

## **The Power and the Plumb Line** *Zechariah 4:1-10*

Good morning,

*Lincoln Log Masters* is a reality show about building log cabins.

The show details the process of building log homes and shares some terms about the tools used to build those homes.

The show also addresses the risks associated with tools, such as chainsaws and heavy machinery.

*? What if we lived in the 1800s and had to construct a home without power tools or modern conveniences?*

Building without power tools might be fun as a hobby, but it is much better to have power tools, laser levels, and modern conveniences if we want to be proficient during building.

Please open your Bibles to ***Zechariah 4*** as we take a one-week break from our survey through the ***Psalms***.

Go to the ***Gospel of Matthew*** and back up two books and you will find ***Zechariah*** in the Old Testament.

Allow me to set a backdrop for the ***Book of Zechariah***.

Throughout Israel's history, they rebelled against the LORD and at different times, the LORD corrected them in various ways.

Before the Babylonian captivity, King Josiah's father and grandfather were both wicked Kings and he led Judah.

Josiah was a godly king, who became king at eight years old. Josiah was known for rediscovering the Law of the LORD.

But once Josiah died, the people of Israel went back to their old ways of worshiping idols and disobeying the Lord.

So finally, the LORD sent judgment through Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Babylon conquered Judah as prophesied beforehand, and the people were exiled to Babylon for 70 years.

*Jeremiah* and *Isaiah* were prophets who foretold of the coming captivity before the fall of Jerusalem, and the books of *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* were written while the Jews were in captivity.

*The Book of Ezra* tells of the return of the Jews which was promised by the LORD, after Judah spent 70 years in captivity, that was prophesied by *Jeremiah* and *Isaiah*.

*The Book of Nehemiah* tells of the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple after the captivity was over.

In *Zechariah* many of the Jewish people began to believe that this time was a “*day of small things*” (*Zechariah 4:10*) and that the LORD was not a present help.

These people began to think that obedience to the LORD’s commands was now useless, as they began to think it made more sense to forget God and pursue a life of their own desires.

Originally the LORD called Israel to be a light to the nations, but they failed miserably in their calling.

Even with this failure the LORD was not done helping them fulfill their destiny.

## **I. Time to wake up.**

Read *Zechariah 4:1*

The people who returned were not prepared for what they found.

We tend to remember the good old days and the former glory of a place that may or may not be an accurate recollection.

If you know the history of this time, you will remember that King Cyrus of Persia had allowed 50,000 Jews to return from exile in Babylon to rebuild the city and the Temple.

Those who returned to Jerusalem witnessed a desolation they never could have imagined.

The destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar was so great that all they could do was cover the rubble and the waste of the past and start building anew on top of it.

The foundation for a new Temple was formed shortly after the initial return, but many powerful people began to oppose the rebuilding of the Temple and harass those who were building it.

Twenty years after returning to the land, some had become **discouraged**. Because of the harassment, many people lost the vision and desire to continue to rebuild the city and the Temple.

The prophets *Zechariah* and *Haggai* were contemporaries.

In *Haggai*, some of the people who went back into the land were disillusioned because they saw the foundation of the new Temple and began to miss the glory of the old Temple.

*Haggai 2:3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?'*

*Haggai 2:4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the LORD of hosts.*

*Haggai 2:5 'According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'*

*Haggai 2:6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts:' Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land;*

*Haggai 2:7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.*

*Haggai 2:8 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts.*

**Haggai 2:9** *'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts.'* NKJV

Sometimes we become disillusioned or disappointed when we go down memory lane.

Times of disappointment, discouragement, loneliness, and sorrow can make someone lethargic and sleepy.

Here we see Zechariah awakened by an angel as he had a half-asleep feeling as if he was awakened from a deep sleep.

The people had lost the hope they had of the vision from God.

***Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish.  
KJV***

*Who was this angel who woke Zechariah up to give him this vision?*

Zechariah saw a vision of Joshua the High Priest of the time.

***Zechariah 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the Angel.***

***Zechariah 3:4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him, He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes."***

***Zechariah 3:5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.***

As Joshua the High Priest was in the presence of the LORD, Satan accused him of standing before God in ***filthy garments***.

The LORD fixed the problem by cleansing Joshua, taking away the *filthy garments* and the sin those garments represented.

***Zechariah 3:6 Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying,***

***Zechariah 3:7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.***

The Angel of the LORD, the LORD of hosts is none other than Jesus Christ before the manger in the Old Testament.

