

The Two Witnesses (Part 4)

Zechariah 4

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As we begin, let me repeat my belief that it is not necessary for us to understand the prophecies fully before they happen. Remember that I went over this in my first sermon to quite an in-depth degree. We saw then, when going through those scriptures, that it is only after they occur that we fully grasp how God brought those prophecies about and what they really mean. Our understanding of them is going to be faulty—maybe faulty at best—up until the time they actually happen. We may have a general understanding of what might go on. But our understanding of their fullness is not going to be complete until afterwards—and maybe a long time afterwards—when we finally see all the pieces put together.

It is more important to my mind—the way I look at it—for us to be aware of *the possibilities* of their fulfillment by knowing the details of the prophecies themselves. That is, by going through the prophecies and seeing them in detail, and seeing what they could mean, without trying to be necessarily dogmatic about "This is the way it is going to be." and "This is what we need to watch out for." It's much better if we see what the prophecies say and then watch world news; watch the things that are happening in the church, and see if any of those things fit with the details that you have learned about—then have faith that God will bring them to pass in the way that will be best.

Just a short summary of what we went over in the last sermon: In the last sermon, we concentrated on Revelation 11: 2-3. These verses tell us several things, [including] that the work of the two witnesses will at first leave out (or reject, or disregard) any kind of measuring of the nations. Remember this was where it says, "But leave out the court which is outside...for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will trample the holy city underfoot forty-twomonths."

So, the Two Witnesses will—early in their ministry, before they are actually called "the Two Witnesses" (because that doesn't happen until verse 3, that they are particularly stated to be the two witnesses)... But early in the ministry their job will be measuring *the temple*, which is a symbol of the entire church; *the altar*, which symbolizes the way of worship, how one worships; and then *the worshippers* themselves, which symbolizes of course the individual person. So it will be general [as] we see the whole scope of the church and the course the church looks to be heading. And then, of course, the way one worships tries to move it back into the way that it should be and that would be glorifying to God. And then, of course, the individual worshipper will have to come in and follow this way that should be. So it goes from general to specific.

Then we came to the period of the forty-two months, and the 1260 days. We found, after going through some of those scriptures, that the most literal and plain interpretation of these is that they are the same period—the Great Tribulation. They are just called by different terms. I have no idea why God chose to call one "forty-two months" and one "1260 days." I don't know if it is

necessarily that important. We know that it is the exact same time period as 3½ years. Forty-two thirty-day months comes out exactly to 1260 days; and so here we have the same period of time, it seems. This seems the most likely explanation.

What it is showing here under the forty-two months is the time when the Beast tramples the city of Jerusalem underfoot. And then the 1260 days—the same period of time—represents the time of the preaching of the two witnesses.

I've heard some people quibble about 3½ days—meaning that the Tribulation and Day of the Lord will end when Christ returns, but the two witnesses die 3½ days before that occurs. Well, I think that is quibbling because they are certainly going to witness by their death for that 3½ days. Then, their resurrection is certainly going to witness for God as well. So they don't necessarily have to be alive to witness. They can witness by their dead bodies lying in the street, because that's exactly what it says in the Bible that will happen. So their dead bodies lying in the street for 3½ days will fulfill prophecy (which glorifies God and points to the truth of His Word). So I don't necessarily see that the 3½ day period is of any consequence.

We also saw that God will endow—or give—the Two Witnesses whatever they need to do the job that they are given. I said that power here, as you'll notice in your Bible, is *italicized*. And maybe a better word would be *authority*. God will give them, or endow them, with authority to do basically whatever needs to be done. In a way, you could almost say that God gives them *carte blanche* to do with His power as they wish.

If you look in verses 5-6 to see the things that they do with that power, these are things that haven't been done since the prophets did them two or three thousand years ago. I can't think of any of the prophets that spit fire out of their mouth, but the Two Witnesses are allowed to do that. They kill people, it seems almost with abandon, if they strike against them.

These are two people that are going to be given a very free rein of God's power, to make a witness on the earth. But we know that these two will have the character—the *channeled zeal* that I talked about in a couple of those sermons—to make use of this power in a godly and proper way. They won't be doing this (just smashing people and things) willy-nilly. There will be good reasons for them doing these things, which we'll probably get to in the next sermon.

