

THE VISION OF THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

TEXT: ZECH. 4:1-7

Introduction:

1. Zechariah, like Haggai, was a prophet to the small remnant that returned to Judah after the captivity.
2. This morning I would like for us to look at the vision the LORD gave Zechariah here in Zechariah 4:1-3 – the vision of the golden candlestick.
3. When I first started preaching, I heard a preacher say he always followed the CIA (not the Central Intelligence Agency) when preparing to preach.
 - Context
 - Interpretation
 - Application
4. The context: A small remnant of Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity. They returned to find Jerusalem in rubble and ruin. The people were discouraged, and so the LORD sent the prophet Zechariah, and the prophet Haggai, to encourage the remnant to rebuild the temple.
5. Ezra 5:1, 2 says, “Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.”
6. The interpretation: Zechariah could not understand the vision of the golden candlestick, and so he asked the angel for an explanation (4:4, 5).
7. Strictly speaking, the angel does not explain the symbolism of the vision, but he does give Zechariah the message God wanted him (and us) to have (4:6, 7). This brings us to the application...
8. The application: I would like to concentrate on the message given to Zechariah, because it is a message for us as well. There is a great application here for Christians today (4:6, 7).

I. THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK (4:1, 2)

1. The golden candlestick was located in the Holy Place in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and then later on in the temple in Jerusalem.
2. Like all of the furniture in the temple, the golden candlestick was symbolic.

3. In Isaiah 49:6, the LORD said to the nation Israel, “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”
4. Israel failed miserably, and consequently her light was put out. In Matthew 21:43, our Lord said to the chief priests and the elders of Israel, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”
5. Our Lord pronounced judgment upon them because they had rejected Him.
6. The Lord Jesus Christ is “the Light of the world.” But most people prefer darkness. John 3:19 says, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”
7. Our Lord said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).
8. And again, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5).
9. The Jews rejected Christ, and then the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, just as He had predicted. Pointing to the temple, our Lord said in Matthew 24:2, “See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”
10. This prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70, when the Roman general Titus invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. Titus took the beautiful golden candlestick, and carried it away to Rome. The golden candlestick is prominently pictured on his Arch of Titus. I saw it when I was in Rome a few years ago.
11. The golden candlestick was a work of indescribable beauty, and therefore a perfect picture of the deity of Christ.
12. It was beaten out of a piece of solid gold, symbolizing our Lord’s crucifixion on the cross. The Bible says, “He was bruised for our iniquities” (Isa. 53:5).
13. The seven lamps (Zech. 4:2) reveal the beauty of the golden candlestick. They represent the Holy Spirit. Referring to the Holy Spirit, our Lord said, “He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:14).
14. Revelation 4:5 says, “And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

15. In Scripture, the number “seven” represents perfection. The number “seven” is found 54 times in the book of Revelation, and it is found four times in Zechariah 4.
16. The seven lamps (4:2), the seven pipes (4:2), and the seven eyes of the LORD (4:10; cf. 3:9) all speak of the power of God and the omniscience of God.
17. Furthermore, the book of Revelation speaks of the seven candlesticks, which represent the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.
18. Revelation 1:13 and 2:1 say the Lord Jesus Christ is “in the midst of the seven candlesticks,” signifying the Lord is in our midst.
19. In Revelation 2:5, our Lord warned the church of Ephesus, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”
20. Since they did not repent, the Lord removed their candlestick. That area is now known as Turkey and it is predominantly Muslim.
21. Could the same thing happen to America? From the very beginning, the Gospel Light has shined brightly here in America.
22. But the light is getting dim and soon may go out.
23. David Baron was a Jewish convert to the Christian faith. He was a leader in the Messianic Jewish movement. He wrote several books, including *The Visions & Prophecies of Zechariah*, which in my opinion is one of the best commentaries on the book of Zechariah available. I am happy to tell you the entire book is available on line.
24. Back in 1918, David Baron wrote this:
“The history of corporate Gentile Christianity is not as the shining light that ‘shineth more and more unto the perfect day,’ as some who boast in the supposed progress and speak of the conversion of the world before the glorious appearing of Christ ignorantly suppose, but rather that of a bright dawn, developing into an increasingly dark and cloudy day, and ending in blackness of darkness. And there is no hope for Christendom which continued not in the goodness of God when once it is ‘cut off’; nor is there any promise of the restoration and relighting of its candlestick when once its light has been quenched in anti-Christian apostasy.”
25. “Anti-Christian apostasy.” I am afraid these words adequately describe American Christianity.

26. Thirty years ago, the leader of the “Get back to God” movement here in America was Jerry Falwell, an independent Baptist preacher. Some questioned his suitability because he used rock music and hung around with questionable characters.
27. But at least Dr. Falwell was a born again believer. He was a Baptist who had the right doctrine.
28. Now the new leader of the “Get back to God” movement is Glenn Beck – a Mormon! America is in trouble!

