

## Not by Might – Zechariah 4:1-10

**Zechariah 4:1-3** 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."

- Zechariah ministered as a prophet during the time that the remnant was released from Babylon to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the temple.
- God gave Zechariah a vision of the golden lampstand that was meant to stand in the temple. Since Zechariah and his people were there to rebuild the temple, it made sense that God spoke to them in images related to the temple.
  - **Revelation 1:12** Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,
  - **Revelation 1:20** The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.
  - The golden lampstand signifies the church. Since there are 7, it is the complete church, perfect and mature.
- The lamps required continual maintenance. Every morning, and every evening the high priest had to refill the oil, clean off all the soot, and trim all the wicks. Sometimes this required extinguishing it momentarily, like if the wicks needed to be replaced entirely.
- But in this vision, there is something new. Something not in the temple – 2 olive trees, with pipes going to the lamps.
  - These trees are just continually filling the lamps.
  - This is symbolic of the lamps no longer needing human attention.
  - The oil is representative of the Holy Spirit.
  - The flame of the Spirit is what brings light to the church, which in turn brings light to the world.

The Israelites, under the leadership of Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, were tasked with rebuilding the temple.

- This task seemed impossible. These were prisoners being released with very little. They have been in captivity for 70 years. Most of those experienced with the temple would have died, and those still alive are very old. Probably too old to really work construction.

**Zechariah 4:4-5** 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."

- This is the way we understand what God is saying. When it is unclear, ask Him!
- Yes – Zechariah was speaking to an angel, not God – but this was OT and he could not come before God. We can.

**Zechariah 4:6** 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.

- The angel does not spell out the symbolism for Zechariah.
- Instead, the angel reveals exactly what Zechariah needs to know:
- Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

### **Not by might nor by power**

Might = Chayil – Numbers, lots of manpower. An army.

Power = Koach – Strength or ability

If we have to do a construction project we would probably think we need 2 things:

1. Lots of manpower
2. People with strength and ability

**Essentially, this correlates to collective strength and resources and/or individual strength and abilities.**

- But this is not how God wants this accomplished

**How does God want to accomplish things on the earth?**

**Matthew 16:18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**Psalms 127:1** Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.

Even Paul says we can't even preach in our own strength:

**1 Corinthians 2:4-5** And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup> that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

**Will we trust in our own abilities and resources, or will we trust God?**

**Zechariah 4:7** "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!'" ' ' "

- There are obstacles in the way. Big obstacles, mountain sized.
- God declares that the obstacles will be removed and that Zerubbabel will be there for it's grand opening.
- But what is the victory shout? Mountains fall! Be removed! Victory is ours? No. it is Grace, grace!
- What a weird rally cry!
- But what is grace?
  - It is us receiving the benefits of the work that God is doing.
  - Grace is God's favor. It is an acknowledgement that it is God doing everything, not us. (We are saved by GRACE and not of ourselves).

- This goes back to verse 6. Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.

When the work is done through human might or power, we can take credit for it, but when the work is done by the continual supply of the Spirit, then it is all of grace and to God's glory.

**Zechariah 4:8-10** 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."

- Now It is declared that Zerubbabel started the work, and his hands will finish it.
- How is it grace if he is doing the work?
  - Grace is God doing it, but He often does it through us. It is a difficult concept, but it is real.
  - It is similar to resting in Him. Which often is not resting in our way of thinking.
  - Zerubbabel will actually do the work (well, direct it anyways). But it is still God that is doing it.
  - We do sometimes actually have to do stuff to be a part of grace. That seems contradictory, but it is not.
  - God's plans will be carried out, and we are given the opportunity to be a part of that.
- Who has despised the day of small things?
  - Specifically here the weak and poor beginnings of the temple
  - When we allow God to do the work, to build the house, sometimes He takes longer than we think it should.
  - The temptation is always to jump ahead and do it ourselves.
  - God is not interested in the speed of growth, or even of the size of growth. He is interested in our obedience and our surrender.

- When we allow God to complete His work, then all will know it is God that has done this.

## Story Time

**2 Chronicles 20:1-3, 12** It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. <sup>2</sup> Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* En Gedi). <sup>3</sup> And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah...

<sup>12</sup> O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You."

- Israel is about to face a battle that cannot be won by their strength.

**2 Chronicles 20:14-24** Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. <sup>15</sup> And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. <sup>16</sup> Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. <sup>17</sup> You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord *is* with you."

<sup>18</sup> And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.

<sup>20</sup> So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be

established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”<sup>21</sup> And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

“Praise the Lord, For His mercy *endures* forever.”

<sup>22</sup> Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. <sup>23</sup> For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them*. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

<sup>24</sup> So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

- Who fought this battle? God
- But the army of Judah still had to do somethings:
  - Wait until morning
    - When a smaller army faces a larger army, the smart play is a sneak attack in darkness.
  - Go
    - They did not know what to expect
  - Sing praises (vs22)
- The Israelites won this battle with no might or fight. It was by the Spirit of God.
- This is a great image of allowing God to work through us.

**Acts 16:23-32** – Paul & Silas were delivered miraculously from prison, and then brought salvation to the jailer's household.

In all 3 of these examples, God set forth a plan. He wanted the temple rebuilt. He wanted Israel to have that land and survive. He wanted the jailer to receive salvation.

- In all 3 examples, God did the work, but people were allowed to be a part of it. God's power was sufficient to do it without anyone, but He includes us in His work.
- This is Grace