

### Visions: The Golden Lamp Stand, Flying Scroll, Woman in the Basket

#### Zechariah 4-5

Zechariah 4 - *"Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. <sup>2</sup> And 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. <sup>3</sup> Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left."*

*<sup>4</sup> So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" <sup>5</sup> Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." <sup>6</sup> So 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. <sup>7</sup> '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!"'"*

*<sup>8</sup> Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: <sup>9</sup> "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. <sup>10</sup> For 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."*

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

#### Background Notes

The first six chapters of the book of Zechariah contain eight prophetic visions that God gave to Zechariah. At the time of these visions a group of Jews had returned to Jerusalem from their 70-year captivity in Babylon, but the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord was not finished. The people had become discouraged, and were threatened by enemies in surrounding provinces. So, Temple construction had been a delayed for about 15 years.

So, God gave these prophetic visions to Zechariah to encourage the people, and to motivate them to finish the job of building the house of the Lord. Zerubbabel, the godly governor of the Jews who had led the return from captivity, would lead them in finishing the Temple (v9-10). And the vision reminded the people that God was in control, and as long as they looked to Him, He would enable them to finish the rebuilding (v6).

No mountain barrier or obstacle could hold back the blessing of the Lord – the blessing of the rebuilt temple, and the Lord’s continued blessing in the future (v7). How encouraging for Israel - and how encouraging for us as well! No mountain barrier or obstacle can hold back God’s blessing on our lives as we follow the Lord.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. At the time of the end, Israel will be a witness to the Light of the World.

Verse 1 says that Zechariah had fallen asleep (not the first believer to doze off under the sound of the Word!) In this vision, Zechariah saw a menorah-like candelabrum, similar to the seven-branch lampstand in the Tabernacle. This lampstand had a continuous supply of oil flowing to its lamps. Two olive trees supplied olive oil through two pipes to a bowl on the lampstand, which in turn supplied the oil to the seven lamps.

The meaning of this encouraging vision was that the nation of Israel would be restored to her God-given role as a light of testimony to the world. (And by the way, note the context. *Israel* is view here - not the Church.) Through the power of the Holy Spirit, represented by the oil, Israel would be a testimony to the world for the Messiah, the true Light of the World, represented by the lampstand.

In both the Tabernacle and the Temple of the Old Testament, the golden lampstand was a “type” (or picture) of Christ as the true Light. In Isaiah 49:6 God says of His Servant, the Messiah, *“I will also give You as a Light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

Israel will be the means by which this testimony of the Messiah will be carried to the ends of the earth. The testimony was to begin in Zechariah’s time, with the witness of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, who were represented by the branches of the two olive trees. However, this testimony will continue on to the End Times with the witness of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists of Revelation 7, and in particular the two witnesses of Revelation 11 during the time of the great Tribulation. And Israel’s witness will continue right up until the millennial kingdom of Christ is established. In the End Times, Israel will be a witness to the Light of the World.

### 2. At the time of the end, wickedness will be exposed and judged.

Zechariah 5:1-4 - *“Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. <sup>2</sup> And he said to me, “What do you see?” So, I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.” <sup>3</sup> Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: ‘Every thief shall be expelled,’ according to this side of the scroll; and ‘Every perjurer shall be expelled,’ according to that side of it.” <sup>4</sup> “I will send out the curse,” says the Lord of hosts; “It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house, and consume it, with its timber and stones.”*

In this sixth vision, Zechariah saw a flying scroll. It was a large scroll – 15 feet by 30 feet - and it was seen flying in and out of houses around the world. On the flying scroll were written the curses of the Law of God. The meaning of the vision is quite obvious: evil will ultimately be exposed and judged, and judgment will be swift as portrayed by the flying scroll.

Just as in Zechariah's day, people are able to hide sin and wickedness in our own day - but ultimately they will not get away with it. When the Lord returns, all wickedness will be exposed and judged. There will be no more sweeping of sin under the rug.

Let me ask you: if the flying scroll were to visit your home, or your dorm room, or your office, what would it find? Would it just fly in one window and quickly out the other? Or would it linger, because certain sins and wickedness would have to be exposed and judged by the standard of God's Word?

In the end, nothing will be hidden. Everything will "come out in the wash." So **now** is the time to bring your sin before the Lord and ask for forgiveness through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. At the time of the end, wickedness will be exposed and judged.

### **3. At the time of the end, wickedness will be removed and banished.**

*Zechariah 5:5-11 - "Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth." <sup>6</sup> So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth." He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth: <sup>7</sup> Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket"; <sup>8</sup> then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. <sup>9</sup> Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.*

*<sup>10</sup> So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?" <sup>11</sup> And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."*

In the seventh prophetic vision, Zechariah saw an "ephah" - a large basket - with a woman sitting inside. A lead disc cover prevented the woman from escaping from the basket. Then, in the vision, two other women with wings picked up the basket containing the restrained woman and removed it to the land of Shinar, or Babylon. Notice - the Bible is not teaching here that there are female angels. Remember - this was a *vision*, and the record says that Zechariah saw "two women with wings like storks" - not two angels.

Only a brief interpretation of this vision was given to Zechariah, so what is its meaning? Wickedness, represented by the woman in the basket, is now under restraint and control, and eventually it will be removed and banished to the place where organized rebellion against God began, the Tower of Babel. It will end where it began, in Babel. Wickedness will

have run its full cycle. All organized evil will be removed from the land of Israel. In fact, worldwide wickedness will be banished.

This vision may be more than symbolic. The city of Babylon is being rebuilt today. Furthermore, Revelation 17-18 predict that in the End Times there will be a worldwide idolatrous system of religion, politics, and commerce, and it will be centered in Babylon. This false and evil system is pictured in Revelation as a woman, a prostitute called "Babylon the Great." But this system will be overthrown when the Lord returns to this earth and sets up His glorious millennial kingdom. What a great time that will be! What an encouraging vision for Israel - and for us as well! At the time of the end, wickedness will be removed and banished.

## Practical Application

**Remember - bigger and more beautiful is not necessarily better**

Zechariah 4:10: *"For who has despised the day of small things?"*

In verse 10, the "small things" were Zerubbabel's rebuilt Temple and its courtyards. This rebuilt Temple complex was nothing when compared to the size and grandeur of Solomon's Temple that was destroyed by the Babylonian armies.

But in essence, the Lord said: That's OK, because bigger and more beautiful is not necessarily better. It's the attitude of heart that courts. If the Lord is in it, and the work is done for the Lord and by the Lord, that's what really counts. Success is achieved *"not by might, and not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts"* (v6).

We all need to learn this lesson, don't we? We all tend to think that bigger and more beautiful church buildings are better – but not necessarily! Some of us think that big-name preachers and more talented Christian musicians and drama presentations are better - but not necessarily. We think that bigger and more organized ministries are better - but not necessarily. Bigger and more beautiful is ***not always better!***

Are you discouraged because you're involved in a small church or small ministry? Remember this passage from Zechariah! Size and grandeur is not what's critical. The Lord is looking for proper priorities and attitude of heart.

Is the Lord in the midst of your fellowship? Is He #1 in your church? Is your fellowship looking to the Lord, not to human might and power? Is your church or ministry bearing witness to the Light of the World, as emphasized in this vision? Then don't *"despise the day of small things"*!

Remember - bigger and more beautiful is ***not*** always better!