



**BETHEL**  
PRESBYTERIAN

# **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

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## **Kingdom Success**

Zechariah 4

We live in a world hostile to Christ (John 15:18)! Not only is our work cursed (cf. Genesis 3:17), but any effort we might make when it comes to serving Christ will be difficult! Psalm 126 describes ministry in the fallen world.

Psalms 126:5, 6, "...sow[ing] in tears..." and "...go[ing] to and fro weeping..."

We see it in Christ! He labored on this earth for three long years, and what did He have to show for it at the end? Absolutely nothing! Every one of His disciples forsook Him; He died

alone on a Roman cross! Recall the words of Christ from Isaiah.

Isaiah 49:4a, "I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity..."

Yet you must see that it NOT ONLY is Christ, but all who would seek to serve the Lord in this state. Asaph speaking of the lot of God's people in this world:

Psalms 80:5, "Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears, and Thou hast made them to drink tears in large measure."

Llan Duguid put it this way:

How do you keep going when there is little to show for your labours? It is easy to preach if thousands flock to hear your every word, easy to counsel people whose lives are healed by your wisdom, easy to lead when others are eager to follow. But how do you cope when the reality is the reverse, and it seems that all of your efforts go for nothing? (Duguid, 2010, p. 105)

Can we not all here identify with this? When it comes to our parenting, marriages, work, service, our walk... all we want is to serve the Lord! BUT it seems as though so often our efforts are wasted- such that at times we find ourselves mouthing the words of Solomon, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

This is the context into which God sent Zechariah to minister. As you know, in 537 BC the people of God returned to Jerusalem with joy, rejoicing, and great anticipation of the future. BUT then they quickly met with failure in *everything* they endeavored to undertake!

- The temple remained in shambles.
- They were hated by their neighbors.
- Their crops were cursed.
- And their homes were criticized by the Lord.

After eighteen long years of this, their attitude and mindset were in the dumps! Yet such is where the ministry of God's Kingdom takes place! There is NO such thing as the "Midas touch" when it comes to the Kingdom of God. It is carried out in incredibly hot and dry conditions where many successes in the end turn out to be a mirage!

Yet that is NOT to say there will not be success! Church history and personal experience tell us that God's kingdom work is advancing. God will not be denied, the "gates of Hell will not prevail against us" (Matthew 16:18)!

All of this raises the question: What is kingdom success? And how do we secure it? That is the focus of the Zechariah 4.<sup>1</sup> Zechariah's fifth vision which concerns itself with the true

nature of kingdom success. As we embark upon this study, notice that the text is arranged chiastically.

- A. Vision #5, Part 1 (vv. 1-3)
- B. Application of the Vision, Part 1 (vv. 4-6)
- C. Implication of the Vision (v. 7)
- B<sup>1</sup>. Application of the Vision, Part 2 (vv. 8-10)
- A<sup>1</sup>. Vision #5, Part 2 (vv. 11-14)

We will begin by looking at the center and point of the vision (v. 7) and then work our way outwards, considering first the application sections (vv. 4-6 & 8-10) and then the vision sections (vv. 1-3 & 11-14). Notice the true nature of kingdom success.

Zechariah 4:7a, “What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain...”

The language of “a mountain” is used frequently in Scripture of all obstacles which stand in the way of the work of God’s Kingdom. And so Isaiah speaks figuratively of what God does in the redeemed life.

Isaiah 40:4, “...every valley [will] be lifted up, and every mountain and hill [will] be made low...”

This was written to the newly exiled people of God to encourage them as they struggled in Babylon. The trials and difficulties would loom over them like a large mountain. Yet as they served the Lord, these “mountains would be made low”! Using this same language, Christ said this:

Matthew 17:20b, “...for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move...”

Christ here is NOT talking about a literal mountain, BUT those things which stand in the way of kingdom service! As we serve the Lord by faith, in time these “mountains are moved”! : It is in light of this that Paul spoke of a faith which “removes mountains”! (1 Corinthians 13:2)

In the life of Zerubbabel — the grandson of Jehoiachin, the rightful heir of the Davidic Throne, as well as the governor/leader of God’s people in Jerusalem — the “mountain” referenced here was all that stood in the way of God’s people as they endeavored to rebuild the temple and serve the Lord in Jerusalem. Ian Duguid put it this way:

The great mountain encompasses both the practical difficulties of rebuilding (such as the mountain of rubble that had to be overcome), the political difficulties of rebuilding (opponents, sceptics and enemies) and the spiritual difficulties of rebuilding (spiritual opposition and warfare, of the kind that is evident in the previous chapter). (Duguid,

2010, pp. 107-108)

Well get this! These massive obstacles — which had delayed God’s Kingdom work for eighteen years — would dissolve as Zerubbabel went about the work of God’s Kingdom!<sup>2</sup> In fact, in four short years, notice what was going to happen.