II. THE TWO OLIVE TREES (4:3)

1. The bowl supplies oil to the golden candlestick (4:2).
2. Each one of the seven lamps is fed by seven pipes coming out of the bowl (4:2). In Scripture, the number “seven” represents perfection. The seven pipes kept the oil flowing constantly.
3. In the Bible, oil is a picture and type of the Holy Spirit.
4. Seven represents perfection, so we have here the perfect fulness of the Holy Spirit. The plentiful supply of the flow of oil is a picture of the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. **Oil lubricates**, thus abolishing friction and promoting smoothness.
 - b. **Oil heals**. In Bible times wine and oil were applied to wounds – you may recall how the Good Samaritan poured oil and wine into the wounds of the injured man on the road to Jericho (Luke 10:34).
 - c. **Only the Holy Spirit can heal the broken lives and the broken hearts** of people who have been wounded by life’s sorrows and cares. Thank God, we can sing from the heart, “Burdens are lifted at Calvary, Jesus is very near.”
 - d. **Oil lights**. It is the Holy Spirit who illuminates the Word of God and opens it up for the child of God. Jesus said that “He will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). How does He do this? Through the Word of God.
 - e. **Oil warms**. The Holy Spirit can light a fire under a lukewarm Christian and get him red-hot for God. And He can warm up the coldest unbeliever, bringing him under conviction as the Word of God is fervently preached.
 - f. **Oil invigorates** – that is, it increases the energy of the body. In the book of Acts, we read how the apostles turned the world upside down because they were filled with the Holy

Spirit; they were led by the Holy Spirit; and they were endowed with power from on high by the Holy Spirit.

- g. **Oil polishes.** The Holy Spirit takes the rough edges from the character of the believer. The fruit of the Spirit has none of the blots and blemishes of the old nature.
4. In Zechariah 4:3 we see that the bowl is connected to two olive trees. The immediate application was for Zerubbabel (4:6). “This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel” (4:6; cf. 4:7, 9, 10).
5. Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah (Haggai 1:1). He was in the royal line of King David (cf. Matt. 1:12), but it was now “the times of the Gentiles” and there was no more king in Israel.
6. The next king of Israel will be the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Zerubbabel faced the difficult task of rebuilding the temple in the midst of a corrupt and worldly society that was hostile to the things of God.
8. The application is clear – we are trying to win souls and build a Bible-preaching church in the midst of a corrupt and worldly society that is just as hostile (perhaps more so) to the things of God.
9. God gave this vision to the prophet Zechariah to encourage Zerubbabel and the people (4:6, 7).
10. The other olive tree represents Joshua the high priest (cf. 3:1).
11. Satan resisted Joshua the high priest (3:1), and today he is still trying to hinder the work of God.
12. But I have good news. James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
13. Zechariah 4:14 says, “These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”
14. Take your stand for God and He will help you, bless you, and guide you.
15. Ephesians 6:11 says, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
16. Ephesians 6:13 says, “and having done all, to stand.”
17. Ephesians 6:14 says, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”
18. Take your stand for God.
19. In Revelation 11, we read about two witnesses who will prophesy during the coming tribulation. Revelation 11:4 says, “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.”

20. There is much speculation over their identity. Personally I believe they will be Moses and Elijah, but the Bible does not tell us their names.
21. But it does say they will take their stand for God during a very difficult time. That is the application for us today.

III. THE GREAT MOUNTAIN (4:7)

1. Zerubbabel faced the difficult task of rebuilding the temple. He faced a “mountain” of opposition. But the Lord encouraged him by 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. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it” (4:6, 7).
2. I am reminded of what our Lord said in Matthew 17:20, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”
3. Zerubbabel needed that kind of faith to rebuild the temple.
4. He could not accomplish that great task in his own strength – “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (4:6).
5. God encouraged Zerubbabel through the following promises:
 - (1) God would certainly remove all obstacles (4:7).
 - (2) Zerubbabel would finish the temple (4:9).
 - (3) The LORD was working for them (4:9b).
 - (4) The people would once again rejoice (4:10).
 - (5) The eyes of the LORD run to and fro through the whole earth, and they do not miss a thing (4:10b).

CONCLUSION:

1. Today we hear much of military power.
2. We hear much about atomic power. For example, it is likely Iran will soon be able to use nuclear weapons.
3. We hear much about political power. Many Christians get caught up in this, believing that if we can just get rid of all the corrupt politicians we can turn our country around.
4. We hear much about all of this worldly power, but the only power that matters is the power of God (Zech. 4:6).

5. Titus 3:6 says God has poured out the Holy Spirit “on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”
6. Our Lord said in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”
7. Let us ask God for the fulness and power of the Holy Spirit.
8. He said in Luke 11:13 that we are to ask Him.