In verse 3, we also went through the wearing of the sackcloth; and we saw that it could mean a number of things. Sackcloth can mean mourning. It can mean repentance. It can mean austerity, or it can even mean poverty. And I think, in that sense, spiritual poverty would be the best way to look at it—meaning poor in spirit (like Jesus Himself was). Obviously, when one is poor in spirit, God gives that person power because they are in the right frame of mind and have the right attitude to use that properly. So, my vote is *on poverty*—being poor in spirit; but it could mean all of those things. If you want to make it very general, you could say that the sackcloth represents that these two men are godly. They have the proper, Christ-like, character that is necessary for this job.

Then we came to verse 4, and I want to read that again. The rest of the sermon will be about this verse and Zechariah 4. So, after we read verse 4 here, we will be reading Zechariah 4 and spending most of our time there.

Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

It's very, very clear (if one has any knowledge of the Old Testament) that this verse points most specifically to Zechariah 4:14. It's not quite a paraphrase. It's not quite a quotation. But it does make a very clear reference to it. This is where things start to get tricky, because Zechariah 4 is NOT an easy chapter to interpret.

But before we go there, I do want to mention one thing. If you look at some commentaries, some of the commentators will say that the Two Witnesses are not men. They say things like that they are types of Zerubbabel and Joshua. That is, Zerubbabel represented the state (because he was governor) and Joshua represented the religious end of things, the church (because he was high priest). So they say that what this means is that one representative of the church and the state is able to witness for God somehow.

But it just doesn't make any sense to think that the Two Witnesses could be anything other than people. There are several reasons why. For instance, Revelation 11:10 calls them "these two prophets." You don't think of anything but men or women—human beings—as being prophets or prophetesses. So it must be that these two are men. Zechariah calls them "anointed ones." You would think that "anointed ones" would mean servants, which would mean men.

In verse 7, it says that they will be killed. Verse 8 says that their dead bodies will lie in the street—meaning that they have bodies. You wouldn't think that a church would have, necessarily, a body or that a state would have a body—one body, or multiple bodies in this sense. He's talking about people here. Verse 11 says that they can be resurrected. So the easiest interpretation of this is that they are exactly what the Bible says they are—two human beings (prophets) that have bodies and will be able to do these miracles and make this witness. So I just wanted to go over that very quickly, so that we understand that I am not thinking about anything but two literal people at the end time.

Now back to Zechariah 4, so that we can try to interpret exactly what this means [when it says] that they are the two olive trees and the two lampstands. We went over part of this already, but I want to go over it again. There were a few questions, because I went over it so quickly in the last sermon. Maybe I can put a little bit more detail into it this time.

Zechariah 4:1 Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep.

This is just interesting in terms of, let's say, Matthew 25 and the Ten Virgins. They were asleep. The angel comes and has to waken the prophet out of sleep. Now, could there be some sort of a parallel there? I'll let you decide that. But it's very interesting that, at this point, the prophet himself had to be awoken out of sleep. So just stick that in the back of your mind. Maybe that's (in a way) a key to the timing of this revelation of the two witnesses, etc.

Zechariah 4:2-5 And he [the angel] said to me [the prophet], "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. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" 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."

The angel thought it was pretty obvious, what these things were. But the prophet, maybe being still groggy in his sleep, didn't understand. He couldn't make the connection. So the first thing to do here is to get an idea of what the lampstand looked like.

As I mentioned in the other sermon, this is a kind of menorah—the six branches, with one at the top, lampstand that stood in the holy place in the inner chamber. (Not the holy of holies, but the holy place where the priests were allowed to go and where the shewbread was and the altar of incense.)

Now, it's not exactly like that. It has some interesting variations. For one thing, it has a central bowl on the top of this lampstand, which the other menorah (the actual menorah in the temple, or the tabernacle), did not have. It was a large golden bowl that just stood there on top of the central pillar of the candlestick.

