



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 4:1-14

"Israel the Light of the World in Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're looking at Zechariah chapter 5 tonight, and our subject is "Israel, the Light of the World in the Lord." Today's Judaism, we have been saying in one way or another is a religion of laws and ethics and ritual. It has often been pointed out that the Talmud is a body of Jewish religious literature outside of the Bible. Judaism is a legalistic religion, and the core of Judaism is the Mosaic Law as contained in the Pentateuch. The Talmud, among other things is the interpretation of the meaning of the Mosaic Law, and its application to the daily life of the Jew. Six hundred and thirteen commandments have been deduced from the Law of Moses, and they cover every possible situation of Jewish life. Of the six hundred and thirteen commandments, three hundred and sixty-five are negative commandments, things which the Jew must not do. And two hundred and forty-eight are positive commandments, the things which a Jew must do. Almost entirely absent from Judaism is any stress upon a personal relationship to God, any emphasis upon the spirit of God and religious experience.

About thirty years ago there was a lengthy article in *Time Magazine* on Judaism. And in the course of the article it was stated by the author, who drew it up, "For Judaism is of this worldly, rather than another worldly religion. Its basis is action, rather than

dogma. Obedience to the law is far more important than belief, for the law is truth set forth in terms of action." That would sound quite good to many Protestants today. In fact, if a person were to say, "Obedience to the word of God is far more important than belief." You would probably get a positive reaction from most people. A little realizing, of course, that there can be no obedience to the law if there is no belief; and that when we put these two things in opposition to one another, we are really contradicting the teaching of the word of God, and contradicting everything that is found in Scripture. Scripture stresses obedience, but it stresses the obedience that flows out of trust. And there can be no obedience to the law of God, if there is not knowledge of the law of God and trust in the things that ultimately are found in Jesus Christ.

Even Jewish people have realized that important segments of the rabbinic law have little basis in the biblical text. In fact, in the Michener, which is an exposition of scriptural things it is stated that, "Many things in the Judaism and particularly in Jewish religion, are mountains hanging by a hair." In other words, great systems of thought have been built up which have no relationship to the word of God more than a hair. Though really, a lot of that is true of Protestantism too. We have, in Protestantism many forms of tradition, many kinds of taboos, and many things that we ought to do, which are not necessarily found in the word of God, but they have been built up in tradition and by tradition. We have tradition in Believers Chapel. Some of our tradition may be good, and there may be some that is not good. It is the duty of the elders and others, particularly the elders, to examine the things that they are doing in the light of the teaching of the word of God constantly. The reformers often spoke, and reformed theologian often still speak, of the church reformed and to be reformed. And what they mean by that is that the church reformed is the church as it has come to be reformed through the things uncovered in the Protestant reformation. But we shouldn't just stop there. But the church should be something that is constantly being reformed. Well, I think that's right. It's also striking that there is practically no stress on spiritual experience in Jewish literature.

Some years ago a rabbi by the name of Marvin Nathan wrote a book entitled, *The Attitude of the Jewish Student in the Colleges and Universities toward His Religion*. The material in the book was based on answers to questionnaires which he sent out to fifteen hundred Jewish students from fifty-seven colleges and universities. In addition, Dr. Nathan personally interviewed over a hundred students at the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University where he was living. And he also said that he participated in many group discussions at several institutions of higher learning. These are some of the things that he discovered. This Jewish rabbi, two thirds of the students confess that they no longer entertain the personal concept of God. One third declared themselves skeptics, agnostics, or atheists. About three-fifths of the students, according to the study, displayed doubt, confusion, or indifference with reference to their religion. Three-fourths of the students have never recited their prayers at home, or if they had, they had given up that practice. Two-thirds had never attended, or if they had attended had ceased attending, any synagogue services. And one of the most revealing facts brought out in the study was that of the three religious groups, the orthodox, the conservatives, and the reformed, a larger percentage of the orthodox group gave up the religious practices than either of the other two groups. So, what you see in Judaism today is really a shell of what Judaism was supposed to be.

