

Hope for a New Day

Haggai 2:20-23; Zech 4:5-14

SS Lesson for 06/22/2014

Devotional Scripture: 1 Peter 1:3-6

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson teaches us that there is **Hope for a New Day**. The **study's aim** is to see how God worked in the lives of His people and how He gave them hope. The **study's application** is to make it our practice to respond quickly and willingly to the Lord and the words that He sends us. (*From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

Key Verse: *Zech 4:6*

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.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The significance of Zerubbabel. Before identifying the “two olive trees” (Zech. 4:3) with “the two who are anointed” (Zech. 4:14), the angel prepared for this conclusion by relating the vision to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah (cf. Hag. 1:1, 12, 14; 2:21). The angel suggested that he would finish the temple (Zech. 4:9) through the abundant supply of the Spirit of God. Thus the oil for the lamp is associated with the Holy Spirit. By His enabling the temple would be completed (Zech. 4:6) and every obstacle (mighty mountain, Zech. 4:7) to rebuilding would be removed. Military strength (might) and human manpower (power) could not accomplish the task, but Spirit-empowered workers under the direction and leadership of Zerubbabel would do so. The Lord explained to Zechariah (Zech. 4:8-10) that Zerubbabel’s finishing the restoration temple would drive the critics to silence for they would know God had sent the prophet and the reconstructionists (God bless it! [Zech. 4:7] Men will rejoice [Zech. 4:10]). (Because Joshua the high priest was the subject of the preceding vision, no specific mention is made of him in this vision, but the two visions go together). As Zerubbabel... laid the foundation of this temple (Zech. 4:9; i.e., he began the work of rebuilding on the ancient foundations), so he would also complete it, epitomized by his laying the capstone (Zech. 4:7). The word translated plumb line (Zech. 4:10) is disputed and possibly refers to this final crowning stone (cf. Baldwin, Zechariah, pp. 122-3). Others say it symbolizes Zerubbabel’s supervising the rebuilding project. Those who despised the day of small things may have been older Jews who thought this temple was insignificant compared with the former temple of preexilic times (cf. Ezra 3:12-13; Hag. 2:3).

The interpretation of the two olive trees. The words about the seven being the eyes of the Lord are possibly a delayed answer to Zechariah’s question in verse 4. Like “eyes” the seven lights (lamps, Zech. 4:2) symbolize God’s worldwide scrutiny, for nothing is hidden from Him. Others understand the “seven” to refer back to the seven eyes in the previous vision (3:9). The two olive branches and two gold pipes are mentioned for the first time in the vision in 4:12. The two branches with olives poured their oil into the gold pipes, which flowed into the bowl and then through the 49 channels to the seven lamps. The interpreting angel removed Zechariah’s confusion regarding the two olive trees (Zech. 4:3, 11) by indicating that their two oil-supplying branches represent the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth (Zech. 4:14). The branches refer to the anointing of priests and kings, with particular allusion to Joshua and Zerubbabel who typify the Messiah as both Priest and King. The lampstand, then, seems to represent Israel as a light to the nations (cf. Isa. 42:6; 49:6), potentially in Zechariah’s time, but will be actually so during the millennial reign of Christ. Another fulfillment, partial at least, of Zechariah 4:11-14 is found in the two witnesses in the future Tribulation period (Rev. 11:3-6, esp. v. 4).

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

This well-known verse has been an encouragement to God's people over and over again. It speaks of the hope that God will yet show Himself in a new way, in a new day. Again and again we find ourselves in need of a fresh encounter with God in the midst of our lives and ministries, and this verse gives us the confidence that God will meet us at our point of need. The background of this text is very interesting. It was addressed by the Prophet Zechariah to the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel, in the years following the Exile. According to Haggai 1:1, Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David and in the messianic line; so promises to him must be seen in their full biblical context. In Haggai 2:20-23 the Lord's prophetic word to Zerubbabel gave out some promises that God would yet reestablish Israel in the center of His plan. For many decades Israel had lived under the domination of foreign powers such as Babylon and Persia. These were mighty, conquering empires. It had to seem impossible that

