

“Not By Might”

Zechariah 4:1–14

Dr. Frank Barker, Pastor Emeritus
September 4, 2016 – Morning sermon

We will be looking at Zechariah 4 which is the next to the last book of the Old Testament. Zechariah 4:1–14 says [1] *And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. [2] And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. [3] And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” [4] And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” [5] Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” [6] Then he 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. [7] Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”*

[8] Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [9] “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. [10] For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

“These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.” [11] Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?” [12] And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?” [13] He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.” [14] Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

May God bless His Word to us today.

Zechariah lived in the 500 B.C.s where the Jews had rebelled against God in various ways and finally God had punished them by having Babylon conquer Israel and take them into captivity for 70 years. They conquered them in 606 B.C. and then in 536 B.C. God had the Medo-Persian Empire conquer Babylonian Empire and Cyrus the Mead allowed the Jews to go back and rebuild Jerusalem which had been basically destroyed. The Jews were also to rebuild the temple. When they went back there was a lot of opposition from surrounding areas and so they stopped building the temple and began to build their personal homes.

You and I have a huge task like they did. What are we trying to do? We are trying to build a temple and that temple symbolized the church, the living temple, made up of living stones. Our job is to spread the church throughout the world and build that living temple throughout the world. We also face a lot of opposition, like they faced opposition. One aspect of opposition is the moral decay in our culture here in America. It’s alarming in what we have in trying to get the job done of spreading true Christianity throughout our nation and the world. The LGBT and transgender stuff today is horrifying in the moral decline in the last 20 years. It’s terrible. It’s amazing how it is picking up.

Another aspect of opposition of building the living temple is the Muslim terrorism that has spread throughout the world and in our country. There is a book written by Dr. Don Boys titled Muslim Invasion: The Fuse is Burning! Dr. Boys was a member of the Indiana House of Representatives, a Christian school administrator and a curriculum developer who wrote columns

for USA Today for eight years. He has appeared on many network, cable, radio and talk shows. In his book he gives us a real picture of the obstacles we face in building the temple through the spread of the Muslim religion.

I want to give you a few indications of that. *According to research, in order for a culture to maintain itself for more than 25 years there MUST be a fertility rate of 2.11 per family. With anything less the culture will decline. Historically no culture has ever reversed with a 1.9 fertility rate. A rate of 1.3 is IMPOSSIBLE to reverse because it would take 80 to 100 years to correct itself and there is no economic model that can sustain a culture during that time. In other words, if 2 sets of parents each have a child, there are half as many children as parents. If those children have one child, then there are 1/4 as many grandchildren as grandparents. As of 2007 the fertility rate in France was 1.8, England 1.6, Greece 1.3, Germany 1.33, Italy 1.2 and Spain 1.1. Across the entire European Union, in 31 countries, the fertility rate is a mere 1.38. Historical research has told us these numbers are impossible to reverse. Yet the population of Europe is not declining. Why? Immigration. ISLAMIC immigration. Of all population growth in Europe since 1990, ninety percent has been Islamic immigration.*

In France the fertility rate is 1.8 children per family and the Muslims rate is 8.1 per family. In Southern France, traditionally one of the most populated Church regions in the world, there are now more Mosques than Churches. 30% of children ages 20 and younger, are now Islamic. In larger cities such as Nice, Marseille and Paris the number has grown to 45%. By the year 2027, 1 in 5 Frenchmen will be Muslim. In just 39 years France will be an Islamic Republic. In the last 30 years the Muslim population of Great Britain rose from 82,000 to 2.5 MILLION. That is a 30 fold Increase. There are over 1,000 Mosques, many of them former Churches. In the Netherlands 50% of all newborns are Muslim and in only 15 years, half of the population of the Netherlands, will be Muslim. Currently in Belgium, 25% of the population, and 50% of the newborns, are Muslim. The government of Belgium has stated 1/3 of all European children will be born to Muslim families by the year 2025. The German government, the first to talk about this openly, recently released a statement saying: "The fall in the population (German), can no longer be stopped. Its downward spiral is irreversible...It will be a Muslim state by the year 2050! (German Federal Statistics Office). The 50 plus Muslims in Europe will turn it into a Muslim Continent in a few decades, doubling in just 20 years. In 1970 there were 100,000 Muslims in America.