Seven arms radiate out from the central pillar—the central post. And each of them had a small bowl at its end. I believe I used the picture like one of those solar system models that you see, with the sun in the center and the nine planets on wires, or whatever, put in their proper places around this central sun. Maybe we can think of it like that. It doesn't necessarily mean that all seven of these bowls were on one plane. They could have been just wrapped totally around this central pillar.

I'm trying to think of this in terms of Revelation 1, where Christ is shown to be "in the midst of" the seven lampstands that are around Him in a circle. At least, that seems to me to be the most logical way of looking at what happens there in Revelation 1. Possibly this, in Zechariah 4, mimics that—except, instead of just being separate lampstands around, they are connected by these arms.

So we have the central post, the bowl on top, the seven lamps connected to the central post by arms and each with a bowl at its end. This is where I think I tripped up some people when I said there are not seven tubes, or seven pipes. There are forty-nine of them. Forty-nine pipes come out of the bowl at the top, and seven of them run to each of the bowls at the end of the arms.

Now, somebody has asked me how I know that it was forty-nine and not just one pipe for each lamp. I have to go back to the Hebrew on this. What it says is NOT that there were "seven pipes to the seven lamps" (as it says in the New King James). It says that there were *seven and seven* pipes to the lamps.

You and I, when we do our math, when we say "seven and seven," we think fourteen (not "seven times seven"). But I checked in Keil & Delitzsch Commentary, and I think whoever it was that did the commentating (I'm not sure if it was Keil or Delitzsch.) made it very clear that it is

what is called a *distributive sense*. Each one of the seven lamps had seven pipes. He used the example of one place where it says either Goliath, or one of his brothers, or one of those giants had "six and six"—making 24—toes. Now, "six and six" we would say is thirty-six and not twenty-four. But he said that the six are distributed among the four appendages. So you have six and six go to this, and six and six go to that. Six times four is twenty-four.

It's kind of a strange way of thinking. We don't think like this. We're not Hebrews. We don't speak Hebrew like that. We don't multiply like that. But, evidently, that's the way it is—that what we have here are seven lamps, and we have seven pipes to the seven lamps. If you do the math, that's forty-nine pipes.

What it means (and I think this is very telling) is that God didn't just give each of His churches one pipe to feed it. He gave them seven each—meaning there's a *superabundance of oil* that is available for each of the seven churches. They lacked nothing that would come from God's Spirit.

I wanted to add one more thing, about why it's not fourteen. That is, why it's not two pipes for each. That is because the Hebrews, if they had said fourteen, they would have just written fourteen. But to show, to describe, the lampstand with the lamps, the arms, and all of that—they had to use this formulation of *seven and seven* to show that there were seven pipes going to each of the seven lamps. (It's hard keeping all these terms straight—lamps, lampstands, posts, bowls, pipes, tubes, whatever.) So this superabundance of oil supplies the lamps constantly, and it pictures perfect abundance from God. God does not deny the church anything. It's all there, as much as one needs; and I think that's very encouraging.

I want to read one paragraph here—from the Keil & Delitzsch Commentary—just to, in a way, sum up what the lamps mean. That is, what the symbolism of the lamps is.

The burning lamps were a symbol of the church or of the nation of God, which causes the light of its spirit, or of its knowledge of God, to shine before the Lord, and lets it stream out into the night of a world estranged from God. As the disciples of Christ were called, as lights of the world (matt 5: 14), to let their lamps burn and shine, or, as candlesticks in the world (Luke 12: 35; Phil 2: 15), to shine with their light before men (matt 5: 16), so as the church of the Old Testament also. The correctness of this explanation of the meaning of the candlestick is placed beyond all doubt by rev 1: 20, where the seven *luchni'ai* [the Greek term for candlesticks], which John saw before the throne of God, are explained as being the seven *ekkleesi'ai* [churches], which represent the new people of God, viz., the Christian church.

So Keil & Delitzsch here very clearly understand the symbolism. Because Revelation 1: 20 shows us very clearly that the seven lampstands are the churches of God, this vision in Zechariah 4: 1-5 is a copy of sorts of the same thing. The prophecy here in the Old Testament is looking forward to the Christian church and the seven churches. It all fits together very nicely. So it's very clear from Revelation 1: 20. Why don't we just go there and see that the Bible does indeed

interpret its own symbols.

