple building project which had lain dormant for 16 years. Their flurry of activity resulted in renewed vigor by their adversaries to prevent the work from continuing. In Ezra 5:3ff, Tattenai, a nearby Persian governor, wrote a letter to King Darius to prevent the Jews from continuing the work. “This presented Zerubbabel with a serious threat. Cyrus, who had authorized the return and rebuilding, was long dead. Darius, the current ruler, was not even his direct successor, having come to power after a recent civil war. What would happen if Darius would listen to his governor, as he might be expected to do? Neither might nor power would possibly avail for Zerubbabel; he would have to rely on the Lord” (Phillips).

Ezra chapter 6 tells us what happened. Darius went to the archives and found the original decree by Cyrus. As a result, Darius supported Zerubbabel and the Jews over Tattenai the Persian! Clearly this was the result of the Holy Spirit working in the heart of the Persian emperor. Furthermore, Darius instructed Tattenai not to inhibit the work, but rather to support it. Tattenai had no choice but to aid Zerubbabel in the temple reconstruction effort (Ez. 6:13). So, the Holy Spirit flattened the mountain of opposition that was the Persian Empire, and four years later, Zerubbabel completed the temple amid the rejoicing of the people of God (Ez. 6:14-16). “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.”

2. *Second Oracle (4:8-10)*

⁸Moreover 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. ¹⁰For 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” (Zechariah 4:8-10).

The word of the LORD comes to Zechariah again with essentially the same message, as a second witness to testify to the truth of the oracles. Once again, Zerubbabel is told that not only will he start the temple project, but that he himself will complete it.

“Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.” On one level, this statement is used as an indicator of predictive prophecy. When the temple construction work is completed, then Zerubbabel will know that the prophecy has been fulfilled. This phrase was used twice in the third Night Vision (2:9, 11) and also used in the Appendix of the Night Visions (6:15). And in those cases, the meaning of the phrase is not limited to validating human effort. Rather, the phrase is indicative of the work of Messiah. And so, here again, we begin to see messianic overtones in Zechariah’s vision. Zerubbabel, the Davidic prince, is a type of the greater Davidic king to come. Zerubbabel, the builder of a stone temple, prefigures the greater temple builder to

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come. Jesus Christ does not build His temple with physical stones, but with “living stones” – the people of God (1 Pe. 2:5).

“For who has despised the day of small things?” As in the first oracle, here we have another rhetorical question of opposition. This time, the opposition is clearly internal, reflecting the despondency and dejection of the Jews. The older Jews wept with sadness when they realized this second temple would not be as glorious as the first (Ez. 3:12-13; Hag. 2:3). The whole building project seemed doomed to failure. However, through the power of the Holy Spirit, their entire attitude would be transformed into rejoicing. Phillips makes an apt application for us here:

“Where does a person like me begin such a daunting endeavor?” we are prone to ask. The answer is that we begin by beginning: by trusting in the Lord, by doing what is there before us to do, by not despising the day of small things. Small beginnings, we are reminded, lead to great endings when they are done through faith in God. The day of small things requires faith to believe that what we dare to begin will be carried through in the power of God. Hudson Taylor said, “A little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness in a little thing is a big thing!” What matters the most, is not the scale or the scope or the subject of the endeavor, but the faith that is willing to begin and to respond to our Lord with trusting obedience (*cp.* Mt. 25:21).

The rest of verse 10 is difficult to translate and interpret. But we have the repetition of some familiar elements, and so the explanation is consistent with what we have already studied. Jordan points out that the translation of the next phrase should be: “But they will rejoice when they see the stone, the tin, in the hand of Zerubbabel.” The word “seven” occurs later in the sentence and is associated with the “eyes of the LORD,” just like the “seven eyes” in the previous vision (3:9).

Let’s take this piece by piece. First, who are those who rejoice? In context, they are the ones who despise the day of small things; in other words, the Jews themselves. Why do they rejoice? Because they see something in the hand of Zerubbabel. What could be in the hand of Zerubbabel that would cause them to rejoice? Clearly, by comparing this oracle to the previous one (4:7), it would be the final stone in the temple rebuilding project.

So what is actually in Zerubbabel’s hand, according to the text? The Hebrew literally says, “the stone, the tin.” Since ancient times, this has been interpreted as a plumb line, but that doesn’t really make sense in context. A plumb line is used at the beginning of a building project to set the walls straight; it wouldn’t be needed at the end of construction. Furthermore, the Hebrew word *bedil* means “tin” not “plumb,” and tin metal would not be heavy enough to serve the function of a plumb line. Therefore, Jordan suggests that this “tin stone” in Zerubbabel’s hand is really the capstone of the previous parallel oracle (4:7). It is the final stone set in place at the top of the temple, which causes the people of God to rejoice.

So far so good. But what about the “seven eyes of the LORD”? Well, remember from our discussion of the previous Night Vision, we saw a priestly stone with seven eyes on it (3:9) that represented the Spirit of God. It spoke of the Holy Spirit empowering the priestly work of the Messiah. Here we see a kingly stone with seven eyes on it, which also represents the Spirit of God. Thus, in this vision, we have the omniscient Spirit of God, who scans the entire earth, empowering the kingly work of not only Zerubbabel in building an earthly temple, but also the work of Jesus Christ, the greater temple builder.