Occasionally Protestants think of Jewish people as individuals who can take up the Old Testament and read the Old Testament Hebrew, and cite all of the great passages of the Old Testament. But in stead of believing them, they disbelieve them. And so the result is that many Protestants have inferiority complexes in talking with Jews. They don't know the Old Testament too well themselves. They think the Jewish people understand the Old Testament a whole lot better than they. And they think that since they are not Christians, they have some good reasons why they don't believe the Old Testament Scriptures. Well, the facts are quite a bit different. The Jews are a very irreligious body of people today, and that is generally true of all Jewish people. They may talk quite well,

but when it comes to the knowledge of the Scriptures, they have very little knowledge of the Scriptures. Of course, there are some exceptions; there are some orthodox individuals who ponder things in the Scriptures. Although, many of them will tell you that they did not study the Scripture, so much as they did Jewish literature when they went to theological seminary. Like many of our Protestants who go to theological seminary and study the contemporary opinions of theologians and exegetes, and when they come out, many of them have a difficult time finding verses in parts of the Bible. So, Judaism then is a religion of laws and ethics and ritual. And in the sense it is very much like Protestantism today.

Well, if you read Zechariah chapter 4, and if you were a Jewish man and you had been following along in this book, you would have noticed that this chapter is quite a bit different from Judaism in that, first of all, a great deal of stress is laid upon the activity of the Spirit of God. Think of this famous text in verse 6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." So the fourth chapter of Zechariah is an antidote to all of this emphasis upon laws, and ethics, and ritual, and denial of personal experience. It turns the attention from human effort and legalism to divine activity and grace. There's really a kind of, I think, beautiful logic in Zechariah to this point. Remember, if you turn back to chapter 1, in verse 17 at the end of the first vision we read, "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem." And then look up just a few verses to verse 13, "And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words." Well, that's what he's been telling us, good words and comfortable words. In the first vision, in the second vision, in the third vision, and then a natural question might have arisen with the third of the visions in which these comfortable words have been spoken, well how is all of this going to come to pass? And last Tuesday night we looked at chapter 3, which records the fourth

of the divisions, and we saw that what the author is saying that these great things that are going to happen are going to come to pass by divine mercy and grace.

Notice the fourth verse, "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." And so, the sovereign activity of God in the removal of the filthy garments from Joshua, the high priest, and the clothing of him by the Lord God with change of raiment, is the explanation of how these great blessings are going to come to pass for the nation.

Well, now we come to chapter 4, and here, of course, Israel is set out ultimately as a beautiful witness to the whole of the earth, a witness to the nations. In fact, Israel becomes the light of the world in Christ. Now, let us not forget that lying in the background of this is the tabernacle. And remember the tabernacle with its altar of burnt offering, and then its altar at which the high priests had to wash their hands and feet constantly, and then in the tabernacle we had the table of showbread, the candlestick, and then of course, the altar at which the prayers were offered; and then in the holiest of all, the arc of the covenant and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat. So, in the tabernacle we have, not only a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is a picture of Israel as well, as God's representative to the nations of the earth. Because remember, our Lord Jesus is God's Israel. He is the seed, the seed of Abraham. He is the ultimate one in whom all of the blessings of God are made possible for us. And he is an Israelite. Never forget that. So, God is working through the Lord Jesus, the seed of Abraham. And it's not surprising then that the tabernacle, not simply picture what our Lord is to us, but also what Israel is to the world. And we have further development of this in chapter 4 of Zechariah.

Now, in the portrayal of the vision, Zechariah describes it in verse 1 through verse 5, also with some questions and answers. Listen as I read verse 1 through verse 5.

"And the angel that talked with me (Remember it's night time, all of these visions were given in the night.) The angle that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And 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 seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And 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? (Would that be what you would ask? Some of you look surprised. That's probably what you would ask, that is if you weren't so embarrassed about your ignorance. You didn't want to ask a question, because it's not easy to read those verses and picture in your mind exactly what the prophet is talking about. At least it's not for me, maybe it is for you.) Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord."

