

Zechariah Chapter Four

Introduction: In this chapter are the vision of a golden candlestick, and of two olive trees by it, and the explanation of these symbols. The preparation to this vision, which is the awaking of the prophet, as of a man out of sleep, is in #Zec 4:1. The vision of the candlestick, and olive trees, is in #Zec 4:2,3. The candlestick is described by what it is made of i, gold; and by the parts of it, its bowl, lamps, and pipes; and the olive trees by their situation; the explanation of which is at the request of the prophet, since he did not know what they meant, #Zec 4:4,5 it is revealed to him, that this represents, using Zerubbabel as a type of it, the building of the temple, the building of the Gospel church by Christ; and which is done and finished, not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit, though it has much opposition, and contempt of it by many, its completion is to the great joy of many, who observe the grace of God, and his providential care and goodness, in it, #Zec 4:6-10 the prophet is told concerning the two trees that these are the two anointed ones that stood by the Lord of the whole earth, #Zec 4:11-14

4:1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

Same angel and written as if this is almost a continuation of the previous vision, but required the angel to awaken or call the attention of the prophet to this new situation unfolding before him. The term “wakened out of sleep” sets a picture of what is happening before us as we all can relate to things that we first note having been awakened from a deep sleep by some unknown thing. That is we are groggy and things do not register as we might think they should. This is rather different than most visions where your attention is riveted and everything is extra real and most vivid though indeed you may not understand what is going on the details are sharp and your mind is as if on fire, racing.

2 And said unto me, What seest you? And I said, I have looked, and 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:

The angel calls for his attention and makes sure he is seeing clearly the vision before him. Though similar to the candlestick in the temple, this one is different than any that has ever actually existed before. Only with the understanding of the New Testament can we see what is happening here and that this is a vision of the church to come and the difference being the source of fuel or light put out from the candlestick. Revelation one shows the church represented by a candlestick and the ministers the angels thereof. Thus we are looking at the truth of God as it will be shed as light into the world by the Gospel of Jesus Christ by His ministers in the New Testament church.

3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof.

This verse will be more fully explained by the text itself in verse 14. For now let us just see this as completing the picture that the prophet was looking at.

4 So I answered and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, What [are] these, my lord?

5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knows you not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

This seems strange for the angel to ask. Obviously the prophet knew what these were and was asking what do they symbolize because they made no sense being the objects they appeared to be. Then why have these in a vision unless there is something else signified by these things. It is perhaps a bit of a rebuke because this prophet was not making the connection much like Christ asks in different times of people if they did not or how they could not understand things that He was doing or saying as if they should know these things. Perhaps it is merely to draw a more immediate attention to what is about to be said so the prophet will take close note of these things. I find this weak however for it is obvious almost from the instant it begins until it ends when a person is seeing a vision of God and the vision is literally burned into their memory and many years later the vision appears as clearly as when it was first given of God. It appears then to be a mild rebuke which the prophet apparently accepts in acknowledging his ignorance and calling the angle "lord" or master a term of deep respect.

6 Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, Zerubbabel led the first band of Jews, numbering 42,360 back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and temple. Ezr 2:64. Zechariah would have been well aware of this since this was contemporary to his own ministry. So, God is saying to him that what is happening here is not only the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple but is a type of what God's chosen people and city will be in the future. That though the adversity of the times may make some faint, it is never by their power but of God these things will come to be. Christ told the Jews of His day to search the Scriptures (meaning the Old Testament as we know it) for it was Him they spoke of. Typology may be taken to extremes and Christ found where that is not the intention of the Lord, but the opposite to not see how all of the history of the Jewish peoples and

their lives were types of the future family of God in all nations is as serious of an error. Looking back with the complete New Testament in hand it can be hard to understand how the Jews could not see these things and how they could miss their Messiah when He came the first time. Such thoughts are mere arrogance and ignorance of the so-called modern person. The ignorance of the church as a whole of the history and events of the Old Testament make it impossible for them to fully understand what God has done in Christ or why it is even necessary for Christ to have died. Thus we see graven images in the churches and the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel and Christ standing in the holy place of God today. While the Bible is the most complete and only reliable and infallible source of revelation it is a great truth that God has always used the natural things of this world to reveal himself to mankind. So much so that Paul could say that because of the creation alone (the light of nature) that all mankind stood guilty before God because God had not only revealed himself in these natural ways but to such a depth that even those without the Scriptures knew not only God but the persons and powers of the Godhead (Rom 1).

