

# Mid South Conference 1978-11 Zechariah's Visions

by Bob Clark

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*Bob Clark's sermon emphasizes that God's work is accomplished through His Spirit, not human strength, as illustrated in Zechariah's visions.*

**Duration:** 31:31

**Scripture:** Zechariah 4:1-6, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Zechariah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Zechariah chapter 4. The first part of the chapter presents a vision, while the second part discusses the purpose of the vision. The speaker highlights the importance of being attentive and engaged during prophecy meetings, as falling asleep or becoming bored can hinder understanding. The chapter also emphasizes that divine power is necessary to accomplish God's holy purposes.

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## Transcript

I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Zachariah again in chapter 4. Zachariah chapter 4. Indirectly, Zachariah has been giving to us some good counsel on how to live in a troubled time when the work of God is apparently being defeated and not going ahead. And his guidance is in broad principles of recognizing the present care of the Lord, his supervision, his interest and his exercise of heart interceding for us. We saw that in the first vision.

The first vision presented to us the presence of Jehovah amongst God and his people. The second vision gave to us God's powerful control over the circumstances ultimately to effect God's protection and provision for his own. The third vision then drew to our attention that God was going to center his kingdom in the nation of Israel and in particular the city of Jerusalem.

And the city was laid out and the dimensions were all prepared and God's inviting his people. They are going to effectively call the nation back into a fellowship with him and his people in a time to come. And we are urged in a similar way to separate ourselves from the inequity, the lack of balance in our life.

And identify ourselves with the Lord and the work of the Lord and God's people. The fourth vision drew our attention to the priesthood and the need for the cleansing of the priesthood. It would be appropriate then if

God is going to cleanse the priesthood first that he would now turn toward the economical, political part of the nation and cleanse and empower that.

And that's the next logical step. That's what is done in the book of Revelation in chapter 17 and 18. In Revelation chapter 17, the fulfillment of God's eternal purposes, he cleanses and judges the ecclesiastical, the religious pomposity of the world and does away with that and then turns to the economical, political world in chapter 18 and destroys that.

So the same process is given to us here. Chapter 4 presents to us God's purposes capacitated. God has the ability to capacitate, to enable, to empower people, but he does this to accomplish his purposes.

It's not a promiscuous donation of his Holy Spirit that you should be enabled to do anything that you would like. There is very little in the Holy Scriptures that would lead me to think that that's an accurate view from Scripture. God capacitates us to accomplish his purposes.

He enables us if we are passive and submissive and willing and surrendered to him and in desirous of having that divine enabling, he will give us the help to do his work. He will give us the help and the enabling to cheerfully strengthen, to be capacitated to accomplish his purposes. As an example, in the city of Troas, as Paul passed through, it would appear that it was not his purpose to see souls saved in Troas at that particular epoch in the city's history.

And the apostle passed through. He ultimately arrived in the city of Corinth and he sought to leave Corinth and God says, No, you must stay here for I have much people in this city. And then Paul was used to reach that much people.

These and this perspective of evangelism and the work of God needs to balance out our thinking. Some of us become very discouraged because you're in a community of a few thousand people, your testimony isn't growing and I am not encouraging dilatory neglect of self-discipline and outreach. But I mean, for those of you who are seeking to go on well, you might well be discouraged if there isn't that great revival-like fire that might be somewhere else.

God gives enabling to do the work that he is seeking to do. And when we try to do something more in the flesh, we are going to be hazarding our own spiritual welfare. And the lesson that's illogical to come now through Zachariah to Zerubbabel, Joshua is going to shortly get the message that he needs to be cleansed and straightened out because he's a prefiguring of Christ and the priests that are in association with him, they are to prefigure the wonderful blessed priestly service of our Lord leading the whole nation into a priestly ministration.

Now Zerubbabel needs a little encouragement too. He came back with the original company. Zerubbabel is their political leader, he is their governor.

He came back with the original group and he has labored hard and he's tried to do something and he's tried to be a good and faithful leader and he's been doing his best as he is able. And now there is a message for Zerubbabel. Possibly it might have a practical message for you in the place of leadership in one of the assemblies.

A role that you have tried to undertake and do faithfully and yet feel that you have been relevantly ineffective. The angel of the Lord 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 looked, and behold a

candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon and the seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof.

