

## Zechariah 4:1-14

June 15, 2022

### II. The Night Visions (1:7-6:15)

#### E. The Fifth Vision (4:1-14)

In the previous chapter – Zechariah’s fourth vision – we read of God’s acceptance and calling of the new high priest, Joshua. We also saw how Joshua pointed the way to the ultimate High Priest, the Messiah, Jesus. As we move into Zechariah 4 and the account of his fifth vision, we see the other *de facto* leader of Israel come into play: Zerubbabel.



Zechariah’s vision is an intriguing one, and it is described for us in vv. 2-3. Let’s start with the idea of a menorah, which has long been a symbol of Israel, including the modern state today. A lampstand, such as the one in the official seal of Israel, was present in the Temple, and is even seen in depictions of the Romans after they destroyed the Temple in 70 AD.

Yet, instead of having seven lamps affixed to a base, Zechariah’s lampstand has a bowl positioned on top of it, which supplies the lamps with oil. Depending on how we read the Hebrew, each lamp has either a dedicated pipe coming from the bowl, or perhaps a total of seven pipes providing oil to each lamp. As if this vision wasn’t fanciful enough, there were two olive trees on either side, continually supplying oil to the whole apparatus!

Zechariah, confused at what he’s seeing (and who would blame him?!), asks in vv. 11-12, *what are these two olive trees?* In v. 14, the angel identifies them as *two anointed ones*. In the context, these two supplying oil to the lamp of Israel were Joshua and Zerubbabel, the religious and civil leaders, respectively.

Now that we know what the vision is, let’s consider the question why? In the Word of God, lampstands regularly symbolize those who give light to the world (cf. Matt 5:14-16; Rev 1:20; 2:5; 11:4-6). At this point in time, Israel was God’s chosen representatives, and the olive trees of Joshua and Zerubbabel continually “fed” oil to the lamp so that their light would once again shine brightly from the city of Jerusalem and its Temple.

Even in this vision, we have a glimpse at the Messiah to come. Jesus, *the true Light* (John 1:6-9), has already come and been installed as the Great High Priest. When He comes again, He will also rule as King over the earth! Whereas under the Old Covenant, no one man could occupy both offices of priest and king, Jesus’ New Covenant knows no such limitation (cf. Zech 6:13).

As the fourth vision focused on Joshua, so this fifth vision focuses on Zerubbabel. His efforts for the Temple will ultimately be fruitful, yet *not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit* (4:6). We also would do well to remember that the success or failure of our ministries do not rest upon our abilities, or eloquence, or committees, or programs, but upon the Lord’s power to bring about His purposes (cf. Acts 2:47).

Indeed, should Zerubbabel grow discouraged, the Lord offers encouragement in v. 9: *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall also finish it*. There will be those who regret despising *the day of small things* (v. 10). We read in Ezra 6:15 that *the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius*. The Lord’s sovereign oversight always prevails, scanning to *and fro throughout the whole earth* (Zech 4:10). What seems small and insignificant, the Lord will one day bring to full fruition!