Israel would ever escape from their yoke. Life was hard under that yoke, with poor harvests and high taxes. The people were often discouraged. Yet God's promises came, giving hope and confidence that the presence of God would accomplish amazing things in the lives of His people as they waited on Him. We too must realize that God loves His people and desires to show Himself to us. In our discouraging times, we must look up and remember that we have a God we can pray to and trust in. How does His help come? How does the victory arrive? God's Word is clear that it does not come by "might, nor by power." Two words are used here to help us understand that the help we desire comes from God. "Might" is a term for strength—the ability to endure, to be firm. Sometimes we think, Well, if I can just wait it out, something good will happen. That is trusting in ourselves. The next term, "power," is more of a creative word. It is the ability to make something happen, that is, potency. Sometimes we think, I can make something happen here, and we rush ahead with our own ideas and in our own strength. But God is telling us that He will do it by His Spirit. God teaches us to pray, to wait on the Lord, and to trust that in His time He will show us what He can do for us. In life and in ministry today, we seem to live in a pragmatic age—all the emphasis is on our ingenuity and the omnipotence of human talent and on how much we can do for God and for ourselves. But is the Lord not saying to us that what we really need is for Him to move powerfully? Would we rather not have the success that God gives than something we produce in our own power? Does not God deserve to receive the glory? The church needs revival today. Our society needs an awakening. Our lives need the touch of God. We need breakthroughs and answers to prayer. These things are not going to come through our wisdom, cleverness, or strength. We need God. Our hope and confidence need to be in Him. Let us live looking upward, asking God to move powerfully by His Spirit.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
Hag 2:23	'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts.	Hope Because of Pleasing God
Zech 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.	Hope Because of the Promise of God's Power
Zech 4:12	And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"	Hope Because of the Indwelling Holy Spirit

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Today's lesson is the last in this unit of studies that focuses on the rebuilding of the temple in the post-exilic period of Old Testament history. Most of today's text comes from the book of Zechariah, who was a contemporary of Haggai. Like Haggai, Zechariah encouraged God's people to faithfulness in completing the rebuilding project that had been on hold for some 16 years. The day of victory and achievement would come only by means of a day-by-day devotion to carrying out God's plan. The same principle holds true for Christian service today. The fact that Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai is clear from the dates mentioned in their books (compare Zechariah 1:1 with Haggai 1:1). These two prophets are also mentioned together in Ezra 5:1, 2, where they are described as "supporting" those who worked on rebuilding the temple. The first major section of the book of Zechariah (that is, 1:1-6:8) consists of eight visions given at night to the prophet. All were messages to challenge and encourage those involved in rebuilding the temple. As Haggai did, Zechariah conveyed special messages to the leaders of the people, namely Zerubbabel and Joshua. The fourth of the eighth visions, recorded in Zechariah 3, concerned Joshua. Today's lesson from chapter 4 describes the fifth of these visions and offers a message especially intended to encourage Zerubbabel. Before we turn to our text from Zechariah, we will consider a single verse from Haggai. The final message in this book is addressed to Zerubbabel, governor of those who returned from Babylonian captivity. The message begins with another promise from God to "shake the heavens and the earth" (Haggai 2:21), repeating an earlier promise found in 2:6 (covered in lesson

2). The effect of the shaking is more specifically defined in 2:21, 22: kingdoms and chariots, along with their horses and riders, will one day "fall, each by the sword of his brother." Amidst all of this predicted turmoil, a promise was given to Zerubbabel.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Hope Because of Pleasing God (Hag 2:20-23)

20 And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying,
21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying: 'I will shake heaven and earth.
22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overthrow the chariots And those who ride in them; The horses and their riders shall come down, Every one by the sword of his brother.
23 'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts."

When we please God He fights our battles (20-22)

Fights our battles because He goes before His people and fights (Deut 1:29-31)

29 Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. 30 The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, 31 and in the desert. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

Fights our battles because He is God (Ps 46:8-10)

8 Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Fights our battles because the battles are His to fight (2 Chron 20:15-17)

15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. 17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'"

Fights our battles because He is the only with the power to do so (Ps 44:2)

2 With your hand you drove out the nations and planted our fathers; you crushed the peoples and made our fathers flourish.

Those who please God are His ambassadors (23)

An ambassador making an appeal for reconciliation (2 Cor 5:20)

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

An ambassador bringing a trustworthy healing (Prov 13:17)

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.

An ambassador who is a messenger of God (Mal 2:7)

7 "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction — because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.

An ambassador to help turn people to Jesus (Acts 26:16-18)

16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Hope Because of the Promise of God's Power (Zech 4:5-9)

5 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."

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.

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!" ' "

8 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

9 "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.

Power of the Holy Spirit (5-6)

Empowered by the Holy Spirit so that the word of God can be spoken boldly (Acts 4:31)

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit as part of living wisely (Eph 5:15-18)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve (Acts 6:2-6)

2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." 5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit as evidence of the grace of God (Acts 11:22-24)

22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit to know the love of God (Eph 3:16-20)

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit to love and be self-disciplined (2 Tim. 1:7)

7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Power of God's grace (7)

Power of God's grace that makes us sufficient (2 Cor 12:9)

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Power of God's grace through God's will and pleasure (Eph 1:5-6)

5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Power of God's grace through mercy (1 Tim 1:13-14)

13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Power of God's grace that provides justification (Titus 3:3-7)

3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Power of God's grace that results in blessing after blessing (John 1:16)

16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

Power because God never fails (8-9)

God's power never fails because it is majestic (Ex 15:6-7)

6 "Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy. 7 In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

God's power never fails because it is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)

21 Do not be terrified by them, for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

God's power never fails because God and man knows it (Ps 62:11-12)

11 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong, 12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

God's power causes His enemies to cringe (Ps 66:3)

3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

God's power never fails because it cannot be turned back (Isa 14:27)

27 For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Hope Because of the Indwelling Holy Spirit (Zech 4:10-14)

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."