The 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? And the angel that talked with me answered and said, 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, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, 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. His hands shall also finish it, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.

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. 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 that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. The simple candid advice that comes to us who want to do the work of God here in this particular vision, I would envision it being that human ability and human strength and human resources is absolutely inadequate. We cannot do the work of God.

Divine power alone can achieve God's holy purposes. And in this vision, our minds are drawn to an exercise of heart that Zechariah has. Have you noticed the change in the tone of this vision as compared to the preceding? Preceding, he would ask and the angel would give an immediate answer.

Now he asks and says, What these be? Mind you, he had no questions in the fourth chapter. Regarding that preceding vision, in chapter three rather, excuse me, in the fourth vision, he had no questions. Being a priest himself, he grasped and comprehended and entered into the whole manipulation and he grasped the whole concept and raised not a question.

Because he was practically involved with this. But now he has questions, and his questions are not answers. Why? Quite possibly because the answer is too important to just casually give the answer.

I should hope you would do the same thing with your children. They come and ask you a question. Hopefully you and I are intelligent enough not to answer our children, but to ask them questions back again and make them think.

Learn that they should communicate, evolve their thinking, and verbalize their thoughts, and then you'll know exactly where they are, how mature they are, how they express themselves, and know better how to illustrate. Sometimes you're talking to a five-year-old, very precocious and able, and he or she may have a lot more ability to think and make relevant thoughts and present concepts and express them than maybe a teenage boy. This is exactly what God's doing.

He says, what's the answer? Now that's easy. Some of these school children ask that, and when you give the answer right back, or if you do that in a class and you give the answer, the child never has remembered that. The student never has grasped it.

That's why you don't learn from preaching. Hopefully, by hearing preaching, you get interested in the Word of God and go back, and then you learn. Most of us cannot remember what we heard on Sunday.

Possibly some of us can't remember what we heard yesterday. What am I saying now? We do have flight of ideas, and there are times when we don't hold on to things. But you learn what you have to think about and become involved in.

And this is exactly what's happening here. He says, don't you know these things? Now, the reason why this is drawn to our attention is because it's been preceded by verse 1. He is being prepared for the vision in verse 1. Then verses 2-5 is the presenting of the vision for us, and then the purpose of the vision is the remaining part 6 through the end of the chapter. First, the preparation for the vision.

And he waked me as a man that has wakened out of his sleep. Have you ever fallen asleep during prophecy meetings? Have you felt kind of drowsy and heavy and bored while you've been studying Zechariah? Does your mind wander? I don't see any head shaking. You don't want to commit yourself, huh? It shouldn't surprise you if that's so, because there's biblical precedent for it.

There is something that happens when we envision the unknown and the unseen. And I do not pretend to have any knowledge or insight into it except the authority of the Bible, personal experience. Do you remember when the Lord went up onto the mountain? It was not in the night time particularly.

He went up onto the mountain for the purpose of praying. After a short time of prayer had been had, when we are expressly told that the Lord was praying concerning His death that He should accomplish in the future at Jerusalem, and then what are we told? Peter and Nathan were with Him and were asleep. Why? There is something about the future that arouses our curiosity in idle, casual thought.

But when we actually begin to consider spiritual verities, the machinations of God's purposes, when you begin to apply your soul to eternal truths, you are very likely to find a veil of heaviness. Ever fallen asleep while you're praying and really exercised of heart and concern? Ever find a veil of vagueness and imperturbability in your mind that you can't seem to weed your way through all the complexities of thought? You get mentally tired? Greater men than you have had the same experience. Look at Daniel chapter 10.

And I, Daniel, saw the vision, for the men that were with me saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon me, so that they fled to hide themselves. Now in verse 8, Daniel 10.8, Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. I heard the voice, but when I heard the voice, there was, well, in a deep sleep, on my face, my face toward the ground.

The angel touched me and set me upon my knees and the palms of my hands. Daniel had his strength left, his vitalities were sat, he had dozed into sleep. Zechariah had spent an evening on this March 24th with these visions being poured into his soul, great experience, and now he must be roused as a man that's wakened.