Revelation 1:12-20 Then I [John's speaking] turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 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."

That's very clear. God has not left us without an interpretation of these symbols. So the seven lamps—or the seven lampstands—are the seven churches of God, which He talks about there in Revelation 2 and 3. Jesus is shown standing in the middle of them. The figure here has a slightly different purpose than Zechariah 4. It's brought forward a bit, showing that Jesus is working amongst the seven churches. He is very active in their work. We know from Colossians 1:18 (probably the best scripture on this particular subject) that He is the Head of the Body, the church. He is the Head. He is involved. He is working through them all. He's intimately involved in all of their doings. So Jesus is shown here in His glory, working all this out.

As I mentioned last time, some questioned whether the lampstand in Zechariah 4 represents Christ. He obviously seems to replace the central post in Revelation 1, because they are arrayed about Him. So I think, yes, that He does represent the lamp post in particular; but He is not represented in the bowl. He supports it. In the symbolism, the bowl sits on His head (as it were). When we get down to Zechariah 4:10-14, we'll see what the bowl represents.

Now back to Zechariah 4:6. This is a pretty well known verse in the church. Here's the answer that the angel gives to Zechariah about what all this means, and it seems almost as enigmatic as the symbolism.

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."

Mr. Armstrong often quoted this verse, when he spoke of doing the work. And that is, indeed, a right principle—a correct spiritual principle. When God does something, it is not done through physical strength. It's interesting that *might* and *power* are literally *arms* (that's what "might" means) and *power* is physical activity. The work of God is not going to be done through feats of arms, or military victories, or anything that would be in terms of fighting or contentions. Nor will it be done by any amount of hurried, physical activity.

As much work and effort as men are going to put into it, that's not what's going to get things done properly. They will be helpful, certainly, because God works through men; and men have to exert themselves in order to do God's will. But that's not what is going to get the work done. He says very clearly here that all the credit goes to His Spirit. It's God at work! And we submit. We do the things that must be done. That is, what the Spirit directs. But God will be the One that gets the credit, and not us. We could have done none of these things by our own means.

So God gives the ability. He gives the inspiration. He gives the strength. He gives us endurance. He opens the doors. He supplies the manpower. He supplies the money and the resources for going through those doors. He supplies favor so that the doors can be opened, and we can walk through them and then do the work.

In a way, we could say that God's work is an act of grace. It's a paradox. It's an oxymoron to say the work is *done by grace*. We always think of *work* and *grace* as being two extremes of things, but it's not! What comes first? The grace comes first. God grants favor. God gives gifts. And then the work is done. And so where is the glory? It's in the grace. The works come afterwards and get the work done.

Let's see this a little bit. Let's go to John 3. This might seem a strange place to go. This is, of course, Jesus and Nicodemus' conversation; but Jesus makes a point here to Nicodemus, that He says he should have understood. This is right after Nicodemus said, "Do I have to go back into my mother's womb and be born again?"

John 3:5-8 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Like the wind, spirit is invisible. You can't see it. You can't see it move. You can't see it work. You can't see anything of the Spirit. But you can see what the Spirit does. You can see how it acts on things—just as the wind, going through a tree full of leaves. You can't see the wind. You've never seen the wind. But you have seen the wind move the leaves on the tree. You've seen the branches sway. You've maybe seen a strong wind knock a nest out of that tree, or rip the leaves off that tree, or seen a branch come down off that tree—depending upon the strength of that wind. But you've never seen the wind. It's the same with the Spirit. The Spirit moves, and then you see the people react. The people do things. A work gets done. What we

see isn't the Spirit at work, but we see the Spirit ~~in~~ it.

Let's go to I Corinthians 12, where Paul writes:

I Corinthians 12:4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:7-8 But the manifestation of the Spirit [You don't see the Spirit. You see the manifestation of the Spirit.] is given to each one for the profit of all. [Now notice how it manifests itself.] For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit...

How does this work? God gives His Spirit to a person, and out of his mouth flow words of wisdom. It's not the Spirit itself that is doing anything that is coming out as words of wisdom. But it's the Spirit working on that person's mind, and then that person himself speaks works of wisdom. But who gets the credit? God—by working through His Spirit!