11 Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?"

12 And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"

13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."

14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

The Holy Spirit provides spiritual insight (10)

Spiritual insight from God, which brings understanding (Phil 1:9-10)

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,

Spiritual insight through examining the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11)

11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Spiritual insight through meditation on God's Word (Ps 119:99)

99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

Spiritual insight through praying and seeking it with all my heart (Prov 2:3-5)

3 and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

Spiritual insight to know the spiritual truths of God's Word (1 Cor 2:13-16)

13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Holy Spirit provides spiritual power (11-12)

Spiritual power through the Holy Spirit for eternal life (John 4:14)

14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Spiritual power that leads us into the likeness of Jesus (1 Cor 15:46-49)

46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

Spiritual power that leads to perfection (Heb 12:22-24)

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Spiritual power that comes from putting on the full armor of God (Eph 6:12-13)

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Spiritual power in the inner being (Eph 3:16-19)

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

The Holy Spirit anoints His people (13-14)

Anointing that comes from God pouring out His Spirit (Joel 2:28-29)

28 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Anointing that provides truth (1 John 2:20)

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

Anointing that teaches all things (1 John 2:27)

27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Anointing that saves (Ps 20:6)

6 Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand.

Anointing that empowers to stand firm (2 Cor 1:21-22)

21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Anointing that opens spiritual eyes (Rev 3:18)

18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts From David Guzik

The meaning of the vision

1. (Zechariah 4:6-7) How Zerubbabel will accomplish the work: by the Spirit of God.

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. 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!” ‘ “

a. This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Zerubbabel was the civic leader of Jerusalem, and had the responsibility to finish the work of rebuilding the temple. The work had stalled, and Zerubbabel needed encouragement to carry on the work.

b. 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts: In the vision of Zechariah 3:1-10 God spoke to Zerubbabel about the issue of *purity*. But purity alone is not enough to accomplish the work of God - the work of God needs *resources*, and not the resources of human might or power.

i. Might focuses on *collective* strength, the resources of a group or army. Power focuses on individual strength. God says, "not by the resources of many or one, but by My Spirit. It will not be by your cleverness, your ability, or your physical strength that the temple will be rebuilt, but by the Spirit of God."

ii. The necessary resource for God's work is the Holy Spirit and God promises Zerubbabel a rich resource in the Spirit of God to accomplish His work. When we trust in our own resources - whether they be small or great in the eyes of man - then we don't enjoy the full supply of the Spirit. "Oh! May God send us poverty; may God send us lack of means, and take away our power of speech if it must be, and help us only to stammer, if we may only thus get the blessing. Oh! I rave to be useful to souls, and all the rest may go where it will." (Spurgeon)

iii. This was the Spirit - the breath - the *ruah* of the LORD which worked in creation (Genesis 1:2), at the Red Sea, to open and close it (Exodus 15:8; Exodus 15:10) and that gave life to dead bones (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

iv. Looking back to the vision earlier in the chapter, we see that God wanted Zerubbabel to know that the Holy Spirit would continually supply his need, just as the oil trees in the vision continually supplied oil to the lamps on the lampstand. God wants His supply and our reliance on the Holy Spirit to be *continual*.

v. "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. Remember, that he who was with us when we were but few, must be with us now we are many, or else we must fail; and he who strengthened us when we were but as 'little in Israel,' must be with us, now that we are like 'the thousands of Manasseh,' or else it is all over with us and our day is past." (Spurgeon)

c. By My Spirit: Why oil is a good representation of the Holy Spirit:

- Oil *lubricates* when used for that purpose - there is little friction and wear among those who are lubricated by the Spirit of God
- Oil *heals* and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times (Luke 10:34) - 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 *invigorates* when used to massage - the Holy Spirit invigorates us for His service
- 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 and smoothes out our rough edges

d. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! The work of rebuilding the temple was so massive it seemed like a great mountain. Here God promises that by His Spirit, that great mountain will be leveled into a plain.

i. In this case, the great mountain may have literally been the mountainous pile of rubble at the temple site. That rubble would be removed and the work carried on.

ii. "You all get up plans and say, 'Now, if the church were altered a little bit, it would go on better.' You think if there were different ministers, or different church order, or something different, then all would be well. No, dear friends, it is not there the mistake lies, it is that we want more of the Spirit." (Spurgeon)

e. He shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" This is God assurance to Zerubbabel that not only will the work be finished, but *Zerubbabel* - he - shall finish it, setting the capstone and declaring that it was all a work of grace.