Zechariah 4:7b, “...and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

The “top stone” is in reference to the final stone that would be used in the rebuilding of the temple. What a glorious message to this no doubt burdened saint! Though at the time of our text the work brought with it massive mountains of opposition and difficulty, God would remove that mountain such that in four short years, the work would be completed as the people with one voice shouted, “Grace, grace [or ‘blessing, blessing’] to it!”<sup>3</sup>

From this we must understand that when it comes to God’s kingdom work — work that God commissions us to do — there is NO stopping it! It will always succeed!

That means, provided it is God’s work and will, our labors are never in vain! We may NEVER see the fruit, BUT we can be sure that God will bring His purpose and will to pass in His time! We see it in Solomon’s writing.

Psalms 127:1-2, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to retire late, to eat the bread of painful labors; for He gives to His beloved *even in his sleep.*”

And so it is with any and all Kingdom work. Recall the words Christ spoke to Peter upon his profession that Jesus is both God and Savior (that is, the Christ).

Matthew 16:18, “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (ESV)

That brings us to the means! If God’s Kingdom work ultimately will succeed, how is this success brought about in our lives?

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

When I first read this, I was shocked by the rhetorical pattern evidenced here, “*You don’t know what this means?*” We are going to see this pattern in just a bit. At first reading it seems as though it is condescending as well as humiliating. Yet we must see that the

angel here is NOT reproving Zechariah, BUT using a didactic tool to get Zechariah to think!<sup>4</sup> That's all this is.

That having been said, vv. 4-5 is speaking of the vision of vv. 1-3, which detailed an image of a gold lampstand with two olive trees on either side of it. Zechariah had no idea what the vision meant and so he inquired of the angel who accompanied him. And yet, rather than give the answer to Zerubbabel's inquiry, the angel gave him the SIGNIFICANCE of the vision (which is a declaration of how God's kingdom work succeeds).

Zechariah 4:6, "Then he answered and said to me, 'This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,"<sup>5</sup> says the LORD of hosts.'"

This is huge! For it tells us how God's work is to be done. It is NOT ultimately done...

- by might: *חַיִּיל* (*chayil*); referencing military strength or human prowess (cf. 1 Kings 5:13–18).
- by power: *כֹּחַ* (*koach*); referencing human strength, will, planning, or determination (cf. Nehemiah 4:10).

So get this, the task before Zerubbabel — the rebuilding of the temple — ultimately would NOT be about resources, supply, endorsements from the powers that be, human strength/determination, or wise planning. RATHER, the task before Zerubbabel — and for that matter all of us as we endeavor to serve the Lord- ultimately comes down to the question of trust! As we go about our service in God's kingdom, what ultimately will be that on which you rely? It must NOT be self or anything of this creation, BUT the Spirit of God!<sup>6</sup>

Do you understand what this means? It changes everything!

- It means we get out of the business of building our Kingdom (which we are really good at) and so depend upon the Spirit of God as the Lord brings about His purposes in our lives!
- It means serving, parenting, working, laboring with open hands before the Lord relying upon His power to bring about the results!
- It means living by faith and NOT by manipulation, argumentation, or any other strategy of the flesh!

When we do our work in reliance upon Christ, it is then we see the straight path of the Lord! That is what Solomon was getting at when he wrote this:

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

I remind you of the words of Jack Miller:

God's holiness is not only about his righteousness, but also about his power. The job we have to do, we cannot do in our own power. We work hard, but we must realize that we also are spectators watching from the sidelines to see what God is doing. Our work will never be about ourselves as conquerors; it will only be about God, the Conqueror. This is how it was for Moses, and this is how it is for us. (Miller)

That brings us to a practical consequence that will arise in our lives if we live by faith and not by sight.

### The Consequence

Zechariah 4:8-9, "Also the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.'"