7 Who [art] you, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [you shall become] a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it.

Babylon is called a great mountain by Jeremiah (51:25) so this could read “Who are you foolish nation of Babylon to resist Zerubbabel, for I will destroy you.” This applies today to the church as the apostate and reprobate world around her resist her on all sides. Yet the battle belongs to the Lord and in the end not one hand of man will be lifted in that greatest battle of all times but that great army will be destroyed by the word of God alone (Rev. 19:19ff).

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.

Zerubbabel began and will finish this work signified by the top or head stone being placed. So the Lord began His church (I found my church Christ said to Peter) and He will finish it in His time. Zerubbabel is seen then as a type of Christ the builder of the church or kingdom of God on earth. The Lord Himself being the head or capstone of the church. These things were taking place around the prophet even as the words were being spoken so He would know God spoke these words. Thus we are told to test the spirits and see if they are of God for the devil can also give visions and deceive all but the elect and even the elect for a season at times. More important though was God telling the prophet these were types of the coming age of the Messiah. Above all other books of the Bible as has been noted, Zechariah is one of the most Messianic.

10 For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel [with] those seven; they [are] the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

In context this refers to the rebuilding of the temple which was a contemptible thing to those who opposed it. Likewise many of the Jews saw it as a small thing when compared to the glory of the former temple and thus it was a “little thing.” The Jews paraphrase this as ““for who is he that despises this day, because the building is small?” How many today despise or make little of the work in the church because it appears small when compared or weighed by the standards of the world? The widow’s mite spoken of by Christ comes to mind when I read this passage. Who would give much thought to two cents placed into the offering plate today? Yet with God these two pennies can change the whole world.

“Those seven” meaning the perfect number of the godly being the eyes or knowledge and power of God in the world. “Running through the whole earth” signifying the strength of God’s people in all of the earth. Zerubbabel being represented as the master builder, with a plumb line in hand to measure the uprightness of the building so it is Christ as the Master Builder that sees to the uprightness of the church today and forever. Though frowned on or condemned by many as a cult or worse the Masonic order correctly uses these images in its teachings concerning a Great Architect who oversees the building of all of life. Their whole ritual is based on this type of Christ with the world as His temple. Seven eyes or the providential ordering of all things under the all seeing eye of God being the reality, not what appears to man in the concrete world. This is not a reference to angels or special beings but of the saints of God led and cared for in His grace alone.

11 ¶ Then answered I, and said unto him, What [are] these two olive trees upon the right [side] of the candlestick and upon the left [side] thereof?

12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What [be these] two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden [oil] out of themselves?

.13 And he answered me and said, Knowest you not what these [be]? And I said, No, my lord.

14 Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth

Zechariah having had the candlestick explained now turns his attention to the two olive trees on each side of it. The angel once more as if a rebuke asks do you “really not know these things:” Literally this is “the sons of oil.” Some say this is the gifts and graces of God, which stand by the church. Others say that they represent the Holy Spirit and Christ who stand by or in the church. Oil is representative of the Holy Spirit and Christ as the Anointed One or Messiah seems to be the more clear interpretation of these two. This is even more so when we consider it is the branches that feed the oil that is the light of the candlestick that is the church. So Christ is the light of the church. The Holy Spirit brings

light to man in the regeneration of the heart so man can see Christ. God did not see fit to give us the interpretation further than these are the two anointed ones that stand by the church.