Notice what the commandment of Jesus to the High Priest was to, *walk in My ways, and keep My command.*

Jesus gives us clean clothing in His sight and the sight of the Father if we obey His command. ***What is Jesus' command?***

***John 6:28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"***

***John 6:29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." NKJV***

Maybe you have been going through an experience of suffering, loneliness, or sorrow. You need strength and comfort.

Maybe your prayer life has been lacking or your faith is lacking, and you need prayer to trust the LORD in a storm. May we not sleep, when we should be **trusting**, watching, and praying.

## II. The power source.

Read *Zechariah 4:2-6*

After Zechariah is awakened out of his sleep the LORD gives him a vision of the lampstand that used to be in the Temple.

While the LORD was giving Moses instructions for the pieces of the original Tabernacle, we are told...

*Exodus 25:31 "You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece.*

*Exodus 25:32 And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side.*

*Exodus 25:33 Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower — and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand.*

*Exodus 25:34 On the lampstand itself four bowls shall be made like almond blossoms, each with its ornamental knob and flower. NKJV*

Since Zechariah and the people were in Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, it made sense that God spoke to them about a lampstand.

The lampstand was hammered out of pure gold, with one middle shaft with three branches coming out of each side, so it was a total of seven places for lamps.

Zechariah saw something that was never in the original Temple, *two olive trees* that supplied the *seven lamps* with oil through seven individual pipes.

One of the duties of the priests was the care of the lamps on the golden lampstand. The lampstands had to be continually refilled with oil because the lamps were to burn continually.

*Exodus 27:20 "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. NKJV"*

In this vision, Zechariah saw “self-filling” lamps, which were fed directly from two olive trees.

The angel asked Zechariah, “*Do you not know what these are?*” The angel wanted Zechariah to understand the meaning of this vision.

Zechariah was the prophet, and **Zerubbabel** was the civic leader of Jerusalem, who was responsible for making sure the work of rebuilding the Temple would be completed.

Remember, the work had stalled due to the attacks and their disappointment, so the angel was showing **Zechariah** that **Zerubbabel** needed encouragement to carry on the work.



***‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.***

**Might**, speaks of a *joint* strength, the resources of a group or army. **Power** speaks of an individual strength.

The work of the LORD will never be completed by military might, nor by the power of any group of men. The Spirit of the LORD is needed to **complete** the LORD’s plans and in His way.

Many people want to complete work for the LORD in their own strength and wonder why the plans soon fissile out.

The way of the flesh is the Oxcart theory.

Remember back to King David and the Ark of the Covenant have been captured by the Philistines.

The Philistines soon discovered that they wanted Israel to take back the Ark because of all the misfortune they encountered.

Originally when the Philistines captured the Ark, they placed it in the house of their god Dagon, but the statue kept falling on its face before the Ark.

They decided to move the Ark to various cities, and wherever the Ark went, the people there became ill and formed tumors.

After seven months the Philistines told Israel to come and get the Ark.

The LORD originally told Moses how to handle the Ark, since it represented God’s throne, He told Moses how to move it.

***Exodus 25:14 You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. NKJV***

But when King David went to retrieve the Ark, he allowed it to be transported with an Oxcart instead of doing things the way the LORD had instructed.

Instead of doing things the LORD's way, David copied the Philistines' method of using an Oxcart when they arrived at the threshing floor, Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it and died.

The resource for God's work is the Holy Spirit and we must fully rely on the Spirit of God to accomplish the LORD's work.

When we trust in our resources, then we won't enjoy the full supply of the Spirit.

C.H. Spurgeon said, "*O churches! take heed lest ye trust in yourselves; take heed lest ye say, 'We are a respectable body,' 'We are a mighty number,' 'We are a potent people;'* take heed lest ye begin to glory in your own strength; for when that is done, 'Ichabod' shall be written on your walls and your glory shall depart from you."

We have learned this before, but it is a good reminder that Oil in scripture is a representation of the Holy Spirit.