(<http://religionresearch.org/closer/2009/05/05/islamizing-europe-muslim-demographics/>)

PEW Research center estimates there were about 3.3 million Muslims of all ages living in the United States in 2015. (So it has gone from 100,000 to 3.3 million.) This means that Muslims made up about 1% of the total U.S. population (about 322 million people in 2015), and we estimate that that share will double by 2050. On September 11, 2001 when 19 terrorists from Egypt and Saudi Arabia fly two planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in Manhattan and one plane into the Pentagon in Washington, they caused over 3,000 deaths. Their targets represented our commerce and our military where we were the strongest.

On April 1, 2016, Muslims marched through Germany yelling "We are Allah's help, we shall conquer you!" Osama Bin Laden issued this; 'We call on every Muslim who believes in god and wishes to be rewarded to comply with god's order to kill the enemies and plunder their money.' This is speaking to all Muslims who won't respond through the Muslim faith. Muslims recruit people in prison. Seventy percent of France's prisoners are now Muslim. The Muslim goal is to conquer the world. Palestinian children are taught to kill Jews and to be human bombs. Page 78 of the Washington Times in April 2016 reported that about 20,000 immigrants released

by Homeland Security into the US community last year were those who had committed 64,000 crimes, including 216 kidnappings and more than 200 homicide manslaughter convictions.

In this book by Dr. Boys, he says “Mohammad Akram, a top Muslim operative, wrote a memorandum in 1991 that revealed their purpose. It unambiguously states that the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood in North America is to destroy Western Civilization from within so that Allah’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.” So you can get a feel of what we are facing today. Every paper you pick up today has something of that nature in it.

Franklin Graham, Billy Graham’s son, went to every capital city in the US, calling people to pray for the situation. He says in his recent magazine, “The tragic shooting of a gay nightclub in Orlando that killed 49 people and injured dozens more, not only revealed the clear and present danger of Islamic terrorism in America but justice clearly demonstrated our cultures blatant hostility toward Christians.” Then there were 10,000 boys kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria. He ran a boot camp for about 100 boys. Children as young as five years old, learned to handle assault rifles and marched through the woods in flip flops. Another headline reads Jihadists kill dozens in calculated hospital attack in Pakistan. There was a weekend terror attack at a wedding in Turkey. We hear things like this every day we pick up a newspaper. We face real challenges here.

It could be that we’re entering end times. The Bible talks about things getting really bad close to the return of Christ. Let’s start in our study first by looking at Zechariah 12:2–3 which says [2] *“Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. [3] On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it.”* All the nations of the earth will gather against Jerusalem. This is something yet to happen and will take place right toward the end. Zechariah 12:10 says [10] *“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.”*

Note that this is written 500 plus B.C. from Zechariah and here God is saying when they look on Him whom they have pierced. This is talking about the crucifixion of Christ and this verse is also quoted in the New Testament. There will be a final great attack on Jerusalem and in the middle of that attack they will look on Him whom they have pierced. Then they will realize they crucified their Messiah. The Jews will realize that He was who He claimed to be, God the Son. They will be deeply grieved over their ancestors who did that rejection of Christ. They will repent and come to faith in Jesus Christ. Now let’s look at Zechariah 13.

Zechariah 13:1 says [1] *“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”* It goes on to talk about that toward the end of this all the nations gather, attack them and their eyes will be opened as they come to faith. Then Christ will return as you read on in Zechariah 14. That is the end of the world and we’ll get a new heavens and a new earth. It could be that we’re moving towards the end times now with this spread of the Muslim faith. This may be what leads up to this great attack on Israel but even so, we have a job to do and our job is to build that temple, that living temple made up of living people, to be spreading the Gospel to overcome the opposition that we are facing.