I Corinthians 12:8-11 ...to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

What we've seen here is that we don't see the Spirit flowing into the churches, guiding and directing individuals. What we see is the works that are produced by the Spirit flowing into the churches, and into individuals. We see things like sermons given and articles written. We see healings. We see people acting in faith—let's say, allowing themselves to be fired for keeping the Sabbath, but knowing *in faith* that God will provide. We see people being able to use their gifts of languages to help others be able to understand the truth—let's say, in interpreting into another language. Or, in writing in a language and being able to allow people who speak that language to understand. Or whatever it happens to be that is used for the good of the church, and to further the understanding of people, and to prepare people for the Kingdom of God.

All of those are *manifestations of God's Spirit*. And it says very clearly that, even though there are so many different ways that the Spirit works, they all come from one God. It is He who wills them to manifest themselves in each individual person. I'm getting to a point here. Let's go back to John 6.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

The reason why I came here is because I wanted you to see what one of the main manifestations of God's Spirit is. Words. The entire revelation of God that we have before us, in our laps, is made up of words. And if this isn't a manifestation of God's Spirit, I don't know

what is! Many of these words are the words of God Himself. Many of the words—far fewer, but many of them—are Words of God's servants that have been written down for our admonition. But everything, in a way, comes down to words because the way of God is a set of ideas. These ideas we put down on paper as words; or, when we speak, we speak them as words. We can't understand them otherwise—than as words.

So, the servant of God may do other works. He can do healings, which are not necessarily manifested as words—although often there are words that accompany a healing. That is, specifically a prayer. Casting out demons is the same way. There is usually a prayer involved. There are miracles, and often miracles involve certain words that are spoken. But the works themselves—the healings, the casting out of demons, and the miracles—are not words; but they are manifestations of the Spirit. However, the primary job of a servant of God is to speak or to write words to convict people of God's truth. So, in the speaking of words or in the writing of words, he witnesses for God.

In the end, when we come down to it, the witness of the two witnesses is *words*. They will give evidence for God. But why did I speak about this? Why did I make this diversion, let's say, right here at this point? It has to do with *the oil*. We have known for a long time (and the world knows this too) that the Spirit of God is often symbolized by oil. Back here in Zechariah 4: 6, an angel is explaining to Zechariah the work of the Spirit. God's Spirit flowing and producing works (or results we might say, visible signs of God's inspiration and involvement in His servants' activities) is shown here flowing into the church.

Now, I want to give another short quotation from Keil & Delitzsch.

Oil...is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Spirit of God [So far, so good; but I want you to see this qualification that they make.], not in its transcendent essence.

Did you get it? Not in the form that it appears, let's say, in God Himself. Not in its raw form. Let me repeat that [Keil & Delitzsch quote]:

Oil...is used in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Spirit of God, not in its transcendent essence, but so far as it works in the world, and is indwelling in the church.

Do you understand what they are getting at here? They are saying that the oil that is flowing through these pipes is not God's Spirit in the raw. It's *God's Spirit in its works*. That is, in its manifestations. Do you catch the difference? We are not seeing, necessarily, God's Spirit as God's Spirit. We are seeing God's Spirit as it manifests itself in primarily words, but also in things like miracles, healings, casting out of demons, acts of faith, etc. It's very interesting. When we get down to Zechariah 4: 11-14, we'll see that it becomes even more interesting.

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!"

The angel is still trying to explain verses 1-5 here to Zechariah. This term "O great mountain" can mean two things. The first one is that it doesn't mean anything specifically, and this is the one that many commentators have latched on to. [They say] that it simply stands for the mountain of obstacles that any servant of God faces in doing God's work. So, it's a general term meaning *trials* that come up to try to stop the work of God. The angel says here that before God's servants these trials will not be "great mountains," but they'll be flattened down; and they'll just walk right through them, IF they follow God's Spirit.

The other one is a little bit more interesting. Mountains in the Bible symbolize *governments*. If you look in Isaiah 2: 2, it says that when Christ comes He's going to establish His Kingdom at the top of the mountains. That means that He'll be over all the governments of this world. But let's go back to Daniel 2 and see this in a similar sense, but a different place. This is in Nebuchadnezzar's vision. Do you remember the great image? Its head was of gold, with arms and chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

Daniel 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

We'll drop down to verse 44, where the interpretation is.

