

Golden oil for light and power

Part 1

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[00:00:01] From the last but one book in the Old Testament, Zechariah. How thankful I was for that introduction this afternoon to the subject of this evening, the fourth chapter of Zechariah.

And the angel that talked with me came again and waked me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep and said unto me, What seest thou?

And I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof, [00:01:01] and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl and the other upon the left side thereof. So 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 be? And I said, No, my Lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

Who art thou, O great mountain?

Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.

[00:02:02] And he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, that was the Lord's house, his hands shall also finish it.

And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you.

For who hath despised the day of small things?

For they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.

With those seven they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

[00:03:05] 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 again and said unto him, What be

these two olive branches, which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?

And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

[00:04:02] My subject tonight is Golden Oil for Light and Power.

Zechariah wrote in a very difficult day.

And I wouldn't like you to think that by any means I know even as much as I ought about prophecy. But I do note that Zechariah wrote in a day like ours, a day of small things.

In spite of the great advances in the last few years, of technical knowledge and science, for the people of God it's a difficult day.

I'm also well aware, and would like to make it clear at the beginning, that Zechariah really wrote about the dear earthly people of God.

[00:05:08] And that he had them in mind throughout, perhaps. But I submit that because he wrote in a day like ours, right in the center of this beautiful book, there's a message for us.

There's a kernel. As there always is, even in the scripture, there are nuggets of gold hidden in all else that is written.

There they are. They need looking for.

All good things need looking for, and need our attention. But there they are. It's not impossible to find them. But what a sweep Zechariah takes.

[00:06:01] He starts writing about the oppressors of the people of God.

But he takes an onward look, which only God himself can do. But God is so gracious and good, that he loves to open the windows of heaven and pour a blessing down. But he loves also to throw back the shutters and anoint our eyes, so that we too can see as he sees into the future, insofar as we are able, which isn't very far compared with God.

But Zechariah therefore writes first of all about the oppressors. And then he takes a look right down the ages, to far beyond the day in which we live. And most theological students look upon, I think, look upon Zechariah [00:07:04] as, well, in the past, in the dusty past, probably not to be understood, but known. His main theme is the future.

When this same Jesus, that some of his loved ones had the mortification of sea, leave their very midst, it wasn't that he vanished out of their sight as just before, but here they saw him go, in physical fact, rise and into the heavens. He did the kind of thing that men with their expensive rockets, that are only just learning how to do, with a lot of clouds of dust and fire and flame and failure. But Jesus just

went.

My dear young brother and sister, if you're intrigued with the advances of this world, [00:08:02] I'll show you in the Bible even I, things far more marvellous far long ago.

And they're only a portent of things to come, because the angel said this same Jesus, which you have seen going to heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go. Notice the particular precision.

And Zechariah painted this scene.

It hasn't happened yet. May not for quite a while, but it will.

The first half of Zechariah is what the writers call apocalyptic.

It is a series of visions.

There's no other minor prophet that had a series of visions. [00:09:04] The major prophets, yes. But I noticed that Zechariah had a sort of compression of Daniel stroke revelation.

It's a prece of the wonders that one reads of in those truly wonderful books.

Let me just try and outline them.

Bear with me as I try to pull into a few words so great a subject. Seven visions I make it.

They can look like eight, but there were seven. The first thing that Zechariah saw was, apart from his guide on the horse standing beneath the myrtle trees, Don't let us ever say that the Bible is a dull, dark, dry book. [00:10:04] What a picture it calls up of the rider sitting on a red horse beneath the myrtle trees. This was the guide that Zechariah saw. But behind him was the vision of three riderless horses standing there in a row.

To Zechariah they meant power.

The horse was the fastest thing that man knew in the way of transport, and I've been in transport all my life, the fastest thing in the way of transport until about a hundred and fifty years ago, till the steam engine. It was also powerful, the most powerful thing he could stride when he went to conquer.

And the scripture uses the horse as a symbol of senseless, brutish power. Oh, they're lovely creatures, but they don't think very well. [00:11:03] They're full of power, but they need direction. They are brute beasts.

And there arrayed before Zechariah was a picture, in vision form, of the oppressors of God's people, how he must have felt it.

There were really four great oppressors, as you know, four great powers that were used of God to bring to heel his own chosen people.

That's a solemn thought.

That's what made it a day of small things for them. We might bow our heads and weep as we think that we too, the people of God, have needed the government of God to bring us to a day of small things. I'm afraid this is so.