This is a repeat of the glorious message of v. 7 announcing the kingdom success Zerubbabel would have at this time. As the governor of God's people, naturally Zerubbabel would be the one to lay the first stone in the rebuilding of the temple. BUT he ALSO would be the one to lay the last stone!<sup>7</sup> Now as it is the Lord who would do this work, notice the difference this makes when it comes to how we view the things of this life.

Zechariah 4:10, "For who has despised the day of small things? // But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel<sup>8</sup>- these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

First let me comment on the latter part of this verse. As with the previous vision, we have here something that is rather unintelligible, "...the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

We considered these eyes in Zechariah 3:9 which spoke of the stone with its "seven eyes"/facets. So, what are these? Once again, I have no idea! However, we do get additional information here. These eyes "...range to and fro throughout the earth"- which speaks of our all-seeing God who in His greatness knows all things (cf. 2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 16:17).<sup>9</sup> But beyond this, we are at a loss as to its meaning!

That being said, consider the first part of this verse and the reference to those who had "despised the day of small things."<sup>10</sup> What does this mean? Consider with me the context. For that we go back to Haggai.

Haggai 2:1, “On the twenty-first of the seventh month, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet saying...”

Recall, the dating here is significant. God gave this message to Haggai on the “twenty-first day of the seventh month” which was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. That means Jerusalem at this time would have been full of worshippers, most of whom were NOT living in Jerusalem (AND so had only heard of the news that the Temple was being rebuilt)! *And were they ever underwhelmed!* Those living in and around Jerusalem had been at it roughly a month and “...*STILL THEY HANDED’T EVEN CLEARED THE TEMPLE MOUNT?!*” I wonder how many of those Jews who came to the temple at this time uttered those very words?!

Biblically speaking, this ALSO was the anniversary of the time when Solomon brought the Ark into the FINISHED temple (cf. 1 Kings 8:2); all of God’s people would have known that!

In light of all of this, the people of God at this time understandably were discouraged! And it was this discouragement which prompted Haggai’s third oracle.

Haggai 2:2-3, “Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people saying, ‘Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? Does it not seem to you like nothing in comparison?’”

As we saw, Haggai didn’t candy coat it! The progress God’s people had in their efforts at rebuilding the temple TRULY was negligible! God’s people lacked the skill, manpower, and resources which Solomon had when he built the first temple- and it took him twelve years to complete it!

Accordingly, God’s word in Haggai at this time was the assurance of His presence (Haggai 2:4-5). In our text, the Lord added a simple exhortation which was/is a call to faith, “Do not despise the day of small things!” What does this mean? Let me ask you these questions:

- What is necessary to complete a 100-mile journey on foot? A seemingly insignificant first step!
- If as a child you were destined to be a great mathematician, you’d still need to learn the addition and subtraction table!
- The greatest orator began his career with one word, typically “mama” or “dada”!

Now with our sophistication and education, we might look down upon a baby saying “mama” or a child learning his math facts, yet without these insignificant and lowly steps, there would be no mathematician or orator!



God’s people needed to see that when it came to the temple rebuild! In Zerubbabel’s hand was “a plumb line” which he would use in the process of rebuilding the temple (a piece of string with a pointed weight at the bottom of it). It is clear that most of the people of God (at the time Haggai 2 was given) mocked and laughed at the image of Zerubbabel standing on temple mount with massive boulders and charred rubble strewn about the foundation (*how would that address this?*). Yet — and this most fabulous — the text before us says that “God was glad when He saw the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand”!

Christian don’t miss it! Because God’s Kingdom work will always succeed, we must NEVER “despise the day of small things”- like these:

- Being honest when no one cares.
- Doing a job right when no one is watching.
- Getting up early in the morning to spend time with the Lord.
- Forcing yourself to think the best when everyone wants you to think the worst!
- Being faithful when those closest to you say, “Curse God and die!”

This is how the Kingdom of God is built! It is NOT doing great things involving massive leaps forward, BUT faithfully doing the necessary, small, even despised things! (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29) Sinclair Ferguson said of this:

There is a principle in God’s temple building and its this: that He is pleased to use small things in order to produce great things... It is not that God has got nothing left to do than to use small things, it’s that God chooses to do it this way... And the logic of those men who wept as they saw the temple foundations and all their impoverishments, their logic was, ‘It’s too small so it is not worth doing.’ But God’s logic was, ‘I delight to use things that are small in order to show that the glory is all mine. (Ferguson, 2012)

That brings us to the basis for our calling and hope.