Daniel 2:44-45 "In the days of these latter kings [meaning the toes of iron and clay] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

This stone was cut out of a mountain, and it grew up and became a mountain itself. It filled the whole earth. I think that this "great mountain" then has more to do with things like government interference. Particularly with Zerubbabel, his problems were with the Samaritans (people who were trying to stop him from building) as well as the governor across the river. And they had to stop building for a while, because there were questions about whether the Jews actually had permission to build the temple. It was resolved very easily by sending a letter back to Persia. They found the letter of authority, written by Cyrus, that told them that they could build. And word came back from Darius that "Sure, they have the authority to build this." And they continued with it, and it was completed.

So, I believe that this "O great mountain" symbolizes *imperial power*. If we put this back in the time frame of the Two Witnesses, that's going to come up again as a problem for the Two Witnesses. The Two Witnesses will have the power of God, and they are going to be functioning by the Spirit. This is encouragement to them—to say, "Don't even think of this imperial power as being a problem." God will work it out. They will have their 3½ years of time to witness. And until that time, they will not be stopped. It will be just like walking over a plain, with no bumps. They might have some hassles, but they won't have any obstacles that will stop them.

Next we get to the capstone. Notice that it is translated as capstone. Some people have thought that this was a foundation stone, but it is not. It very clearly is the capstone. We are talking about finishing the temple (not starting it). So this is not the cornerstone. This is the finishing stone—the very last one. It is also called the gable stone. Or, you can even say an arched stone—the central keystone that would finish, let's say, an archway. As I said, it's a symbol of *completion*.

In this case, it's the temple being sufficiently ready for God's habitation; and the understanding of that ought to be very clear. What we are talking about here is the preparation of the church for God's Kingdom. This is an encouragement—not only to Zerubbabel, that he would finish the temple; but it is also an encouragement to the two witnesses, that their job of measuring the temple, the altar, and the worshippers will be successful. And it will be by "grace, grace" as it says here—double grace—that it will be done.

Now let's get to that "grace, grace." In the Hebrew, this is literally *favor*. Maybe even more literally than that, it means *beauty*. If you look back into the Psalms, there are a couple of them that talk about the beauty of holiness. This can have some connection there; but this is a reiteration, as in verse 6, that it is only by God's gifts and favor that the work will be accomplished.

Hebrew does that a lot. It repeats itself—putting it in a slightly different way, in parallel, so that we can understand just how things work. So, what this means is that it is by God's grace—by His Spirit, by His favor, by His gifts (however you'd like to say it)—that the temple will be completed and ready for God to inhabit. Zerubbabel should not fear anything. It will be done.

But remember that we have to always put this back into the lamps around the central pillar. This is going beyond Zerubbabel. This is going into the New Testament church—specifically down to the end time. We are making our way towards the two witnesses—the two anointed ones—at the end of this chapter. And much like Revelation 10 and 11, it starts out with an early work; and it ends up with their worldwide work. The *early work* has to do with completing the temple, and the *later work* has to do with the witness for God before the whole world. We get to that a little bit in verse 10.

Zechariah 4:8-9 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:
"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."

Does that sound familiar? We are not going to be able to see all the things that made all this possible until everything is done.

Zechariah 4:10 "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 this is a second interpretation—not a different one, just a second interpretation of the first five verses. We have a preliminary interpretation in verses 6-7, and in verses 8-10 we have additional information and interpretation of the seven lamps. The one in verses 6-7 concentrated on "by My Spirit"—making sure we get first things first. God, by His Spirit, will be behind all of this; and it will be done by grace. And we have to get that priority one in mind, when we understand the work of the Two Witnesses. They are servants. They follow the Spirit. That's how it's going to be done. And that's their mind as well. They will not be taking any credit for this. They will know that it is by God's Spirit.