[00:12:01] Babylon had gone when Zechariah wrote. Persia was there. Persia seemed kinder. It was followed by Greece and followed by Rome. And there they stood.

Next, Zechariah saw, number two, he saw four horns which had been pushing about the people of God, the four great empires that God had permitted to oppress his people and rule them.

But there's a hint of deliverance attached to this picture that Zechariah saw in that four carpenters, four smiths or artificers, I like the word carpenters, for I remember that the blessed Saviour had that craft as a man.

[00:13:02] But God had his carpenters to cut down the horns. The world may never boast, it may boast, but it's an empty boast, that it has the situation in hand. It never, never has. God has his servants who, in due course, will cut down every kind of power except that which comes from above. I've had a third vision I like. It's a man with a measuring line measuring Jerusalem. Measuring Jerusalem for new garments, the garments of salvation.

More than a hint of future blessing here. And then comes the fourth vision which is of Joshua, the high priest in filthy garments. I don't know any other person but God [00:14:04] writing a book about his own doings who would be so frank as that to say that his high priest stood there in filthy garments but our God calls a spade a spade and he calls a sinner a sinner however high positioned he may be. But dear Joshua was cleansed in the vision. It's a lesson in cleansing.

We heard about that this afternoon and I was so glad. It's only the precious, precious blood of Jesus shed on Calvary's cross that cleanses sinners. There is no other way to it. And if this is the first time you've been in here let me ask you to listen whilst I say that there is no possible other way of getting rid of sin or sins [00:15:02] than by the precious, precious blood of Jesus. But here buried in the Old Testament prophecy we have a vision which shows that it was possible for God, and God only to cleanse this man.

And after cleansing, after the vision of the cleansing you realise I'm skipping these with almost indecent haste I rely upon your past knowledge or your future reading to put them into perspective. But after this vision, vision number five we get something which is our subject tonight and the subject is witness and power for service.

Light for witness, power for service. And then another vision, number six. This is unpleasant again.

After such a seeming step to deliverance [00:16:02] we get a roll of judgment, a flying roll swift, written, devastating judgment against wickedness.

Wickedness portrayed visually to Zechariah by a woman sitting in an ephah with a lead weight on top all with their significance but suddenly as you translate them in the light of all scripture you find that that's indeed a symbol of commercial and moral wickedness held in check and then the law produced

for judgment.

Well now this day of grace is indeed a day of grace [00:17:06] God hasn't finished with this world and there's the awful thought that judgment is now held over this world.

It's a written, substantiated promise that it will be judged.

Hence of course the glory of the day in which we live small as it may be, great is the opportunity to escape impending judgment.

Seven and last, four chariots four objects of power four illustrations of power and oppression Zechariah was not to conclude his visions without a glimpse that as at the beginning there were horsemen [00:18:04] so at the end there will be reinforced horsemen four great nations with all their power cast perhaps into the hands of one great ruthless power the revived power of Rome.

This is future.

This is more of a scourge to God's own people than anything that has yet been including the Nazi ovens and sharply and shortly at the end of chapter six at the end of that vision there comes and it gives place to another kingdom Christ's kingdom, Christ's kingdom but it's a kingdom of power and Zechariah, Zechariah's pictures [00:19:01] the vision he was given the story all before him in living action closes and Zechariah finishes his book with even more words of the usual prophetic description warning, promise, coaxing by now, chapter four right in the middle of these wonderful visions is our message for tonight Joshua the high priest had been cleansed God loves to cleanse what amazes me is that he offers in this day and age to everyone free cleansing marvelous cleansing [00:20:01] clean every wit the vilest sinner can be if he will come to God for cleansing but so many of us leave it at that we get cleansed in the sense of being forgiven our sins washed away and we relax instead of course of going on to work and to witness and therefore I believe chapter four begins that the angel came and waked me he waked me up how it reminds us of Paul who said it is high time to awake out of sleep even the sleep of those who are relaxed [00:21:03] because they are forgiven who are now on their way to heaven clean every wit far are we to worry about isn't it a delightful, wonderful thing to have got such a salvation nay, such a saviour let us rest in him let us enjoy him let us sit and meditate yes but let's wake up and get on as well and he says he needed waking up even Zechariah he was awake as a man out of deep sleep and then he saw he saw a golden candlestick a lampstand and it seems to me as we read that he was completely bewildered by the glory of it [00:22:01] it was a sevenfold, of course, a lampstand with seven lamps it was typically Jewish but you do remember, don't you that the revelation starts with a picture of a lampstand and a sevenfold testimony and say our brothers in our bible readings and the various assemblies here represented as light bearers witnesses for God in this world tah but it's a sorry story even in the revelation at the end of the New Testament with all the blessing that's been poured out on the people of God it's a sorry story and so it ever will be a sorry story when once we take over that's why I'd love to just direct my attention stand along with me, your attention once again to this, this Enzericher [00:23:03] this golden lampstand why golden? it's the metal that is used in scripture time and time and time again from the early chapters of the Genesis to Revelation depicting the shining imperishable attractive expensive character of God inestimable tah, they say, there have been more valuable metals discovered now there are more expensive things than gold I notice that the best countries are still on the gold standard that it still rules the banking world that it's the countries that have they make gold in guts, in actual fact [00:24:03] in their bank cellars that are still down the top but let's have done with that, I