The prophet is overpowered, no doubt, by the revelation that he has been given, and probably a bit exhausted, and he's aroused from a kind of ecstatic slumber to a new vision. Notice, the 1st verse begins, "And he waked me, as a man that is waken out of his sleep." Even prophets sleep during times of great revelation. Think of it, Zechariah one of the great prophets of the Old Testament is sleeping, and the Lord God has to shake him, so that he may give him further revelation. And he's already had four of these great visions, but he's fallen asleep. So, in the midst of unfolding of great things, saints go to sleep. [Laughter] So in the midst of preaching on Sunday morning at eleven o'clock saints go to sleep. Perhaps you can come and say, "Well there is some scriptural justification for it." Or maybe you can blame it on your pills. "Well, my pills did not work" or whatever. Well, we at least can say this, that there is no safer and better place to go to sleep than in church. Preachers don't believe that usually, but in the final analysis that's probably true.

Now remember, think of Zerubbabel and Joshua are involved in at the present time. The remnant has come back to the land of Judah. They are rebuilding the temple. They are seeking to be established again in the land. And Zerubbabel and Joshua hope to complete the task of the rebuilding of the temple. It will be referred to in a moment as a mountain, and he will talk about the headstone of it. So, the historical background is the completion of the second temple, after the temple of Solomon was done away with. So that's the background, and that's Zerubbabel's task. And I have no doubt that one of the chief reasons this prophecy is given to Zerubbabel is to encourage him, to let him know that first of all, the Lord's work is done in the Lord's power, but in addition, to give him an assurance that the work is going to be finished. Notice the 9th verse in this connection. "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 unto you." So, he wants to encourage the prophet and give him strength as he's doing God's will in rebuilding the people.

Now, essentially this vision is a vision given against the background of the tabernacle. The candlestick immediately makes us think of the lamp stand in the tabernacle, in the holy place. And in addition, we have the bowl above the candlestick. If you can think of a candlestick with say, six of parts, and then one central stem, so that the total is seven, and then if you can think also of a bowl on top of it filled with oil and connected with each of the parts of the candlestick, each of the lamps; and if you can think of two olive trees that are growing out of the ground by the side, one on the right and one on the left, also connected with the bowl. So what you have is a kind of lighting system. The olive oil from the olive trees going into the bowl, which in turn goes to the lamps, and the tree remains in light as a result of this continual flow from the trees that are by the side of the lamp stand. So, the candlestick, and one thinks immediately of the tabernacle. So, you have the bowl above, the seven pipes to each of the seven lamps, and the trees to each of the sides, and of course, the stress of it is the automatic,

spontaneous supply of the oil. And it does not come from them. It comes, of course, ultimately from the Lord God. And that's why we read in the 6th verse, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD."

One would be expected to know something about this, if he knew something about the tabernacle. And since these individuals knew a great deal about the tabernacle, the vision, no doubt, was understood by them a whole lot easier than it might be understood by us, if we do not understand much about the tabernacle. Now, the prophet is not afraid to ask questions, and that of course is what we ought to do too. We should ask this text questions. We should say, "What does this mean, Lord?" And study it with that in mind.

Let me just make a few suggestions. First of all, "behold a candlestick all of gold," the lamp stand. Now, the symbolism of this is not specifically explained, but the message is given, and through it Israel is to be the light of the world, in the Lord, by the spirit. So, it seems very plain that what this is designed to represent, ultimately, is the ministry that Israel is going to have to the nations by virtue of the one who is ultimately pictured by all of the furniture of the tabernacle, the Lord Jesus Christ. One thinks of Israel, of course, as being chosen by God originally to give a revelation of him. That's why God chose Israel to begin with. He said, "You shall be my witnesses." That's Israel's purpose. Isaiah chapter 43 makes that very plain. Israel, however, failed and as a result of that, the kingdom of God was taken from them, so Jesus said, and given to a people bringing forth fruit. Now, we know from the unfolding of the New Testament, that the people bringing forth the fruit is that body of people composed of both Jews and Gentiles, who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ in the present day. In other words, the form of the people of God that exists today upon the earth, called in the New Testament very often by the term church.

And so, the church has become the administrator of the kingdom of God. But in Romans 11, we've often referred to this text, because it's probably the plainest text in the

Bible to expound this point. Paul warns the Gentiles in Romans 11, that if they do not continue in faith, they too, like the natural branches of Israel, will be cut off from the olive tree. And in fact, he says, the fact that Israel is composed of natural branches and they have been cut off as a nation. The fact that the natural branches have been cut off, and unnatural branches have been grafted in. Reasonably, rationally, logically, one will have to say it's more likely that the natural branches will be grafted in again. And he makes that very clear in Romans chapter 11, verse 24. And then in verse 25 and 26, he states specifically, "So all Israel shall be saved." And he doesn't mean every single, individual Israelite. He means Israel as a whole, that is as a nation. The nation has a future; the ethnic future of the nation is made plain by the apostle in Romans chapter 11.