There's a lethargy, there's a veil, there's a heaviness in his spirit, and God says, Now be sure you're awake, Zechariah. Get this message. Are you awake? Are you listening? It's not by might, and it's not by power, but it's by my spirit, saith the Lord.

That's the message that must get across, and it must be passed on to Zerubbabel and all those in roles of leadership. The description of the vision that's used to constitute this now is rather interesting. He sees a giant golden column, a candlestick.

Upon the top there's a large reservoir, a bowl. In the bowl there are seven separate little bowls, and in each of those little bowls, apparently floating in golden oil, there are seven little wicks in each, which is not exactly clear in the King James Bible, but it is both in the Hebrew and I think your New American Standard Bible makes that clear, that there are in all 49 little wicks. Seven bowls, seven candles in each, and then seven conduits roaming down, feeding each of these bowls.

That there's a perpetual feeding of golden oil through a golden conduit, that the light, once it's been lit and illuminated, is perpetually glowing. Now immediately this man, used to priestly ministrations, knowledgeable thoroughly with the Old Testament and the tabernacle candlestick, he has a contrast. And the contrast is what grips his mind.

And what you and I are to see, through that Old Testament perspective, rather than through a Gentile eye, picture yourself a priest, used to and familiar with the fact that every morning one of his jobs would be to go up and trim the seven lamps and be sure that there is enough oil for that lamp to burn all day long. And in the evening, trim the seven wicks and add the oil in order that there's enough oil for that lamp to burn all night long, that the sanctuary and the presence of God, there is always illumination. For our God is light.

It's not the light, He is essentially light. And the light must glow. There was always illumination from our great God.

Now immediately Zachariah would see that. What is it that he sees? There is no human involvement. There are no wicks to trim.

The trees are growing right there, providing the olives. Supernaturally, the olives apparently are plucked, squeezed, prepared, turned into oil, and the oil seeping down, constantly feeding the luminary, and no human agency is involved, that this great, massive light glows and greens. And as a result, there is an impact to Zachariah's soul.

He said, what does this mean? Are we going to change our whole system in the sanctuary? And before he can get misled, he said, are you sure you don't know what this means? No, my Lord. Tell me. Do you ever get interested in Bible study? Do you ever get down before the Lord and say, Lord, what does this mean? Lord, I'm not going to get off of my knees until you tell me.

I want to get a hold on your truth. I want to grasp your word. Young men, you will not get it in a little afternoon Bible study or a devotional time.

There must be one day out of that week. Men, when you come home from work, you must take that Monday night or that Tuesday night, early in the week, and don't go anywhere else, and don't let the television or the newspaper or the children or anything interrupt with your setting aside. Freshen your face.

Take a shower if necessary. Refresh from your work. And sit down with the Word and your concordances and your Bible and whatever expository books, and get on your knees and read and study and work.

And your local church will feel the impact of it. And Zachariah is involved. He said, now I don't know what it means.

Lord, teach me. And then the message comes with a ringing simple clarity. This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, the political leader.

This is not a priestly matter now. Ah, this changes the scene. But now he's better able to grasp.

What's happening? All the pipes, all the conduits, all the gold and oil, the spontaneous, no extracting. What's happening, Lord? Teach me. He says, all right, this is the Word.

Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. God has already cleansed the priesthood. Now He is going to demonstrate that the nation of Israel itself is going to be the light of the world.

And God views that little company, that small remnant, that day of small things. My goodness, poor Haggai took a look at the temple that they had and he wept. And all the old people wept.

Boy, not like the old days. We have a good back in the old days. Have you ever heard an expression like that? The old days are a lot better always than today.

And yet as best as I can look back on the old days, they weren't so hot. The good old days lack a great deal, don't they? And we can't live in the past. And you're not accountable for the past.

We learn from the past. We experience instruction from our godly older brethren and their weaknesses and their strengths and their blessings, and we amalgamate it with the Word of God and carefully weave it into an intelligent pattern for us to be instructed by God. But this is something unique and special and different.

God is still in control of the Gentiles. And He sees approximately 60 to 100,000 people and all their weakness and all their frailty and all the filth of the priesthood. But what does He say? It's a golden candlestick.

Now if that doesn't remind you of something, beloved of God, we are negligent in our grasp of the Word of God. If God looks down and He sees His people and He views it as a golden candlestick, that should bring something to your mind. What portion of Scripture? What portion of Scripture? Revelation.