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In the final analysis, both of these oracles (4:6-7 & 4:8-10) say essentially the same thing. Zechariah encourages Zerubbabel, the Davidic prince, that he will be successful in his kingly task of rebuilding the temple of God. Zerubbabel will accomplish this mission, despite both internal and external opposition, not through his own strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. As the capstone of the temple is laid, great rejoicing will accompany the temple's completion, and Zerubbabel will know that the word of the Lord has been accomplished.

C. The Fifth Vision Revisited (4:11-14)

¹¹Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" ¹²And 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?" ¹³Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." ¹⁴So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:11-14).

There is only one detail of the vision left to be explained and understood – the two olive trees – so Zechariah asks the interpreting angel for a further explanation. However, when no answer is forthcoming, he asks a second question, focusing on the most unusual aspect of the olive trees, their branches which provide oil to the lampstand.

The reason Zechariah asks this question is because the olive trees do not look like normal olive trees. He asks, "What are these two olive *shibboleths*?" The word *shibboleth* in Hebrew means ears of grain, such as corn. Normal olive trees have olives scattered randomly throughout the tree, not clustered in tufts or ears at the end of the branches. So, these trees were unusual.

Furthermore, this abundance of olives in clusters leads to a wealth of olive oil draining through pipes down into the lampstand. But just as these are not normal olive trees, this is not normal olive oil. It is "golden oil," or literally "the gold" in Hebrew. This language – clusters of olives, golden oil – suggests a superabundance, a glorious supply of the Holy Spirit to the golden lampstand of the church. It is a picture of the marvelous grace of God, "who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (Eph. 3:20).

The interpreting angel answers Zechariah's question by saying that the two olive trees, with their *shibboleth*-clusters of golden olive oil, are literally "sons of (fresh) oil," commonly translated as "anointed ones." The Hebrew word for oil here is not the same one as used for anointing oil, although it is likely that anointing is implied. Rather, the Hebrew word is an agricultural word that applies to the fresh oil that comes from the harvesting of the crops. The usage of this word, rather than the word for anointing oil, is consistent with the cornucopia of God's provision.

We've already seen a number of times that Zechariah has used a different Hebrew word in place of the expected one (*e.g.*, rich robes, 3:4; turban, 3:5; stone, 3:9; tin, 4:10), so we should not be too disturbed by the use of a different kind of oil here in 4:14. As all the major English translations suggest, anointing with oil is implied in this designation of the "sons of oil." The question then is, how do we identify who these two "anointed ones" are?

There are two main interpretations of the "sons of oil." The minority interpretation is that they are representative of the prophets, either two specific ones, such as Moses and Elijah, or Haggai and Zechariah, or just of the prophetic order in general. Kline holds to this view, contending that the prophet's role is to anoint with oil, and these trees are "anointing" the lampstand with oil.

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The majority interpretation is that these two “anointed ones” represent the offices of priest and king, whether in general or specifically referring to Joshua and Zerubbabel as the current leaders of church and state. Both the office of priest (Ex. 29:7; 40:15; Lev. 21:10) and of king (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:1; Ps. 89:20) are appointed through anointing with oil. Thus, these offices are divinely ordained through the symbolic anointing of the Holy Spirit. I believe that this interpretation is favored over the minority one, since this vision and the last have focused on Joshua and Zerubbabel.

To further aid us in understanding this identification, Zechariah tells us that these two “stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.” In 3:1, Joshua the high priest was “standing before” God in the midst of his priestly duties, when the accusation of Satan came against him. Later on, after Joshua was cleansed, the Angel of the LORD stood by him (3:5). Now, here in 4:14, both of the “sons of oil” are standing beside the Lord. This position indicates two things: first their acceptance by God; but secondly their service to God. As priest and king, the “sons of oil” are appointed by God as His earthly servants, the religious and civil rulers of His people.

Conclusion

This picture of the priest and king, the servants of God, as the conduits for God’s blessing on the church through the abundant supply of the Spirit, is one that rarely happened in the Old Testament. When the priests and kings were faithful to God, His blessings flowed out upon them. However, that seldom occurred in their history, since the leaders of God’s people were often wicked and corrupt. In Zechariah’s day, the church was blessed with godly leadership. Both Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor were faithful, capable men that served the Lord well. But how could God’s people be assured of such leadership in the future, after these men had died?

The answer, of course, lies in Jesus Christ, to whom both Joshua and Zerubbabel point. The Hebrew word *messiah*, which is translated in Greek as “Christ,” literally means “The Anointed One.” These two “sons of oil,” the priests and the kings of the Old Testament, find their fulfillment in the one Messiah, Jesus Christ. He is the greater Joshua, the greater Zerubbabel. He is the high priest who sacrifices Himself once and for all, thus dealing with sin forever (Heb. 9:11-12). He is the great King of Creation, who sits down and rules once His priestly work is done (Heb. 10:12-14). In Him are combined all that is signified in these two offices of priest and king. And it is through Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit is poured out continuously and completely upon His church (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:7-15), which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

I started this study by asking the question: Where does the power come from to lead a godly life? The answer is made clear in this Night Vision of “The Golden Lampstand.” Jesus – the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, the “Son of Oil,” our Priest-King – supplies His people with the Holy Spirit, who provides the power to live a holy life pleasing to God. It is “not by might nor by power,” but through the Spirit of God that we are able to please Him. The Holy Spirit turns the “day of small things” into rejoicing, as we faithfully perform the tasks to which we have been called. And He is sufficient in all things, flattening mountains into plains as the church shines forth the gospel into a dark world.

Next week: Lesson 8 – The Flying Scroll – Zechariah 5:1-4

Close in Prayer.