And then verses 8-10, this really shows that God has Christ in mind (more than Zerubbabel, who was just a type). We always have to look at these things and know that there are types of Christ in them. Zerubbabel—though he is a type of one of the Two Witnesses—is really a type of the true Savior, Jesus Christ. He's the true King, and we can't ever keep Him far out of these things.

Christ is building a spiritual temple, and He finishes what He starts. You can just take out the word Zerubbabel there and put in Jesus Christ. "The hands of Jesus Christ have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it."

Jesus started it. If you want to go back even as far as the Creation, He was the One who created all these things. And He's going to finish it, and bring God's purpose to pass. Or you could take it a little bit different places, as far as laying the foundation—that having been done in Old Testament times, or in giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins and establishing our communication with God the Father. There are many places where you could see that started the foundation of the temple, but He will finish it. So wherever the starting point and whatever the ending point is that we see in history, He is going to complete the temple.

If you want a New Testament scripture for that, Philippians 1:6 says He who has started a good work in you will finish it, will complete it. There's extra guarantee of that. So Zerubbabel finishing the physical temple in 515 B.C. is just a sign, if you'd like to use that term, that Christ would finish the spiritual one.

Let's talk about small things. [Zechariah 4:10] "For who has despised the day of small things?" The thought here is that no one who understands God and what He is working out despises the times when only little things seem to be accomplished. Those who understand what God is doing know that these days of small things must take place before the big things can happen.

I think this is an encouragement to the Two Witnesses primarily. Their work is going to look like nothing to begin with. But they won't despise it, because they know that the small things must

happen before the big things—the big shebang, or the big bang at the end—takes place. That's what's really going to put them on the map during the final 3½ years. But the small things that happen before that time—in measuring the altar, the temple, and the worshippers—is going to be what sets the stage for the rest of that work. And we'll see that in just a few minutes. It's very important.

It's very important to see also—from the historical point of view—that even when this temple was finished, they moaned about it. "This is nothing like Solomon's temple!" It seemed a small thing in itself, and it was. It was just a bare representation of the original temple that David built through Solomon. But it was necessary. The small things that were happening back then—the Jews returning from exile with a great many of the Levites and the priests, building the temple, putting a wall around the temple, and eventually colonizing most of the old land of Israel (particularly up around the area of the Sea of Galilee)—made the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ possible. He had to have a temple to come to.

So, all these things that happened—these "small things" that happened with this small number of people who came back from Babylon, all the work that they did over a hundred years or so—prepared the way for the very "big thing" of the first advent of Jesus Christ (and His ministry, and His death, and His resurrection). Without the small things, that big thing would never have happened.

So God was preparing for the big thing through the small thing, and He does that all the time. So anybody who is a faithful person will not despise the times when only small things are happening, because they mean that big things are coming and that they should be prepared themselves.

We look at today, and we see the churches seemingly not doing much. The biggest among us are maybe 10,000 people; and that doesn't seem like very much compared to the 140,000 or so that were just 15-20 years ago. But that's okay, because God is preparing something for the time of the end. And these small times are going to pay in great dividends down the road, whatever that may be.

Maybe the most difficult part of this entire chapter is in the next phrase [in Zechariah 4: 10]: "For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel." And then the next part: "They are the eyes of the LORD, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth." The eyes of the LORD" are a biblical enigma, one might say, on its surface.

If you'll flip back to Zechariah 3: 9, this is in the vision of Joshua the high priest; and God's comments to Joshua afterwards. But we'll just read verse 9.

Zechariah 3:9 'For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua:
Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,'
says the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in
one day.'

That seems pretty enigmatic, doesn't it? What are these *seven eyes*? It's really strange—seven eyes upon a stone. There are a couple ways of looking at it. But before we do, let's go to

Revelation 1—because there are more to these "eyes" than meets the eye.

Revelation 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne.

So there we have seven Spirits that are before the throne of God.

Revelation 1:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword...

Revelation 1:20—2:1 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. To the angel of the churches of Ephesus write, "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands."

Revelation 3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars...

That's kind of interesting—seven Spirits and the seven stars.

Revelation 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Now the seven lamps are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Revelation 11:4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.

Now the Two Witnesses are called lampstands.