Chapter 2 and 3. Why there? What does God see the church as? A golden lampstand. And every one of us, our view, your little congregation, your little assemblage, by reason of application, not here now. The local church is not seen here in this.

But by application, it reminds us, and we are mutually interpreting spiritual things with spiritual, so we stay within the canon of Scripture and we see that God is trying to impress you and me with that faithful little lampstand, with all of its impurities and imperfections, as you struggle to be right before God. He says you're a golden lampstand. Now there's a lot of correction needed over there in Revelation 2 and 3. And each of those seven individual congregations standing alone, looking to the Lord for their provision and head-shipping from that special messenger sent by the Lord, that prophetic ministry given to them in the

oversight of elders.

These various things that we treasure as local church truth, but God says it's a golden lampstand. And you are the luminaries in this world. Be encouraged in your soul.

Not proud. Encouraged. Strengthened.

But the logical thing now is if the rubble bell ever gets a hold of this message, and if Zechariah ever tells them that the nation looks like a golden lampstand, and he's going to be a great, powerful ruler and leader, what's he going to do? He's going to start with conscription. Get an army together. And he'll start raising the taxes to strengthen himself.

And he'll start imposing legislation. And he'll build a little bit bigger car for himself and put an extra big basket on top of his camel. And pretty soon he'll start really feeling important.

And so the message has to get through. It's not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. Now that's not even a sentence.

There's no subject, there's no predicate. It's a slogan. Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit.

The Hebrew word might here has to do with hosts or armies. And actually what he is saying now, be sure you tell the rubble bell this, it's not by any army that he makes up. Don't start a draft board.

Don't start conscripting the men. That's not how God's purposes are going to be done. Not by your plans, and not by your working things out.

It's not by might. It's not by a host or an army or a strength of many people. If you would look at Hosea chapter 1, this is also affirmed in a very simple sentence.

Hosea 1.7 I will have mercy upon the house of Judah and will save them by the Lord their God and will not save them by bow nor by sword nor by battle by horses or by horsemen. What's going to save and empower and give us spiritual enlightenment where we are? The spirit of God. And he must be free to work amongst us.

Something's cluttering up the conduit. God says, I have the plentitude of the spirit. And he's ready to pour it into our lampstand that our light will shine.

But it's not by might. It's not by anything that we do. Now, indeed, you can get together a group of men and go out to witness.

And you can get together a group of women and have this, that, or the other activity. But that in itself is not the answer. It's not by might.

It's not by our administrative capacities. Nor is it by power. That has to do with that natural reservoir of human nature.

Sometimes today we think of persons as having a certain charisma. No attachment. Now, grammatically, no attachment to the charismatic movement.

But the idea of gifted, capacitated, real leadership. And we think, wow, he's a leader. But that's not the work of God.

That's not where God is blessing. And now I want to speak so affectionately and openly, but as a genuinely penetrating spirit. Some of you quiet, more retiring brethren have cloaked yourself in your own ease and neglect because you're not a salesman.

You're not aggressive. You're not an outgoer. And you think the word of God and the work of God cannot go on because you are just a quiet, soft-spoken person.

Shame on you. Shame on you. It's not by might.

It's not by our genius and organizational powers. And it's not by our inner power or strength or attributes or qualities. It's by the spirit of the living God that he wants our testimony to be an illumination.

How much of the Holy Spirit have you? We've just been told from the word of God by the Lord's servant. We've been sealed by that spirit. He wants to take over our lives.

He wants to capacitate us. He wants to shine through you and me. He wants to anoint your lips when you're talking to your own children.

He wants to bless and enlarge you. Something is blocking the flow of the oil. It's not God's side.

The trees are there. The golden conduits are there. The purity of this lovely golden oil.

The wicks are there. Everything waited to be ignited. What's missing? Just that little kindling of fire.

Of saying, Oh Lord, I am so weak. I am not able. Get down before God and acknowledge that.

Not to hide your weaknesses. Not to cover up and cover for a lack of activity. But in a humble, genuine, modest sense, ask the Lord to ignite that fervence of spirit that you might burn fresh for God again.

He'll provide the oil. He'll bless the enlightenment. And he will do the work.

