

high priest of the real priesthood. The people of God are at once the temple of His dwelling and the priests of His service.

It is in that day, *ie.* the day of the coming of the living stone and the true priest, that God will actually remove the sins of His people. In that day also the people of God will invite their neighbors to share in the bounties of the Messianic kingdom.

The language here is reminiscent of *Micah 4:4* in which the Messianic age is presented in terms of spiritual idealism.

Two characteristics of Messiah's day stand out in this passage. It is the day of cleansing from iniquity and it is the day of inviting others to share the blessings of God. Surely Jesus must have had this passage and others like it in mind when He said that the entire message of the Old Testament is summed up in His death and resurrection on the one hand and the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in every nation on the other. (*Luke 24:44-49*)

### Chapter XXX—Questions

#### A Vision of the High Priest

1. In the fourth vision, the attention shifts to\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Describe the fourth vision.
3. The forgiveness of the Jews was conditional upon their\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jehovah's willingness to forgive His people is related to what larger purpose?
5. Discuss the Biblical significance of the term "The Branch."
6. Who is identified as the chief corner stone in the temple?
7. Discuss Zechariah's fourth vision in relation to I Peter 2:4-5.
8. What two characteristics of Messiah's day stand out in Zechariah, chapter three?

### CHAPTER XXXI

#### A VISION OF A MENORAH AND OLIVE TREES

##### ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 4:1-14

RX . . . And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me,

What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and, behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are upon the top thereof; and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shouting of Grace unto it. Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered the second time, and said, unto him, What are these two olive-branches, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

LXX . . . And the angel that talked with me returned, and awakened me, as when a man is awakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and its bowl upon it, and seven lamps upon it, and seven oil funnels to the lamps upon it: and two olive-trees above it, one on the right of the bowl, and one on the left. And I inquired, and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these things, my lord? And the angel that talked with me answered, and spoke to me, saying, Knowest thou not what these things are? And I said, no, my lord. And he answered and spoke to me, saying, This is the word of the Lord of Zorobabel, saying, Not by mighty power, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord Almighty. Who art thou, the great mountain before Zorobabel, that thou shouldest prosper? whereas I will bring out the stone of the inheritance, the grace of it the equal of my grace. And

the word of the Lord came to me, saying, The hands of Zorobabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall finish it: and thou shalt know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to thee. For who has despised the small days? surely they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet of tin in the hand of Zorobabel: these are the seven eyes that look upon all the earth. And I answered, and said to him, What are these two olive-trees, which are on the right and left hand of the candlestick? And I asked the second time, and said to him, What are the two branches of the olive-trees that are by the side of the two golden pipes that pour into and communicate with the golden oil funnels? And he said to me, Knowest thou not what these are? and I said, No, my lord. And he said, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

### COMMENTS

Zechariah's fifth vision presents the rebuilding of the temple against the backdrop of two traditional symbols of Israel, the menorah, or seven branched candlestick, and the olive trees.

Again, as in the first vision especially, the record divides itself naturally along the lines of the prophet's questions and the angel's answers. In this case, the angel seems somewhat surprised that the prophet could not answer his own question.

(Verse 1) The angel rouses Zechariah from the ecstasy of the previous vision to show him the present one.

### WHAT THE PROPHET SAW . . . v. 2-3

The seven branched lampstand or menorah became the symbol of Israel at the time of the building of the tabernacle. Moses was instructed by God to place the menorah as the only source of light in the tent of worship. (*Exodus 25:31-40*) Made of fine gold, it consisted of a shaft five feet tall. At three points on the shaft, two branches at each point curved out and upward from the central shaft. The branches so formed, rose to the level of the central shaft, thus forming, with the shaft, a cluster of seven candlesticks. The cluster measured three feet six inches across at the top. Its seven wicks were fed from a bowl of oil which formed its base.

The menorah provided the sole source of light in the tabernacle, the fact which gave it its symbolic significance. As it stood in the south of the Holy Place, directly opposite the table of showbread, it illuminated both the table and the altar of incense which stood on the

west side of the Holy Place just outside the veil which separated this first sanctuary from the Holy of Holies.

The menorah had occupied a similar station in the original temple where ten such lights illuminated the sanctuary. Along with the other sacred implements these menorahs had been returned by Cyrus at the end of the Babylonian exile. The lampstand would take its place in the new temple when the re-construction was finally completed.