Revelation 12:1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

The reason that I picked that last verse is because I wanted to show you that the twelve *stars*

were *men*—depending upon your interpretation of that. I think probably the most common interpretation is that the twelve stars are the twelve tribes of Israel, which were started by twelve men. That's what the symbolism there is, of the twelve patriarchs.

We've read all these things, and it seems like the seven Spirits of God are the seven eyes, are the seven lamps, are the seven stars. I'm not quite so sure about the seven stars, because it didn't specifically say it. But, if you look in Revelation 1:20, it says that the seven stars are the seven angels; and *angels* are known as *stars* in the Bible. Also, in this interpretation, the seven stars are the seven messengers of the seven churches—which are probably, as we've always thought, men.

And so we seem to be going around in a big circle when we talk about stars, Spirits, eyes, and lamps. How do we work this out? The reason why I went to Revelation 11:4 was because the two witnesses are called lampstands. That would make one think that they are whole churches. But they are not. They are two people. Could it be that stars and lampstands are somewhat *interchangeable* depending upon the context? In most cases, the lampstands represent whole churches—whole church groups. But sometimes they represent particular people, who represent those churches possibly.

We know that stars themselves are messengers, or angels, or the leaders of these churches. So it gets really confusing. That's why I said that these "seven eyes" are very difficult to pin down. We have to go back to Zechariah and look at this word—eyes. This is the Hebrew word *'ayin*. "Eyes" in the Hebrew means something different than what we think of in English. We consider eyes to be the organ of *gathering* information. It's through our eyes that we see the world, and through our eyes that we read.

But the Hebrews had a different way of looking at it. The Hebrews gave this gathering of information attribute to the ear. They were probably more in tuned to spoken things, and with spoken things you hear through your ears. You don't hear through your eyes. So, to them, gathering information was done through your ears.

So what did the eyes do? Here's a quotation from *The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, volume 2, page 662:

The eye is used to express knowledge, character, attitude, inclination, opinion, passion, and response. The eye is a good barometer of the inner thoughts of man.

So instead of being an information-gathering organ, it is an information *expressing* or *communicating* organ. We think of that particularly as the mouth; but the Hebrews, in their strangeness (in a way that we just don't understand), they thought of the eyes as being able to communicate these things.

We understand this in terms of, let's say, your little kid lies about something; and you look into his eyes and you see it written there that he's not telling you the truth. That is one of the ways that we think of this same type of thing. You can express love through the eyes. You can express many things—many emotions and much knowledge—through the eyes. And that's how

the Hebrews looked at it. It was not something that *wasreceptive*. It was something that *was expressive*.

Another thing that we need to think of (which will also add to this idea of "expression") is that this word *'ayin* can also mean a spring or a fountain. And what does a fountain do? It expresses water. Out of it flows water. It means welling up—much as Christ used the fountain of living water in John 7: 37-39 to talk about the Spirit on the Last Great Day. Thus what I think is that "the eyes of the BRD" are His servants—out of whose hearts, or minds, flows the fruit of Holy Spirit to the seven churches, mostly in the form of words (speech or preaching).

And thus it says, here in verse 10, that these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. Who are the ones who would rejoice the most in seeing this type here, with the plumb line in his hand, measuring the church? Well, all the servants who are trying to do the same thing. They rejoice to see—in this type of Christ—that the church is being measured to make sure that it is upright.

Now, I don't want to be dogmatic about this. But, like I said, the eyes are probably the most enigmatic of all the symbols in here. I didn't go through Zechariah 3: 9 and the interpretation of the eyes as facets like on a jewel. There is also the idea that these eyes are not upon the stone; but they are looking upon the stone, which is interesting because the stone (if you'll remember Daniel 2: 35, 44-45) represents God's Kingdom coming down to earth and smashing the other kingdoms. And these eyes, looking upon the stone, are happy to see it happen; and they want to give their service to it.

So, there are all kinds of things about these eyes. Maybe they are one of those things that we are going to have to wait until things happen, to really be able to pin this down about what they represent. But to me the best interpretation of them is that the seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God; and that the seven Spirits of God are the seven lamps; and that the seven eyes then are representatives of those seven lamps. And they rejoice to see the completion of this temple, because they see Zerubbabel working.