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## **"MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE."**

SEPT. 17. – ZECH. 4:1-14.

**"Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."**

ZECHARIAH the Prophet was a priest as well, and was a young man at the time of his return under the governor, Zerubbabel, from the Babylonian captivity. As a prophet he was the successor of Haggai, who was now old, and his career as such began in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, and continued about two years. It was part of his mission to encourage Zerubbabel and all who labored in the construction of the Temple, and who were beset by innumerable oppositions, difficulties, etc. – Neh. 12:4-7; Zech. 1:1; Ezra 5:1; 6:14; 7:1.

There are two general views respecting this and [R2521 : page 222] all prophecies; one of these, the one favored by the "higher critics," is that the prophets of the Old Testament Scriptures were men of high moral attainment and faith in God's promises, who realized in advance of others and more keenly the true situation of things, and of their own volition, prompted by their own faith and zeal, exhorted the people, in parables that would be helpful, instructive, encouraging, etc. The other view is that God had the faith in his own promises and arrangements, and that he miraculously operated upon certain chosen persons, so that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy spirit" – things which were not their own thoughts, but which encouraged themselves and inspired their own faith and zeal, as well as the faith and zeal of all about them. This view of the prophets and their prophecies gives the glory to God, and makes of the words of the prophets messages from God, and hence authoritative and reliable, while the fervent utterances of the very best men could not be considered reliable; but, as we all know, are frequently faulty, because

of the fallibility of their authors. The Apostle Peter asserts this last view of the matter, and contradicts the former one. – 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

Any other view than the latter would make the prophecies valueless as prophecies to the Church of to-day. It is not until we realize that the prophecies, altho having some force and application to the times in which they were written, have a special force and application to us, as the antitypical Israel, and to the building of the antitypical Temple, that we get the true force, value and beauty of these prophecies – a force and meaning that is entirely lost to those who take the higher criticism view, and reduce the prophets of olden times to the level of street-corner preachers, who expressed truth in crude forms and figures, blended with considerable of untruth and human misjudgment.

Altogether the Lord gave the Prophet Zechariah seven different visions; and the fifth of the series is the subject of this lesson. It showed a large golden candlestick, or, as we would say, lampstand, with a large central bowl, and seven branches therefrom, each of which terminated in a lamp. The prophet, no doubt, was somewhat familiar with such a lamp, since it in many particulars corresponded to the one made by divine direction, and kept in the holy apartment of the Tabernacle, and later of the Temple. The Prophet knew that this lamp represented in some manner divine favor, enlightenment and blessing as connected with the promises made to Israel. But the lampstand of the vision had a peculiarity all its own, for the Prophet beheld also two olive trees connected with it by golden pipes. (Vs. 12.) Thus the Lord indicated that the supply of oil for Israel's candlestick and the supply of Israel's light was an inexhaustible one.

No doubt the Prophet himself, and those in that day who heard his prophecy, drew from this vision a considerable amount of blessing and encouragement. To them it would speak of the Lord's continued favor with them, notwithstanding the persecutions and difficulties on every hand. Quite probably they interpreted these two olive trees to represent in some manner the kingly and the priestly offices in Israel, which

offices were now represented by Zerubbabel, the governor, and Joshua, the high priest, God's special representatives in the work of restoring Israel. No doubt the Lord wished those to whom Zechariah prophesied to get just such encouragement, and arranged that these two leaders of the people should be types of the Royal Priest – Christ Jesus.

Nevertheless, we believe that there is a much higher significance to the vision than this, for we find, not only the golden candlestick, but also the two olive trees, mentioned six hundred years later, in our Lord's revelation given to the Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos: and this is conclusive proof that the vision was more than merely a parable by Zechariah, and farther reaching than merely the encouragement of the builders of the typical Temple. We will not here enter into the subject in detail, but merely call attention to the fact that the seven lamps or candlesticks shown in united form to the Prophet are shown as separate and distinct in the Book of Revelation, where each of the seven Churches, or the seven epochs of the history of the Church, is represented by a separate candlestick, or lamp. – Rev. 1:12,20; 2:5; 11:4.

The message sent to Zerubbabel, the governor, no doubt carried with it the intended blessing and encouragement to that officer, and was in full accord with the candlestick vision. He was to learn, and all the people with him, that the success of their work was not by the *might*, influence and favor of the Persian monarch to whom they were subject, nor by the *power* and numbers and ability of themselves, as laborers and defenders of their cause against their nearby neighbors, the Samaritans. They were to learn that the success of their efforts should be attributed to God, whose holy spirit, power, influence, would guide and control the affairs of that nation, and accomplish in his own time and way the gracious things which he had promised them.

"Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

This probably referred to the mountain of difficulty which stood in the way of the Lord's work, and which had for some time prevented its completion, and [R2522 : page 223] at the present moment was a serious menace. The Lord's assurance, through the Prophet, was that the Temple should be completed, shall be finished; and not only so, but that Zerubbabel, who had laid the foundation stone, should also have the honor and privilege of completing it with the head-stone or cap-stone, and that when completed there would be great rejoicing and appreciation of the work, acclamations of "Grace, grace, unto it!" In harmony with this, Israel was exhorted, "Despise not the day of small things" – small beginnings, feeble efforts, discouraging conditions, etc., – but to consider Zerubbabel the master-builder, the plummet-user, and to recognize the Lord's wisdom and power with him.

But the language used in this connection is entirely too strong to be applied solely to the insignificant little temple built by Zerubbabel and his associates. As we have seen that the former part of this vision applied to fleshly Israel only typically, so we see that this part also applies to Israel, and to Zerubbabel and to Joshua only typically.

Looking for the antitype, we find it in Spiritual Israel, the spiritual Temple, which God is building. In Zerubbabel and Joshua we find the kingly and priestly offices of our Lord Jesus represented in two parts – the word Joshua in the Hebrew signifies *Savior*, and in the Greek is *Jesus*, and the name Zerubbabel, as we have already seen, signifies *Born in Babylon*. The particular time typified would be the present time, when God's people are returning from Babylon, and when the work of Temple-reconstruction is in progress.

Our Lord Jesus himself laid the foundation of the spiritual Temple, and he himself will complete it as its top-stone, and it shall be acclaimed glorious, not only by men, but by angels, in God's due time. The work is in his hand, and altho from outward appearances at the present time there may seem to be discouragements, and little progress may seem to have been made, yet his servants should be of good

courage and should remember that their victory is to come, not through human might, popularity and influence, nor by their own power, but by the Lord's spirit. The possession of his faith and his spirit will give us the victory over the world, the flesh and the Adversary, and make us more than conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood. Our struggles, our efforts, our building, are all on a discouragingly small and insignificant scale, but we see not and build not the real Temple, the living stones. We see each other according to the flesh, to some extent, despite our efforts to know no man after the flesh, and to recognize each other only as new creatures in Christ. We look more or less, however unintentionally, at the things that are seen, which are temporal and imperfect. We think more or less of the work of construction from the standpoint of numbers, influence, outward polish, etc. Instead, we should be looking unto Jesus, the author of our faith, who laid the foundation-stone, and who is to be the finisher of it, and is the cap, the climax, of his great and wonderful work, the new creation in glory. – Heb. 12:2.

The "great mountain" of the present is the great kingdom of the Evil One, which has the appearance of being immovable, but which now speedily, in the great time of trouble and "shaking," shall pass away, leaving a plain, a highway of holiness on which whosoever wills of the world of mankind may return by restitution to full harmony with God under the great Prophet, Priest and King.

The antitypical Temple will be complete when the power of the most high, represented by the oil of the candlestick, the holy spirit, shall rear up the living Temple in resurrection power (from the dead) in the likeness of our Lord, in glory, honor and immortality. Then the glory of the Lord will fill the spiritual Temple! Then will be the shoutings, "Grace, grace, unto it!" Then will begin the great work of blessing all the families of the earth, and the blessing shall flow from this spiritual Temple, a river of water of life, clear as crystal, – as seen in our lesson of August 20.

From this standpoint only, as applicable to the antitypical Zerubbabel, can we understand the reference to the "seven eyes" of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth. We can see that the eyes of the Lord (his perfect and much diversified wisdom) are necessary to be exercised throughout the whole world in connection with the work of preparing the living stones and rearing up the antitypical Temple in the hands of the antitypical Zerubbabel, but we could not see how divine wisdom would be necessary in all parts of the earth to take supervision of the building of the little typical temple by the typical Zerubbabel.

No one can rightly appreciate the hopes and ambitions aroused in the minds of the Jewish nation by the Lord through the holy prophets, except as he realizes the fact that Spiritual Israel has taken the place in large measure of natural Israel, whose branches were broken off, that we who were of the Gentiles might be grafted in and become heirs of the chiefest, the heavenly, the spiritual features of those promises. Nevertheless, we are to remember that there are also earthly features of those promises, which the Apostle assures us are still sure, and reserved for the natural seed of Abraham, and through the latter to extend to all the families of the earth, that whosoever will may become of the earthly seed of Abraham: for Abraham's seed is to be of two parts – "as the stars of heaven" and "as the sand of the seashore." – Rom. 11:26-33; Gen. 22:17.

### **SEPT. 24TH. – REVIEW.**

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**Golden Text. – "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." – Psa. 34:7.**

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