Zechariah 4: 1-3, “Then the angel who was speaking with me returned, and roused me as a man who is awakened from his sleep. And he said to me, ‘What do you see?’ And I said, ‘I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other



I have placed a couple of pictures in your notes which help to explain what Zechariah saw. It began with a “gold lampstand”. As with the fourth vision (Zechariah 3), Zechariah was brought into the Temple of the Lord and given a glimpse of “the lampstand” which was in the holy place of the temple. Recall that this lampstand in the earthly temple was formed to look like a vine with seven branches — which spoke of our union with Christ.



John 15:5, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

The “gold lampstand” spoke of this union and so the importance of you and me “abiding in Christ”!<sup>11</sup> YET HERE, the lampstand in this vision had *A Couple of Modifications*. (1) Unlike the lampstand in the Temple whose wicks and oil had to be trimmed and replenished twice a day by a priest (Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20-21), the lampstand of this vision had a large “bowl” which supplied each of the “seven lamps” with oil.<sup>12</sup> (2) Each of the seven lamps contained “seven spouts [wicks].”<sup>13</sup> That meant, that this “Gold Lampstand” did NOT have seven lights (as in the temple) but seven times seven or forty-nine lights! Now in Judaism “49” was a special number! We read about it in Leviticus 25 where after a lapse of seven times seven, or forty-nine years, the Year of Jubilee was to commence (where the sins of the land and God’s people were wiped away, debts forgiven, and slaves set free)! As such, these lamps, spoke of the radical grace of God, essentially saying, “This is The Basis for all Kingdom Work: The Grace of God which forgives the sinner and brings them into Fellowship with Christ!”



As the angel pointed out to Zechariah 4:6, the picture conveys the importance of our union with Christ and the glorious benefit of abiding in Him — and living our lives clinging to Him, resting in Him, allowing Him to determine what constitutes success or failure, trusting Him, loving Him, and basking in light of His love! Truly, this is the basis for all Kingdom Success! Yet there is more. Skip down to...

Zechariah 4:11-12, “Then I answered and said to him, ‘What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?’<sup>14</sup> [Zechariah posed this question at the beginning (v. 4) to which his angelic teacher did NOT answer. Accordingly, v. 11 was the second time Zechariah inquired about the significance of the image before him. Yet, the lack of response on the part of the angel had its intended result, for Zechariah here refined his question...] And I



answered the second time [which in actuality now is the third time] and said to him, 'What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden oil<sup>15</sup> from themselves?'"

With this our understanding of Zechariah's vision is refined. It turns out that each of the two olive trees had a "golden pipe" or hose<sup>16</sup> through which "golden oil" from the olive trees emptied into the bowl at the top of the lampstand! The picture here is of an endless supply of oil which powered the forty-nine flames (which spoke of God's graced)!

And so, unlike earthly resources to which we might turn in our efforts to serve the Lord, when we abide in Christ, we enjoy a benefit which will never be exhausted! Now interestingly, the vision indicates how we receive this benefit! Speaking of the two olive trees we read this:

Zechariah 4:13-14, "So he answered me saying, 'Do you not know what these are?' And I said, 'No, my lord.' Then he said, 'These are the two anointed ones, who are standing by<sup>17</sup> the Lord of the whole earth.'"

There is little question as to what this initially is referencing... it is Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the governor.<sup>18</sup> Yet, it also is clear that both the fourth and fifth visions ultimately are NOT referencing these two men, BUT the Christ! As we've seen, Joshua and his fellow priests were "a symbol" (Zechariah 3:8) and Zerubbabel was a "signet ring" in Haggai 2:23!<sup>19</sup>

From this we conclude that the endless supply of oil is ultimately enjoyed by God's people as they take solace and encouragement from Christ in His role as a Priest and King!!<sup>20</sup> As a Priest, Christ sacrificed Himself for us and prays for us daily. As a King, He rules over this world as "the Lord of Hosts" holding and upholding all things by His power! Christian, do your work in reliance upon our King and High Priest, Jesus, and while you and I may never see the fruit of your labor, nevertheless you will die a rich man having enjoyed the beauty and glory of your Savior in life only to wake up in eternity hearing those glorious words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21)

So Christian, will your labor in and for God's Kingdom be successful? The only way it will be is if we stop doing the work of God's Kingdom in our own strength, take our focus off of ourselves and place it on the Lord who most certainly will complete the work He began in and through us! That is the essence of Kingdom success!