Who art thou, O great mountain? Zerubbabel must have been casting his eye around to the political powers. The mountain in the word of God, if not always, is frequently a picture of kingdoms. And this great massive kingdom of Syria to the north.

Babylon has not yet been destroyed out there to the east. And down to the south is the Egyptians. And all around, these powers around them.

What can they do? Intimidated and fearful. And the message comes to Zerubbabel. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, that little man in there in Jerusalem, the people without a wall in their city, without an army, without a single boat, without any kind of navy, without any military forces.

But before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, Grace. Mr. Unger in his exposition translates it, All of Grace.

Even then he understood it then. That when it really gets a hold of Zerubbabel, he will grasp that it is all the kindness and goodness of God that has placed him in a role of leadership. And now God is blessing and anointing.

Now how will they know this? What will the sign be? The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hand shall finish it. The man who started

the work will finish it.

God has his program and it will be accomplished in his vessel. Dear brother in the Lord, trying to do something for God in that local assembly? If God touches you, and it's appropriate for yourself, dig a sentence and a phrase and a concept out like this, and apply it to your soul, and see that God has called you, and given you something that you can undertake and do for God and for his people. Trust the Holy Spirit of God, and anticipate that in your lifetime, your work will be finished.

Because you'll give yourself to the work of God. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. What kingdom can stand in front? What power can thwart God's purposes? Now what is being said, of course, here, towards Zerubbabel, is meant in the context, prophetically, the primary interpretation is that there's going to be a greater king coming.

That's implied in Haggai's prophecy in chapter 2 as well. And that this name, Zerubbabel, this one is symbolic of one who's going to come later just as Joshua is of Christ, so Zerubbabel is of our Lord in the political realm. And the Lord will be a priest, chapter 3, king, chapter 4. The only one in whom both of these offices can be consummated.

And this is the last paragraph after the last vision in chapter 6, where these things are all drawn together and we see our blessed Lord Jesus heading up all the plans and programs of God. The question comes, who has despised the day of small things? You and I don't have to be small. It might be that God would prosper you and enlarge you and enrich your life and ministry, and it might be that He shall not.

But who were these people in Jerusalem to despise what was going on? It was God's plan. He moved Cyrus' heart. He protected them and brought them there.

They're starting their work. They've allowed us to be deterred, but God says, it's my candlestick, and it's going to shine for me, and ultimately my purposes will be accomplished. Positive, confident assurance in what? Not might, not power, by my Spirit.

Free the Holy Spirit amongst you. Be knowledgeable of His presence. Read in the Scriptures that which from your New Testament exhortations would keep Him from being grieved and hindered.

Allow His ministrations the joy. Acknowledge those that have gifts in your local church. Set aside your own personal desires or seekings or place, whatever it is, and acknowledge those that have the gift.

And see them preach the Gospel and see souls saved. See them teach the Word and see ourselves serving and helping supportively in whatever role we fit in. Stop thwarting the purposes of the Spirit because of your self-consciousness or because of your petty indulgence and preoccupation with your business.

It's time to set aside and give God a place, and you may be the very vehicle to announce that Word. In other words, allow the Spirit of God to work through us, among us, for Him, that God will get the glory. And thank God if you do have leadership that walks around measuring things by the Word of God.

For that's exactly what's said of Zerubbabel. They shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. What's he doing? He's measuring the wall.

Is it in accordance with God's Word? And he drops the plumb line. Is this wall going up straight and square? Is everything there? And the plummet. And if you have a brother or sister in the assembly of your gathering among believers with whom you meet who is using the Word of God intelligently, lovingly, affectionately as the plumb line for his work, rejoice in that.

And if you've been so blessed to have leadership that have been raised up by God, not trusting their administrative abilities, not trusting their own powers or personality, but relying in the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, rejoice, because the work of God will be done. God's purposes are capacitated by Him, by His Spirit. Free the Holy One to work amongst us.

Enjoy His ministrations. Encourage wherever you see it wrought, and young or old, as we together fit in to God's blessed purposes for His honor and for His glory. Turn to 531.

531. Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way.

Thou art the potter. I am the clay. Mold me and make me after thy will while I am waiting, yielded and still.

Sing the first and fourth stanzas of 531.

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