wouldn't care if lead took its place in the world in the scripture it's gold and it always speaks of divinity and this witnessing lampstand had the hallmark of divinity on it and what can that be? it was a picture to Zechariah it was a picture to him of the future glory of God's earthly people who one day were really going to have the hallmark of the holiness of God stamped on them, they are but has it no message for us tonight cleansed? yes it has [00:25:01] it's the assembly we may take it as a picture let's take it as a picture I'll take the responsibility for suggesting it a picture of the real assembly on earth without the labels without the divisions without the church names the assembly made up of every cleansed soul but you say you can't see them God can and this is God's vision and the sooner we begin to get a sight and I mean a real and practical sight of how God sees his people in this world the sooner we shall come a little nearer to fulfilling his desires on testimony, on witness but this was something [00:26:02] there was something very unusual about this lampstand there weren't any obvious priests there was no man creeping up and pouring oil into the dishes there was no man snuffing the flame to see that it burned no, no, it wasn't left to man scientific development there it was every separate light fed by seven golden pipes pipes that in themselves shone with the divine hallmark the service pipes were even of God and what fed the pipes?

I happen to be connected in some way with a vast importation of oil in spite of all the power of all kinds [00:27:01] oil is required in this country in greater and greater and greater quantities how do they get it? they bore into the earth they pull it out to make a terrific cost they even bore into the sea to pull it out at terrific cost they push it through their man-made refineries until they've got it to the point when it will light and when it will explode with power oh, it's an important commodity but this oil or this oil it came naturally there were olive trees producing it by a means that man couldn't invent he made the olive trees there they were there they were constantly producing secretly from a secret source [00:28:02] by a means that man couldn't describe or begin to understand but they produced it all the time poured it through the pipes into the candlestick there was the flame of witness Zechariah had some questions to ask I think by this time so have you I certainly have but Zechariah was told these are the two witnesses I don't know whether Zechariah understood but we should understand because in the 11th chapter of Revelation in I think verse 4 yes there are those two last day witnesses in about the time that Zechariah was being given a vision of those witnesses for God who suffered so much they are described as the two olive trees the sons of oil the reference you know I can see brothers nodding their heads [00:29:02] yes the reference is there I feel a little safer now but there it is in the word of God what's that got to do with us tonight justice justice as I see it that you and I you and I can be well we are we have been placed into the onerous position of witnesses for God in this world and where are we going to get the power from where are we going to get the light from well later on we come to the fact that not only was the candlestick of gold not only were the pipes of gold [00:30:02] but the oil itself was gold golden oil it says you look at it verse 12 golden oil what does that mean well it's the holy spirit of God not just oil but golden oil God himself the holy spirit of God with the hallmark of divinity on himself if we may reverently say so and on everything he does my anxiety tonight is that I am dull how I need it that any witness I am able to make that any work I am able to do for my saviour having been wakened up after being cleansed should be in the power [00:31:01] of the holy spirit that I shouldn't depend upon man's inventions in my witness of what I really do for God depend upon it that though we may use what man invents and God I believe uses them God could use these things tonight but he doesn't depend on these things for the result and neither should we our dependence should be on that which we cannot manufacture on that which we don't take out of the earth and refine but that which we receive by the mysterious roots down in the earth well here of course I told you that Zechariah was writing for God's earthly people he got an earthly vision but you can draw your golden oil [00:32:04] from your source of power in the place where your roots are down and your roots are in heaven your roots are above what are your roots? what are mine? my affections there is