In Zechariah's vision the form of the Menorah is changed. Rather than a single shaft with its branches forming a single seven branched lampstand, the symbolic menorah of the vision is constructed in such a way that each branch of the main shaft forms the center shaft of a smaller menorah. The effect is seven smaller menorahs branching off from the main menorah. The intent is obviously seven times seven, which is an emphatic statement of absolute perfection, God's perfect word to Israel.

#### WHAT THE MENORAH IN THE VISION MEANT . . . v. 4-10

(Verses 4-5) These verses form the bridge between the vision and its meaning as interpreted by the angel. First the prophet asks the meaning of the vision. Then the angel asks him if he doesn't know the answer to his own question. The prophet answers in the negative. The next verse marks the beginning of the angel's answer.

(Verse 6) The multiple menorah of the vision represents the word of God to Zerubbabel and through him to the people. The multiplied perfection symbolized by the forty-nine lamps springing from a central shaft emphasize the correctness of that word.

In the vision attention is called to the bowl of the central shaft out of which the lamps originated. (v. 2-3) The bowl was a container for the oil which fueled the lamps. In the original menorah of the tabernacle, specific instructions were given concerning this oil container.

The oil contained in this bowl symbolized the Spirit of God which was in reality the source of divine illumination just as the oil was the ultimate source of the light of the menorah.

It is to this that the angel directs the prophet in verse six. "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith Jehovah of hosts.*"

This message is addressed specifically to Zerubbabel as chief civil authority. He is to rebuild the temple not by the use of an army (might) or by (human) power but by the Spirit of God. *Haggai* has pointed out that the work was to be done by the Spirit (*Haggai* 2:5). Therefore Zerubbabel is not to be discouraged by the human weaknesses with which he must contend.

As we have seen, these weaknesses largely manifested themselves as fear. There was a desire on the part of the people to build a wall before the temple, lest they be attacked by their neighbors. There was a desire to tend first to business and farming lest their physical needs not be met during the building. God will have them know that military protection and the supplying of their own needs through their own efforts are not necessary. If they will apply themselves, His Spirit will supply every protection and need.

It is appropriate that this message be addressed to Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was governor of Judah, appointed by Darius. He is mentioned in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai, as well as Zechariah. From these books we know that it was he who, with Joshua the high priest, led the little band of released captives from Babylon and began rebuilding the temple in the second year of Darius.

According to Josephus and the apocraphal book of *I Ezdras*, he was a personal friend of Darius, having won the king's friendship by winning in his presence a contest to determine what was strongest in all the world . . . wine, kings, women, or truth. Zerubbabel demonstrated that truth was strongest of all and so won the king's admiration. With it he won permission to go up to Jerusalem and build the temple, the center for the spreading of truth.

Along with the permission to rebuild the temple, Zerubbabel was given the office of governor, with the stipulation that he also serve as *taxshabba*, or tax collector, sending Judean tribute to the Medo-Persian king.

With all his "connections" in high places, along with his own dynamic personality and wisdom, there is no doubt the governor needed Zechariah's reminder that God's work does not depend upon such things but upon His Spirit.

Having made Joshua fit to serve as religious authority in the preceding vision, God now prepares Zerubbabel to serve as civil authority. In the eighth and final vision these two offices will be symbolically united as one to be filled ultimately by the Messiah.

(Verses 7-10) Trusting the divine power of the Spirit of God, Zerubbabel is to find the great mountain of difficulty in rebuilding suddenly become a level plain. He would have the honor of completing the temple which he had begun and of placing the final coping stones to the accompaniment of the cheers and praises of the people.

Recognizing that the work has been completed in the power of the Spirit rather than human might and power, the people will shout,

"grace, grace," when the chisled top stone is brought forth and put in place as the final act of building.

Those who have "despised small things" (v. 10), *ie.* who have looked with contempt on the beginning of reconstruction, will be silenced when the final stone is placed. "*Thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you.*" There can be no doubt of the divine origin of prophecy when it is fulfilled before their eyes. Isaiah, prior to the captivity, had predicted ". . . saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built." (*Isaiah 44:26*)

In the beginning of the reconstruction, some had despised the footers of the second temple because it seemed the end product would be inferior to that of Solomon (*Ezra 3:1-2*). These shall be won to optimism when they see the governor himself at work with the plummet in his hand. They will recognize in the plumbing of the work by Zerubbabel the all seeing eyes of Jehovah (v. 10(b)). He whose eyes "run to and fro through the whole earth," *ie.* who is in constant command of all things everywhere, will also be watching this work.