So, when we think about Israel's history we think of failure, removal from place of administration of the kingdom, the substitution of another body, but ultimately of Israel's reinstatement as the administrator of the kingdom of God. And in this way, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the prophecies of the New Testament show a remarkable harmony. Occasionally we forget little things, and we are puzzled by them because we don't make careful distinctions. If we'll just remember that we are not talking about individuals primarily, but about nations, national entities. National entities are composed of individuals, but an individual Israelite stands before the Lord God just like an individual Gentile, but certain prefaces pertain to the nation as a whole.

And of course, in order to fulfill them, God must work in a certain number of individual Israelites, but not every individual, not every Israelite. So, in the Old Testament the expression "all Israel," used a number of times incidentally, refers to not every Israelite, but Israel as a whole. Please remember that. In other words, just as the nation did not entirely reject Christ, but the nation as a whole did; so in the future, not every Israelite is going to come to faith in Christ, but the nation as a whole will come to faith in Christ. So, the lamp stand, then suggestive of Israel's position in the world. They are the chosen instrument of God for spiritual enlightenment of the world.

Now, one might ask, "Well, how can Israel as a nation be the chosen instrument for the enlightenment of the world spiritually?" And of course, the answer to that is, only through Christ, and their faith in him, which God will bring them to. So, the foundation of their blessing to the world is their relationship to the Lord. It is what he will be to them. And he in his two-fold office of king/ priest will supply the oil that the lamp stand may be seen by the whole world, and light be given to the whole world through him.

The olive trees, what are the olive trees standing by the side of the lamp stand, referred to in verse 11 and verse 14. In fact, the prophecy concludes with a reference to them. "Then said he, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the LORD of the whole earth." In the local situation it is quite clear that these are references to Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zerubbabel, the Davidic king; and the one who was the inheritor of the Messianic office, and Joshua the great high priest, but it's evident that they stand there in their official position. They are called "sons of oil" in verse 14, two anointed ones; literally in the Hebrew text, two sons of oil, sh•nay ben yitshar, two sons of oil. Now, the reason they're called sons of oil is because the high priest was anointed by oil and installed in his office, and of course the king also was anointed by oil and installed in his office as well. So, these are the two anointed ones, the olive trees that stand by the lamp stand.

The olive branches, well I suggest that the olive branches are really the incumbents. In other words, the two trees are by the side, these are the offices ultimately fulfilled by our Lord. The branches from the trees to the lamps represent the men of prophetic portent. Look back at chapter 3, in verse 9. "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." Now, I said read verse 9, I should have told you verse 8. "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy," verse 9 is a pretty good verse though, don't you think. Verse 8, "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they

are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH." And so, the men to be wondered at, and the men of portent are the two Messianic figures, Joshua, Zerubbabel. What is referred to as the ultimate final union of priesthood and royalty, because the Lord Jesus is going to unite the office of high priest and the office of king, and in the great day of our Lord's kingdom upon the earth, we will have no separation of church and state. For we will have one state, and that one state will be a spiritual state, that is the ideal. People like to think its ideal to have the separation of church and state, well with peace to the Baptists, it's not. The ideal is to have one great spiritual kingdom ruled by one great spiritual figure, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the purpose of the vision is described for us in verse 6 through verse 10, and remember it's designed to buck up discouraged, perhaps, Zerubbabel and the remnant, which as they see this building being built up, they are discouraged, because they know that it does not compare at all with the temple that Solomon had built. It's just a little place. You know, after all, it's kind of like Believers Chapel, and Prestonwood Baptist out there. [Laughter] You're liable to ride down Meandering Lane and take a look over there, and say, "There's the Prestonwood Baptist Church, they seat five thousand people there." And then you drive on down and turn up Churchill Way and you say, "What's that little place over there?" Well, that's Believers Chapel. But the Lord doesn't always go by size, and anyone going to Europe will discover that, cathedral after cathedral, dead as they can possibly be. I remember the famous statement by one BBC Commentator who said, "Churches dot the English countryside like so many extinct volcanoes." That's no word against the Prestonwood Baptist Church, but let me say this, that there are many massive religious structures that are extinct volcanoes.