## References

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## End Note(s)

<sup>1</sup> You know the first six chapters of Zechariah contain 8 progressive visions that God gave to Zechariah in one night! Each vision contains an important exhortation to those godly men and women who returned in 537 BC to Jerusalem in order to serve the Lord. Vision #1 addressed “Our True Rest/Comfort” (Zechariah 1:7-17). Vision #2 spoke of the “Imminency of Destruction” that was coming to this world (Zechariah 1:18-21). Vision #3 described the glorious “Consummation of God’s Redemptive Plan” as it pertains to His people (Zechariah 2:1-13). Vision #4 detailed the “The Radical Grace of God” which was given to assure God’s people that no matter how they fared- be it good or bad- they were and would always be the object of God’s love and so His cleansing grace (Zechariah 3:1-10)!

<sup>2</sup> “The ‘great mountain’ is evidently not to be limited to mounds of rubble that impeded building, any more than Isaiah’s mountains are meant to be taken literally (Isa. 40:4; 41:15). The mountains of opposition to God’s work, both practical and personal, shall become a plain, which cannot hinder progress (cf. Mark 11:23).” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 129)

<sup>3</sup> “Their cry of *hēn, hēn* (‘Favour, favour on it!’) is a request for divine acceptance of the completed building, recognizing that without such favour the building will be useless.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 108)

<sup>4</sup> “The interpreting angel twice delays his reply (cf. verse 13), and the effect is to concentrate interest on the final verse of the chapter.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 128)

<sup>5</sup> That does NOT mean that ministry in God’s kingdom won’t involve means. It does and oft-times the means require diligent labor. Boice put it this way, “There were no shortcuts, however. The work still had to be done: the stones still had to be laid. Any worthwhile work always begins small and progresses from that point to become bigger. As I counsel with people in our day, many of them young people, I am convinced that one of their biggest problems is that they expect shortcuts. They want a simple principle that will explain all the Bible and eliminate the need for concentrated and prolonged Bible study. They want an experience that will set them on a new spiritual plateau and eliminate the need for hard climbing up the steep mountain paths of discipleship. They want a fellowship that has all the elements of a perfect heavenly fellowship without the work of building up those elements by their own hard work and active participation. This is not the way God has ordered things.” (Boice, 2006, p. 510)

<sup>6</sup> “It was the breath (*rûah*) of the Lord that worked in creation (Genesis 1:2), and that opened the Red Sea and closed it again (Exod. 15:8, 10; 2 Sam. 22:16). In Ezekiel’s vision (37:1–14) the wind (*rûah*) brought a dead people to life.” (Baldwin, 1972, pp. 128-129)

<sup>7</sup> “It has been argued that the foundation stone is meant, largely because in ancient Near-Eastern texts no mention is made of a top stone, whereas the foundation stone is known to have been laid during a public ceremony. The strongest argument in favour of a completion stone is the demand of the sense of the passage. The foundation has been laid (verse 9) and the promise is that the building will be finished. Whether or not it was customary, in this case there will be a ceremony of rejoicing when the last stone has been laid, for this is no ordinary building. Its completion is symbolic of victory by God’s Spirit (verse 6), hence the exclamations Grace, grace to it! Hebrew *hēn*, ‘grace’, ‘beauty’, draws attention both to the attractiveness of the building and to the grace God has shown and will show in future.” (Baldwin, 1972, pp. 129-130)

<sup>8</sup> “The second half of v. 10 presents two problematic interpretative issues. First, the Hebrew expression *hā`eben habbēdîl* (NIV “plumb line”) yields interpretive ambiguities. The expression occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament and could mean ‘chosen stone,’ referring to the capstone in v. 7. Many modern interpreters suggest that the phrase refers again to the ceremonial rebuilding of the foundation of the temple. The work by Ellis mentioned above

follows this approach. Traditionally, most believe that the term speaks of a bob at the end of a plumb line used in construction to make walls vertical. Consequently, when the people saw Zerubbabel holding the plumb line as the temple construction drew to a close, all would know that the Lord had done a great thing in their midst.” (Klein, 2007, pp. 162-163)

