

Zechariah 4

1-2 It seems these supernatural events often drain the strength from the observer so that they faint or sleep and need assistance to take it all in. (Daniel 8:18) This Hebrew passage may be describing 7 lamps of 7 spouts making 49 lights as the ESV note suggests, or just seven single lights coming up from the bowl's rim. A first century menorah is depicted on Titus Triumphal Arch.

3-5 Obviously the two trees are symbolic of something. The angel is asking about all the objects in the vision. What are these? He won't give the answer until the last verse of the vision, heightening the importance and expectation.

6 The building of the Temple would not be accomplished with man's effort, but with the assistance of the Spirit of God. (Haggai 2:5) This is one of the most famous Old Testament verses that we apply to many situations. Zerubbabel laid the foundation but people probably were wondering if he had the leadership to complete the job. The Lord declares he doesn't! But the Spirit of the Lord will empower him to get the job done. We can say that about almost any task the Lord assigns to us, from preaching to witnessing our faith.

7-9 The mountain of obstacles (Ezra 4:1-5, 24; Isaiah 40:4) would be removed by the Spirit of the Lord. Zerubbabel would place the final capstone and people would invoke God's blessing "grace, grace" on the finished building. God can finish what He starts.

Are you discouraged about your walk with the Lord? It will only be brought to perfection by the Spirit of the Lord. He is faithful to finish what He starts. (Ezra 6:14-16; Philippians 1:6) Remember that we are God's temple today. (1Corinthians 3:16) "me" – the angel or the prophet?

10 Haggai 2:3-4 Some bemoaned the present temple size in comparison with Solomon's Temple. Holding the plumb line would mean the project was nearing completion. "These seven" the lamps? (2Chronicles 16:9) Some think the first step is no big deal, that things will end there. When God's in something, lookout! The Gospel message started to spread from just 12 disciples. (Matthew 12:31-32)

11-12 The Hebrew is unclear, but the idea is that the trees supply pure oil through two pipes to the bowl that feeds the wicks. (Joel 2:19,24) The idea of God given prosperity beyond their dreams is implied.

13-14 Zerubbabel and Jeshua/ Zechariah and Haggai/ and ultimately Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There are various interpretations offered. It may stand for the

kingly line and the priestly line of Israel that were united in Jesus. He is the One that brings us the Spirit without measure. (John 3:34)

Here is the sense of the vision. Though the piles of rubble and the opposition of their enemies appeared to offer no hope that Zerubbabel would complete what he started, God was reminding the nation that it isn't up to man. God would provide what was needed, His Spirit. If the Spirit of God moves it will be done. God promised a continual supply. If the tubes represent the priest and king, the oil represents the Spirit, the trees are God's abundance, then perhaps we are the wicks. Wicks just soak in the oil. They char but the flame really comes from the burning of the oil. The wick is but a channel to bring the fuel to the flame.

Whatever your calling, whether a king of Israel or a Sunday School teacher, you are but a wick. It's not about you. It's about the oil and the flame. You are just the conduit, like the pipes that bring the oil to the bowl.

For those of you who have never used lanterns let me explain the problem with wicks. They char on the end and when charred enough they cause smoke and the flame is not as bright. They must be put out and trimmed occasionally to work properly. That reminds us of the pruning from John 15:2. If we don't allow the LORD to trim us back, we end up hindering the light.

We never need to worry about the supply of oil running out. I had a friend in seminary who noticed that the themes of Scripture were repeated over and over. He asked what would there be to preach on after you had hit all those themes. No worry. There is no lack of oil. If you keep going to the Lord with your need, will His resources ever run out? It isn't possible. Don't just dip yourself in the oil and limit the flow to a minimum, immerse yourself in it. There is more than enough.

Jesus is the light of the world, but He also called us little wicks the light of the world. (Matthew 5:14) Stay in the oil. Let yourself be trimmed. Remember it isn't about your might or power, but the Spirit of the Lord that anything is accomplished.