Well here is a little building now. They've arrived, they've come back to the land, and they remember the massive, beautiful Solomonic temple, and now they're building just a little thing. And so, the Lord feels it necessary to give them a little encouragement, to let them know he's in it. And so, first of all he says in the 6th verse, the temple is to be

completed by divine power. "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." That's really a kind of slogan of the vision. It's by the power of the spirit of God that things are really accomplished. You know it's interesting to reflect on the lamp stand in this respect, that lamp stands have not only that which supplies oil to them, but in order to burn they must have a wick. I suggest to you that the wicks are the individuals. In other words, the individuals cannot do anything to please the Lord, unless they do it by the oil supplied by the Lord God. And furthermore, they cannot have any supply of oil, it's very much like the manna, remember the manna, you could only gather your manna day by day. And in fact, if you gathered your manna on Tuesday and said, "Well, I'm not going to gather on Wednesday, I'll gather a double portion today." You discover that it spoiled, but you could gather it on Saturday for Saturday and Sunday, or on Friday for Friday and Saturday. So, in other words, God supernaturally allowed them to gather for two days once a week, but the rest of the time it spoiled.

Spiritual truth must be living and vital constantly. You cannot build up spiritual capital and say, "I'll live on that. I'll retire on that." Many people retire on their past experience. You can think about it in the congregation. They do, they had a beautiful experience twenty years ago. They were marvelously converted. They haven't grown that much since that time, but they're there. They have that. But the idea of growing constantly in the study of the word, largely lost to them. We all know that. Come on; take a look around in your mind. Take a look around at Christians you know. And it's amazing, I know some have been twenty years Christians, and they speak a language that's the language of a babe. They don't know where to find things in the Bible. They don't know the terms. It's as if they've been sitting in church and paying no attention whatsoever. Doing like the prophet did, sleeping while divine illumination was being given through the servants of God who were teaching the word.

Well, he says, you know the wick; incidentally, the wick must receive its oil constantly. And then when the wick is burned, it's burned; that's it. There isn't anything left, and so if we are like wicks that means that we have to have a little bit of oil constantly. We cannot store up any spiritual experience. It's to be new and vital and fresh every day. Now, we'll declare ten minutes for confession for all of us to confess our sins, because if you feel like I do, there are so many days in which I do not grow myself. I speak to myself when I speak to you.

The second thing we notice is that the temple is to be completed despite obstacles. Notice the 7th verse, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" The prophet speaks rhetorically. "Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." And this is an encouragement for Zerubbabel, and he is told that in spite of mountains, which suggest difficulty, God is going to bring it to pass that these mountains will become like a plane, and further, there is going to be completion of the temple. He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying "Grace, grace unto it." So, there is to be a completion of the temple despite the obstacles. Well, one might say, "What obstacles?" Well, Zechariah doesn't really tell us all about the obstacles, one had to turn to Ezra, remember? Ezra records the historical background of a lot of this, and so does Haggai, and there we do read of the obstacles. They did have obstacles. And they were serious obstacles. But this is the prophet giving encouragement to the people that in spite of obstacles there is going to be a successful completion of the project.

Now, furthermore he says in the 7th verse, the temple is to be beautifully completed. He says, "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." The headstone was the topmost stone of two top stones, and so it is to be completed, and the term grace, which connotes the idea also of beauty. This temple, small though it be, will be a beauty for those who recognize the spiritual significance of it. Furthermore he says, "Zerubbabel, it's going to be rapidly completed."

Notice the 8th and 9th verses, "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 unto you." So, the one who has laid the foundation will also be enabled to finish it. So, it's going to be rapidly completed. This was a great encouragement, no doubt to Zerubbabel.

In the 9th verse he also suggest, although I find this a little difficult, but most of the commentators feel that what we have here is a confirmation of the Messianic ministry to Israel in the temple's completion. "And thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you." Now, if you'll look back at the 2nd chapter particularly, the expression, "And you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent me unto you as a reference to the servant of the Lord, or Jehovah, or as we believe, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, there is probably some reference here to the ultimate confirmation of Israel's Messianic ministry. The meaning is not exhausted in the material completion. This is a pledge of what God is going to do through them.