#### WHAT THE OLIVE TREES MEANT . . . v. 11-14

The explanation of the two olive trees (v. 3), as well as that of the menorah, begins with a question. This time the question is directed to the angel by Zechariah. The trees stood on either side of the menorah and the prophet did not grasp their significance.

(Verses 12-13) Before the angel answers, Zechariah repeats the question, *this* time noting that the two olive trees are pouring oil into the menorah.

Once more the angel indicates surprise, or at least concern, that the prophet cannot answer his own question. One is reminded of Jesus' response to Nicodemus, "Art thou a teacher of Israel and understandest not these things." (*John 3:10*)

In verse fourteen we come to the angel's answer. The two olive trees are "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The two anointed ones are Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor. These have been set apart by God to the task of re-establishing His people in the holy land. Through them the power of God's Spirit will complete the task of reconstruction. This is apparent from the fact almost overlooked by Zechariah in asking for an explanation, namely that the oil which supplied the menorah was being poured out by the two olive trees.

A word must be said here in regard to the Spirit of God in this text. One of the objections of the Jews through the ages to the Chris-

tian faith has been their inability to accept the so-called doctrine of the trinity. They have the impression that Christians worship three gods.

If we are to take our understanding of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit from the traditional creeds of Romanism and Protestantism, the charge certainly seems a valid one. Such credal statements, however, are not Scripture.

In Zechariah are references to God from the view of three manifestations. These in effect amount not to three gods, but to one God in three relationships to His people. None would question that the frequent references to Jehovah in Zechariah answer to the manifestation of deity commonly called "the Father."

In *Zechariah 2:10(b)*, Jehovah speaks. The conclusion of His statement in *2:11(b)* is "*and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee.*" Jehovah presents Himself as both sent and sender! This is precisely the relationship expressed by Isaiah and repeated by Matthew, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name, Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

In Zechariah, the Spirit is added to these relationships of God to His people. Chapter four, verse six, indicates that the rebuilding of the temple is to be done by the Spirit of Jehovah. In the symbolism of Zechariah's vision this Spirit is poured into the work through His two anointed servants. There is no essential difference between the Spirit of God here and the Spirit of God promised to His people as a presence under the New Covenant.

The Spirit Who directed the re-building of the second temple through Joshua and Zerubbabel, today directs the building of the church through Jesus in Whom the civil and priestly offices are combined as the Anointed One. (cp. *Ephesians 3:14-ff*)

## Chapter XXXI—Questions

### A Vision of a Menorah and Olive Trees

1. What is the backdrop against which Zechariah's fifth vision is presented?
2. Describe Zechariah's fifth vision?
3. Describe the menorah used in the tabernacle.
4. Describe the menorah of Zechariah's vision.
5. What is symbolized by the multiple menorah of the vision?

6. The oil contained in the bowl of the menorah symbolized \_\_\_\_\_ as the source of God's light to His people.
7. The human weaknesses of those to whom Zechariah spoke were manifest largely as \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Show the appropriateness of this part of Zechariah's message being addressed to Zerubbabel.
9. What was Zerubbabel's relationship to Darius?
10. Along with permission to build the temple, Zerubbabel was charged by Darius to \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Who are "those who have despised small things?"
12. What is the meaning of the two olive trees in Zechariah's vision?
13. How does the vision of the Menorah and the olive trees relate to the Jewish objection to the doctrine of the trinity?
14. In the symbolism of this vision, the Spirit is poured into the work through \_\_\_\_\_.
15. The Spirit who directed the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel also directs us today in the building of \_\_\_\_\_.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### A VISION OF A FLYING SCROLL

#### ZECHARIAH 5:1-4

RV . . . Then again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on the one side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on the other side according to it. I will cause it to go forth, saith Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall abide in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

LXX . . . And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a flying sickle. And he said to me. What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying sickle, of the length of twenty cubits, and of the breadth of ten cubits. And he said to me, This is the curse that goes forth over the face of the whole earth: for every thief shall be punished with death on this side, and every false swearer shall be punished