<sup>9</sup> “The eyes of the LORD’ do not merely represent his watchfulness and awareness of everything that is going on. In 2 Chronicles 16:9 exactly the same phrase occurs: ‘the eyes of the LORD that are roaming around in all the earth’. The purpose of this watchfulness in Chronicles was to reward King Asa’s faithfulness with a victory in war. So also here, God is not merely watching from his temple; he is watching over his people for their good in response to their faithfulness.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 110)

<sup>10</sup> “Some looked around them and characterized their times as a ‘day of little things’. Shouldn’t the day of the Lord be a day of great things and dramatic interventions? (See Deut. 10:21; Psalms 71:19). In spite of the rebuilding of the temple, nothing seemed to them to have fundamentally changed. These critics were not just doubting the legitimacy of the present work; they were actively rejecting it, scorning it as inappropriate and useless. In a similar way, Haggai had encountered those who thought that it was not yet time to rebuild the temple (Haggai 1:2).” (Duguid, 2010, pp. 108-109)

<sup>11</sup> “When properly functioning as the seat of worship, the Lord’s house always had a lampstand providing light within. The tabernacle contained a single golden lampstand lighting the holy place (Exod 25:31–40). Later, the temple possessed ten lampstands made of pure gold, five on each side of the front of the inner sanctuary (1 Kgs 7:49). However, not until Zech 4 does the issue of the lampstand within the Lord’s temple arise again. In each instance, the light produced by the lampstands represents God’s glory and his presence among his people.” (Klein, 2007, p. 153)

<sup>12</sup> “Zechariah’s lampstand (*mēnôrâ*) was probably just a cylindrical column, tapering slightly towards the top, on which was a bowl. Innumerable pottery versions of bowl lamps show how the rim was pinched together to form a holder for the wick, the better the light needed the more the places for wicks, seven being the most popular number.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 127)

<sup>13</sup> “Individual seven-spouted lamps have been uncovered by archaeologists at Late Bronze Age Dothan; however, the combination of seven of these around a single bowl is unique. The result would be forty-nine wicks to give light, a kind of ‘super-menorah’.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 106)

<sup>14</sup> “Two olive trees by it, or more exactly, above (‘al), that is, overshadowing it, stand on either side of the bowl.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 128)

<sup>15</sup> “This flowing oil is literally designated ‘gold’, which not only fits the colour of olive oil, but underlines the richness of the provision for this unique golden lampstand.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 111)

<sup>16</sup> “The word translated ‘pipes’ is used nowhere else in the Old Testament, and so it is not possible to be sure of its meaning, but together with the lamps found at Gezer were terracotta tubes which ‘sprout’ into a kind of spout or opening. These may have been used as a means of keeping the lamps supplied with oil, and may explain the ‘pipes’ of verse 12.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 131)

<sup>17</sup> “Moreover, they ‘stand beside the Lord of all the earth’ (4:14). They do not stand before (‘āmad lipnê) the Lord to serve him; they stand beside (‘āmad ‘al) him as members of his heavenly court.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 111)

<sup>18</sup> “By analogy with other uses of the idiom ‘son of’, the meaning is ‘full of oil’; the reference is to the anointing of kings and priests, using imagery suggested by the vision. The two ‘anointed’ were Joshua and Zerubbabel.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 132)

<sup>19</sup> “...the olive trees undoubtedly represent the priestly and kingly offices in Israel, of which Joshua and Zerubbabel were then the officeholders. The true supply of oil is from him who is both priest and prophet, namely, Jesus Christ. It is he who gives the Holy Spirit in abundance (cf. John 14:16–17; 15:26; 16:7–15).” (Boice, 2006, p. 511)

<sup>20</sup> The text gives us a beautiful image of this in v. 1 as it contains a statement unique to this vision, “Then the angel who was speaking with me returned, and roused me as a man who is awakened from his sleep.” It is NOT uncommon for a mortal in the presence of God to lose their strength (as did the disciples before Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, Lk. 9:32). And clearly that is what happened to Zechariah here... exhausted by the weight of the first four

Visions, Zechariah lost all strength and fell asleep! ¶ Accordingly, notice that which accompanies only this Vision... a resurrection of sorts by which the Lord strengthened Zechariah and so enabled him to continue His prophetic ministry here. The message couldn't be clearer: As we abide in Christ and so live by faith, every mountain which threatens God's work will be removed. Yet, this occurs as we embrace "the despised things" to which God calls us in His service each day. As we do this, we will enjoy an endless supply of grace which God gives to His people through the Royal and Priestly offices of Christ.