Let’s now look back at Zechariah 4 to get a feel of what we are to do and how we are to do it. Zechariah sees this golden lampstand. From Revelation 1:20 we find that the lampstand

represents the church. In Revelation there are seven lampstands that represent the seven churches. This golden lampstand represents the whole church and we're the light of the world as God's light shines through us when we take the Gospel out to the world about who Jesus was and what He did. God the Son created the world. John 1:1–3, 14 says [1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [2] *He was in the beginning with God.* [3] *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* [14] *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* This is talking about Jesus Christ.

Jesus died. He was raised. He died for our sins like someone who would pay your fine in court. He ascended and one day He is coming back. We are to take that Gospel throughout the world, the Good News of Jesus Christ. When they come to repentance and faith, believing that incredible story, surrendering their will to Him, putting their trust in Him as their approach to God that is when they become a part of this temple. Our job is to spread that message throughout the world.

So first we see the lampstand. Zechariah 4:1–5 says [1] *And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep.* [2] *And he said to me, "What do you see?" I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.* [3] *And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."* [4] *And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"* [5] *Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord."* The lampstand symbolizes the light of the world.

Then we have a bowl of oil that symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our Source of power there. It is the anointing of the Spirit. When we become Christians He anoints us. He is our Source of power.

Then there are the pipes that lead to the lamps. Those pipes symbolize the channels through which the Spirit's influence reaches the body of Christ. It reaches us. We read about after Christ's ascension that three days later there was the outpouring of the Spirit in this new way. Old Testament believers had the Holy Spirit but starting with Christ's ascension the Spirit was giving in a fuller way ever since. Acts 2:42 says (NKJV) [42] *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Here these elements are channels through which the Spirit works in our lives. The apostles' doctrine here is the Word of God. As we use the means of the Word of God, Communion and prayer the Spirit of God works through us.

Years ago when we started Briarwood Church, we met in a storefront and I had led a fellow to Christ. I began to disciple him and gave him biographies of great missionaries to read like Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael and others. As he read them and saw how they prayed he came to me and said 'I need to learn to pray.' We decided to get together one day a week to pray and as we did this we prayed for other men who ended up coming to Christ and then joining our group. That group is still going on today. That group spread out into others but this is an example of using the means God gives us to spread the Gospel.

Then we see the principle for God's people in this passage. Zechariah 4:6 says [6] *Then he 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.* Zerubbabel was the governor in Jerusalem during this time on their side. This is the word to Zerubbabel as he is facing all this opposition, this big mountain of obstacles in trying to get this temple finished. This means that every human resource and

ability is not enough to get the job done. A greater agency is needed and that agency is God's Spirit, the power of His Spirit working in our lives and through our lives. That is the way we get the job done.

How do you appropriate that? Think about when David went to fight Goliath. David says to this great opponent Goliath, "You come to me with this sword and shield and I come to you with my sling and my sling is a lot better than your sword, buster." Did he really say that? No, he said "I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the army of Israel and He will deliver you into my hands." Then he threw that stone from his sling as hard as he could but he wasn't relying on his own strength he was relying on the Lord because he used His means and His ability. Goliath was knocked off his feet with when that stone hit him and that is the way we do it. We use the abilities that God has given us to advance His cause and build that temple but we don't rely on our own abilities. We rely on Him for it is not by might, nor by power but by His Spirit.

Think about Paul. As Paul is trying to advance the Light and Gospel of the Kingdom around the world, it says in the Bible he was given a thorn in the flesh. Ouch! It was some sort of painful thing. It could have been migraines or something but we don't know what it was. It says in the Bible that three times he asked the Lord to remove it but the Lord said 'no, you need it for this will make you depend on Me and then you get My power.' Satan is the one that brought it to him and attached it to him but God allowed Satan to do it. Paul then sees that he will joy in his infirmities that the joy of Christ may rest upon him. We want to rely on Him and as we do that we get His power. Use the means you have but don't rely on that. As we do that notice what happens in verse 6 and 7.