David Guzik gave some illustrations of oil, I will share with you

- *Oil heals and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times – the Spirit of God brings healing and restoration.*

- *Oil lights when it is burned in a lamp – where the Spirit of God is there is light.*
- *Oil warms when it is used as fuel for a flame – where the Spirit of God is there is warmth and comfort.*
- *Oil adorns when applied as a perfume – the Holy Spirit adorns us and makes us more pleasant to be around.*
- *Oil polishes when used to shine metal – the Holy Spirit wipes away our grime, smoothing out our rough edges.*

The lamps in ***Zechariah 4*** had a direct connection to the olive trees just as New Testament Christians have the Holy Spirit, our **direct** connection to the Father and His power.

### **III. Built on God’s Word.**

Read ***Zechariah 4:7-10***

The ***great mountain*** in *vs. 7* could have been all of the rubble from Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion. Or...

The ***great mountain*** could have been what seemed like an insurmountable amount of **opposition** and negativity from those who didn’t want the LORD’s work of the Temple being rebuilt.

No matter how big the opposition to the LORD is, He is mightier than those who will oppose Him.

***“He shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!”***

The LORD gave assurance to Zerubbabel that the work would get finished, and that it would be Zerubbabel who would finish it, by God's grace.

Guzik said, *“When the work is done through human might or **power** we can take credit for it, but when the work is done by the supply of the **Spirit** then it is all to the **glory** of God's grace.”*

Notice, *“**For who has despised the day of small things**”*

The work of the Temple had been put on hold for 20 years, so the urgency from the prophet Zechariah to get it going may have seemed small to Zerubbabel.

But the LORD said it was time to move, so it was the most important thing for God's people to follow His directive.

Guzik said, *“When Satan tempts us to despise **the day of small things**, he shines as an outstanding liar because Satan does not despise the day of small things.*

*Satan fears **the day of small things** in our life because he sees what great things God does in them and brings out of them.”*

The LORD often gives us the choice of ignoring Him when we think the thing He is telling us to do is insignificant. But His plans and His timing are always **perfect**.

***Luke 12:48 For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. NKJV***

Then notice, ***“For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel”***

The ***eyes of the LORD*** are mentioned in this same context.

The LORD saw Zerubbabel busy with building and using the ***plumb line***. The plumb line represents something else about the LORD as well.

**(Picture)** If you don't know what a plumb line is, allow me to explain it. A plumb line is a string with a weight attached on one end that resembles to toy, top.

You use the plumb line to determine if something is straight up and down vertically like a level is used horizontally.

Bible study tools said, *“The plumb line then is the image — the parable — of God's holy and righteous standard for Israel.*

*It served as a measuring line representing Israel's failure, and how far they had fallen from God's guiding principles.”*

***Amos 7:7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand.***

***Amos 7:8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" and I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore. NKJV***

The Word of God is our plumb line to instruct and test that things are **straight** and done in the way the LORD wants them.

The LORD's standards are what we are to use, not man's wisdom or ways of doing things.

Even though the work was powered by the Spirit of God, Zerubbabel still needed his **plumb line** to complete the job.

#### **IV. Practical Application.**

**The Power and the Plumb Line** is the title of this sermon. Of course, the power comes from the Holy Spirit and the plumb line is the Word of God.

*John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." NKJV*

*"in spirit"*. The work of the LORD will never be completed by military might, nor by the power of any group of men.

The Spirit of the LORD is needed to complete the LORD's plans and in His way. Some want to complete work for the LORD in their strength, wondering why the plans don't work

So, we must depend on, listen to, and be directed by the Spirit of God when fulfilling His directives. We also have the next part of *John 4:24, "and truth"*.

*How can we be sure what we are trying to accomplish is God's truth and will?*

Paul said in *1 Thessalonians 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:20 Do not despise prophecies.*

***1 Thessalonians 5:21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.***

***1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from every form of evil. NKJV***

1. When we feel as if the LORD has given us a vision, we must ensure we are being **controlled** by the Spirit of God and ***“do not quench the Spirit or despise the vision”***.

***Ephesians 5:18 Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled (controlled by) with the Spirit, NKJV***

2. When we feel as if the LORD has given us a vision, we must first **test** it by the Word of God, as we ***test all things; hold fast what is good.***

There are plenty of amoral things that are not addressed in scripture, but there are also things that directly defy the Word of God and if that is the case we are to cancel the plan immediately

3. After testing the vision by the Word of God, we then spend a lot of time **praying** about it.

***James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; NKJV***

Then after much prayer time, you still sense the LORD leading the vision, you obey the LORD by doing your part and rely on the LORD to do His part.

***Zechariah 4:6 "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. NKJV*** **Where God guides, God provides.**