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

2. (Zechariah 4:8-10) More encouragement for Zerubbabel.

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. 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."

a. His hands shall finish it: When the work is done by God's Spirit there are not only resources to *begin* the work, but also to finish the work. God is a *finisher* (Philippians 1:6).

b. For who has despised the day of small things? Zechariah's question rings true to us today. Almost every one of us could answer, "I have despised the day of small things." The question provides its own answer: none of us *should* despise the day of small things, because God has a wonderful - though perhaps difficult - purpose for those days.

i. It was a long "day" for Zerubbabel, because the work of the temple laid in ruins for almost 20 years. He probably would say to God, "What do you mean 'day of small things?' I've lived with 20 years of small things." Even so, God tells Zerubbabel to not despise the time of small things, and to consider it is all as just a day.

ii. In many of God's choice workers He uses a powerful season of small things. Those days are not a mistake nor are they punishment; they are days of priceless shaping and preparation. They are not days to despise.

iii. 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.

iv. Spurgeon spoke to the need for courage in the day of small things in our churches: "To me, it seems that it should be your glory to join the poorest and weakest churches of your denomination, and wherever you go, to say, 'This little cause is not as strong as I should like it to be; but, by the grace of God, I will make it more influential. At any rate, I will throw in my weight to strengthen the weak things of Zion, and certainly I will not despise the day of small things.' Where would

have been our flourishing churches of today if our forefathers had disdained to sustain them while they were yet in their infancy?"

v. "God accepts your little works if they are done in faith in his dear Son. God will give success to your little works: God will educate you by your little works to do greater works; and your little works may call out others who shall do greater works by far than ever you shall be able to accomplish." (Spurgeon)

c. For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel: The seven are the eyes of the LORD mentioned in this same context. They rejoice when they see Zerubbabel busy with the building work, with the plumb line in his hand. The eyes of the LORD see it all, and they are happy to see God's people at work.

i. Though the work was empowered by the Spirit of God, Zerubbabel still need his plumb line. He still needed to get to work. God could have given Zerubbabel a shortcut and instantly, miraculously finished the work. That's isn't God's way of doing things, because His work in the life of Zerubbabel was as important to Him as His work through Zerubbabel.

3. (Zechariah 4:11-14) Explanation of the olive trees and lampstands.

Then I answered and said to him, "What *are* these two olive trees; at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these *are*?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These *are* the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

a. What are these two olive trees: Zechariah understood the message of encouragement to Zerubbabel, but he didn't exactly understand how it connected to the vision of the olive trees and the lampstand.

b. These are the two anointed ones: In Zechariah's day, the two anointed ones were Zerubbabel and Joshua. It seems that they were not the entire trees, but two olive branches from the trees, probably one branch from each tree. The trees themselves may represent the kingly and priestly offices in Israel.

i. God had a special work for these two anointed ones. They would be uniquely anointed to work together and to accomplish the work of God. God often calls two men to work together:

- Moses and Aaron
- Joshua and Caleb
- Elijah and Elisha
- Peter and John
- Paul and Barnabas
- Calvin and Luther
- Whitefield and Wesley
- Moody and Sankey
- Graham and Barrows

ii. God promises to raise up two more witnesses, anointed ones to preach the gospel to the world immediately before Jesus' return (Revelation 11:3-13). Revelation 11:4 specifically says of these witnesses: *These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.*

c. The two anointed ones had work to do and it would be so supplied by the Spirit of God that they would be like the olive trees with a continual supply of oil for the lamps on the lampstand.

i. Anointed ones is literally *sons of oil*. In Hebrew idioms the *son of* something is radically characterized by that thing. For example, the *sons of Belial* totally represent their pagan god

Belial. These two are so characterized by the ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit that they are *sons of oil*.

ii. How did the trees supply the oil? It came *out of* the trees. All real ministry is giving of ourselves. It doesn't matter how much we have; what matters is how much we give of ourselves. Some people are like a huge tank of oil that you might see at a refinery. You think, "that's enough gas to last a lifetime" - but you could never fill your tank there. At the refinery there is much supply, but no delivery. A five-gallon can of gas at home can carry only a little supply - but it will deliver.

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Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Leaders who desire to please God can expect God's encouragement for their leadership (Hag. 2:20-23; cf. Josh. 1:5-9)
2. True spiritual success is the result of God's might and power, not man's (Zech. 4:5-6)
3. What God starts, He will finish (Zech. 4:7-9; cf. Phil. 1:6)
4. For His glory, God often delights to use the small things of life to accomplish His mighty works (Zech. 4:10)
5. The wise seek God's instruction (vss. 11-13)
6. God gives wisdom and understanding to those who truly want it (Zech. 4:14; cf. Jas. 1:5)