Zechariah 4:6-7 says [6] Then he 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. [7] Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" God will enable Zerubbabel to bring forth that top stone and move those mountains, those obstacles.

Zechariah 4:10a says [10a] For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. He will see the completed temple here and rejoice. I think of the phrase small things here and it makes me think of when we started Briarwood. In 1973 we had to pull out of our denomination, the Presbyterian denomination because it was getting so bad liberally in theology and in other things and 240 churches came together here at our building over on Hwy 280 at the time. That is when we started the PCA – the Presbyterian Church of America. Now we have close to 2,000 churches in our denomination and world missions are spreading abroad because we have a very strong world mission's program. We can praise God for that as we keep trying to build and build and build that temple. Don't despise the day of small things.

It reminds of a couple of guys who were wanting to reach out at the campus of Samford University and so they started a work there. Then they came to me and wanted to spread it across our state to other campuses so they drew up a plan to open a campus outreach ministry on a new campus for the next five years. The officers of the church approved it and we begin to pray and work on this and at the end of five years there were five more groups that had started on each of this campuses. Then it spread to five more and five more and then it spread to Georgia. Then a church in Georgia sponsored the staff to start it on campuses in Georgia and now those groups are on close to 100 campuses across our nation with full time staff and overseas. Don't

despise the day of small things. When we rely on the Lord and not ourselves God will do amazing things as we have seen Him do.

Notice the provision of God for His church here. Zechariah 4:11–14 says [11] *Then I said to him, “What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?”* [12] *And a second time I answered and said to him, “What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?”* [13] *He said to me, “Do you not know what these are?”* I said, “No, my lord.” [14] *Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”*

Here He is talking about the leaders Zerubbabel and Joshua who He will give. Zerubbabel was the Governor and Joshua was the High Priest. God will raise up leaders for the job as we rely on Him. The two trees here symbolize that. We certainly face a mountain of obstacles trying to get the job done. We don’t know when the end times are coming but we may be a part of it and facing a very difficult time but our job is to keep building that temple. As we do that God’s power will be manifested as we rely on Him.

Notice the lessons of the lampstand. They need not desire on the aid of men, non-Christian men or fear their opposition. They needed only to trust in God alone to provide resources and leaders because He would give those. They just needed to rely on Him. They needed to use the means of grace – to pray, be in His Word, to be in fellowship – and the mountain will become the plain and the temple will be built. That is our job and that is how we can do it.

We have seen God do amazing things over the years here and we want to keep seeing Him do that every day, in our own lives, in our church, in the denomination and in the church around the world. It is a very crucial day we live in but we have the Spirit of the Lord. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, we thank You so much for this passage of Scripture, the providence of God that is at work and the promise that not by might nor by power but by My Spirit says the Lord. Father, may we live that way every day. We pray that each one of us may have surrendered their will to You and put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior, for we pray this in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Power Point

INTRODUCTION: Zechariah sees a vision of a golden lampstick, a bowl on top, and seven lamps on the bowl. Seven pipes lead to lamps from the bowl and two olive trees pour oil into the bowl (1–3)

I. THE GOLDEN LAMPSTICK

A. The Parts of the Vision (2, 3)

1. The lampstand (cf Rev 1:20)
2. The oil
3. The pipes

- B. The Principle for God's People (6)
- C. The Promise of Success (7–9)
 - 1. The conquering of obstacles (7a)
 - 2. The completion of the task (7b–9)
- D. The Providence That Is at Work (10)
- E. The Provision of God for His Church (11–14)
 - 1. The supply of oil
 - 2. The significance of the 2 trees

II. THE LESSONS OF THE LAMPSTICK

- A. They Needed Not to Desire the Aid of Men nor Fear Their Opposition
- B. They Needed Only to Trust in God Alone
- C. They Needed to Use the Means of Grace

CONCLUSION