nothing more important in my being than my affections my body will crumble and disappear it's already started and my name will perish in this world but my affections especially when I've been cleansed why they're fastened and rooted in my saviour and he's in heaven he's a heavenly person down the power well the amazing thing is that we've each one got [00:33:02] a well within us now like the olive tree and the oil came up was produced nobody asked from where there was no oil in the it wasn't mineral oil the olive tree was producing from the earth it produced olive oil ah my dear fellow believer what a lovely thought that God has been pleased to place in you a fountain springing up the Holy Spirit himself in dwelling you there's a golden rule not only golden oil in this chapter because to one of the questions the answer came back not by might nor by power but by my spirit [00:34:02] saith the Lord that's the golden rule we hear it often in our meetings but here it is in the scripture this is where they get it from the fourth chapter of Zechariah this is what was spoken into the ears of the listening wondering question asking prophet knowest thou not the divine message you kept saying don't you know what it means let me tell you the message of all this that you see before you is that you don't move by human might your own power but by my spirit that's the motive force if it needs the oil to burn the light it needs the oil to drive the service this before men ever thought of using oil for power [00:35:01] God speaks of it my spirit saith the Lord is what gets things done in the sphere of my things it's a wonderful thing I dare say you've had every one of you here tonight has had this experience you try to live the gospel but you speak the gospel you explain it to the little child in the Sunday school class you see him and her grow up through the Bible class you pour the words of life into their ears and you feel that while you ask them the questions and they know all the answers if you ever had one write to you and say dear sir I've stopped coming I know it means a lot to you but although I understand it all it means nothing to me it doesn't strike what's happened [00:36:01] what's the need something from above you can spend your life laying the fire but until someone strikes the match there's no warmth, no power no flame and only God he has reserved to himself the right and the ability to do this so we need to bear this in mind that we must have the golden oil flowing through flowing through and must rely upon it for the power we need at the end of verse 10 it is talk an awful lot about Zerubbabel in this chapter we haven't time to go back and see who Zerubbabel was but he was God's servant and he was God's servant who had the task of doing something [00:37:01] not just learning something not just enjoying something not just meditating on something but he was the man who was to build the house of God it's a wonderful picture of that future servant of that present servant, our Lord Jesus Christ who will be seen operative in this world in great power but though he's in heaven he has his servants here and Zerubbabel was the man to whom the prophet was speaking and whom Zechariah was sent to encourage strengthen, correct put on the right way and keep going and this message came to him who hath despised the day of small [00:38:01] things who has despised it oh I know it's a day of small things but don't make the mistake of despising it of saying what can you expect in a day of small things for they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel normally it was hanging on a wall, keeping it straight as the builders straightened it but those who saw him start shall see him finish and they'll see him with the plummet in his hand, no longer swinging doing its job, the work finished in other words, the work finished God will finish his work, the astonishing thing is that he will use people like you to do his work [00:39:01] golden pipes with golden oil channels for his blessing knowing where it comes from, seeing it on its way to the light or to the engine to keep it going I can't finish without drawing attention to something at the end of Zechariah and that is where Zechariah speaks about the coming of the Lord not the coming for us if you will flick over the page to the 14th chapter this is additional to what I have before me it is so sweet to me [00:40:02] I must say it chapter 14 verse 4 his feet that's the feet of the servant of the Lord shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives the very place where he went up from he will come back to there will be which is before Jerusalem etc. describes its place and it says half of the mountain shall be moved half to the north and half to the south it will be a powerful coming for our

Lord Jesus Christ and it's the coming beyond the time that we are expecting him to come for us this is his coming into this world to act for God verse 5 at the end of verse 5 [00:41:02] the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee will all be there you've got to turn over to the Thessalonians the first of Thessalonians chapter 4 which so many brethren reserve for reading at funerals in spite of the fact that it says therefore comfort one another with these words wherefore encourage one another with these words what words the fact that every one of us here tonight every one that we have mournfully put into the grave for the present will rise to meet the Lord in the air and go with him why why in all conscience should there be such a spectacular removal of all [00:42:02] dear Christians and by the way just as our scientific friends say that unless man can rendezvous in space he'll never get to the moon so unless you rendezvous in the air one day with the Lord you'll never get to heaven it's a wonderful you and I are heading for it spectacular and powerful whether we've fallen asleep if we have we'll be raised again we'll be linked with those that are alive and remain and we'll be caught up with the Lord in the air but why so that Zechariah's fifth verse in the end can be fulfilled Zechariah said [00:43:02] he's coming he's coming down here he's coming to rule to set everything right but he'll have his saints with him oh how he loves us to link us with the greatest events not only of all time in this world but of all eternity too to link us with it personally with himself or doesn't it make us want to serve him better to let our light shine and to see that it's not by human might not by any power from anywhere else but by my spirit the golden oil saith the Lord