

Z'kharyah ~ Part 3

In the Fifth vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that **God** will complete His **Temple** through His two anointed ones.

Lampstand and Olive Trees

In the fifth vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that **God** will be among His returning people.

Faced with the task of rebuilding their **Temple** and **City**, the **Chosen people** felt small, powerless, and overwhelmed. Opposition came from within and without - from the **Samaritans** accusing them of treason (Ezra 4:6–24), to some of their own people thinking the odds against the project were insurmountable (Ezra 3:12; Hag 2:3). But **Z'kharyah** saw things differently. **God** would empower the people and their leader, **Z'rubavel**.

4¹ Then the angel that had been speaking with me returned and roused me, as if he were waking someone up from being asleep, ² and asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I've been looking at a menorah; it's all of gold, with a bowl at its top, seven lamps on it, and seven tubes leading to the lamps at its top. ³ Next to it are two olive trees, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left."

Though the cumulative impact is evident, the vision is marked by complex imagery. Oil pressed from olives, with a wick to soak up the oil, provided the primary source of light in the ancient world. But the **lampstand** described here is surrealistic, with an inexplicable arrangement of containers of oil - **a bowl ... seven lamps ... seven tubes**, and perhaps signifying an abundance of oil. On the lampstand in the tabernacle, see Exodus 25:31–37.

4⁴ I then asked the angel speaking with me, "What are these, my Lord?" The angel speaking with me said, ⁵ "Don't you know what these are?" I said, "No, my Lord." ⁶ Then he answered me, "This is the word of Adonai to Z'rubavel: 'Not by force, and not by power, but by my Spirit,' says Adonai-Tzva'ot.

The angel's question, *"Don't you know what their height is?"* heightens the anticipation of the answer and underscores the necessity of supernatural insight. What the angel said to **Z'rubavel** about the **Spirit** provides insight into the lampstand's interpretation. Oil was symbolic of **God's Spirit** (1 Sa 16:13). Thus, while **Z'rubavel** would be instrumental in accomplishing **God's** purposes, it could only happen through the plentiful supply of **God's Spirit**. This understanding of the significance of the lampstand is supported by the angel's explanation at the end of the vision (Zechariah 4:14).

7⁷ 'What are you, you big mountain? Before Z'rubavel you will become a plain; and he will put the capstone in place, as everyone shouts, "It's Beautiful! Beautiful!"'

While **Z'rubavel** was a legitimate heir to **David's** throne, his role was limited to governor, even though he is spoken of in elevated terms (Hagai 2:21–23). In hyperbolic language, he would be able to move mountains. But since **God** deserved all the credit, shouts of *"It's Beautiful! Beautiful!"* to the **Temple** were very appropriate. Though **God** empowers human instruments, **He** intends to negate any human claim to strength or might.

8⁸ This message from Adonai came to me: ⁹ 'The hands of Z'rubavel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will also finish it.' Then you will know that Adonai-Tzva'ot sent me to you.

10¹⁰ For even someone who doesn't think much of a day when such minor events take place will

*rejoice at seeing the plumbline in the hand of Z'rubavel. So these seven are the eyes of Adonai that range about over all the earth."*¹¹ I replied by asking him, "What are those two olive trees on the right and left sides of the menorah?"¹² Then I asked the question again: "What are those two olive branches discharging gold[-colored oil] through the two gold spouts?"¹³ He replied, "Don't you know what they are?" I answered, "No, my Lord."¹⁴ He said, "Those are the two who have been anointed with oil; they are standing with the Lord of all the land."

Typical of other visionary texts in the **Bible**, *these seven are the eyes of Adonai*, whose symbolism remains unexplained. Though it is often suggested that multiple eyes may signify wisdom or knowledge, uncertainty about such details reminds readers that **God** is transcendent and **His** ways are beyond human understanding. Here, the image of the *menorah* becomes even more otherworldly. Given the placement of this vision next to the preceding one, it is likely that *the two anointed ones* are **Joshua** and **Zerubbabel**.

In the sixth vision for **Z'kharyah**, there is an assurance that wickedness will always be punished. This sixth vision focuses on the **Torah**, which is a departure from the focus on **Yerushalayim** and the **Temple** in the preceding visions. The change involves a significant shift from encouragement to expectation, from revealing what **God** will do to disclosing what He expects His people to do. Throughout the **Tanakh**, **God's** covenant with **Isra'el** was presented as a reciprocal relationship—blessings were dependent on compliance (Gen 17:1–2, 9; Jer 18:7–10)—and that was no less true for the returnees. Though that point had already been made (Zech 1:3; 3:7), **Z'kharyah** developed it in this vision and the next.

The Flying Scroll

*5¹ Again I raised my eyes, and I saw in front of me a flying scroll. ² He said to me, "What do you see?" I replied, "I see a flying scroll thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. ³ Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of all the land; for [according to what is written] on one side, everyone who steals will be swept away; and [according to what is written] on the other side, everyone who swears will be swept away. ⁴ 'I will release it,' says Adonai-Tzva'ot, 'and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name; it will stay there inside the house and consume it completely, even its timbers and stones.'"*¹

The dimensions of the scroll are unusual, though the proportions suggest a partly unrolled scroll, as if it were waiting to be read. The curse for disobedience is not unexpected (Deuteronomy 27:15–26; 28:15–68). The selection of two commandments (Exodus 20:7, 15) is probably representative of the 10 commandments (for other selections, see Z'kharyah 7:4–14). Everyone is held accountable to what the flying scroll says, with the consequences of disobedience expressed in vivid terms.

In **Z'kharyah** 4:1-5:4, the vision of the lampstand shows that **God** is always present, illuminating our lives. If you feel spiritually stagnant at home, take time each morning or evening to reflect on **God's Word**. This creates a dedicated time for spiritual renewal and encouragement, just like the lampstands represented the continuous light provided by **God**. Make it a habit to discuss how you see His presence in your everyday life.

In our next post, we will pick up where we left off by exploring **Z'kharyah** in the previous post.

¹ Z'kharyah 4:1-5:4.