In the 10th verse, he encourages them by saying, Look; the temple is not insignificant in God's sight. "For who hath despised the day of small things?" Now, again if you would turn to Ezra you would find that when the temple was finally completed, some of the people were shouting with joy over it, but others were very discouraged, because when they saw it, it just could not compare with Solomon's temple, and so they were discouraged and defeated. And the prophet says, "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." That's probably a reference to the omniscient eye of the Lord God, spoken figuratively, of course. But the point that is made here is, as someone said it with reference, I think, to the feeding of the five thousand. Little is much if God is in it; and so, if the temple is, speaking materially, no beautiful temple like Solomon's temple. It, nevertheless, is something God has done, and therefore it is important and beautiful for

men of spiritual understanding. Size is not important. It's the ultimate relationship to the Lord God that is significant.

In the final analysis, my Christian friend, what is the most beautiful thing that a Christian can ever set his mind upon? Well, probably after we thought it through, we would say the cross of Calvary. Not the temple of Solomon, not this temple, not the temple in the future, but the cross of Calvary. That's why people wear crosses, originally, they were trying to stress that the cross is the symbol of the blessing of God. The cross, for those who appreciate it, is beautiful, significant, moving; the most moving thing in all of the world; but as a cross, in the days of our Lord, it was an object of humiliation, contempt, reproach. It was, in effect, the place upon which one put a criminal. It was put at a public place, so that people could see it; and the individual could be a reproach and a shame. But if we understand what is meant by the cross, it's a beautiful thing for us. So, oh this temple's a day of small things, but it's really great if God's in it.

And finally, in the 10th verse, he says that this temple is the object of divine supervision. "The eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth, are upon it." Incidentally, I think that this is one of the indications that this prophecy is to be taken in conjunction with the other prophecies which refer on to the future in that day, when the nation shall be converted in a day, because notice, he says, "They are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Ultimately this has a universal significance suggested by that reference. Well now, the prophet here has a few final things to say, and we have them in the last few verses, "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?" The olive trees standing by the side of the candle, which poured their oil out into the bowl, which in turn fed the lamps. So, that's his question. He incidentally, apparently unsatisfied with the general principle, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD." And so, he's saying, "If God does everything, what about these branches?"

It's like an Arminian who is talking with a Calvinist, and the Calvinist says, "It's God who saves men. It's God who saves men. The Bible says salvation is of the Lord. If it's not of the Lord, then it must be partially of us, then we would have reason to boast." And the poor Arminian who doesn't yet understand that salvation is of the Lord, he says, "But we have to do something don't we?" Just realize, of course, that that something that we have to do is something motivated by the Lord God. And it is by his activity that we do do something. That's so simple isn't it, so simple. Well, the prophet here is saying, well what about 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." Isn't it nice to find a person who when he doesn't know anything, says "I don't know it."

Linsky, the Lutheran commentator used to say, "When you don't know something, the scientific thing is to say, 'I don't know what it is.'" That's the first step to knowledge. So, he gets his answer. "These are the two anointed ones that stand by the LORD of the whole earth." I would suggest to you that these trees are really standing for the office of high priest and the office of king. And the branches are the present incumbents, and the present incumbents in the time of Zechariah are Joshua the high priest, we've already referred to him in chapter 3, and then Zerubbabel who is the prince. And so the branches of the present incumbents, who could never really supply oil for the testimony, they are able to do the work of God, but they themselves must be the recipient of the ultimate power of the Holy Spirit, the oil that comes from the tree, which is growing out of the earth.

Well, to sum up then, what we find here is that God's testimony must be spirit motivated, spirit controlled. Otherwise, we have legalism and tabooism. The church is full of legalism; they do not really understand that the work of God is God's work from beginning to end. His salvation is of the Lord. His sanctification is of the Lord. The work that he does is of the Lord. The things that please the Lord are things that are done in the

Lord's strength, and in the Lord's power. And then prophet stressed for us, I think, that no matter how small a work is, if it's God's work, and if it's done by the Lord God, it's not to be despised. And so whether it be small or great is incidental. It's whether it has the character of being initiated by God and performed by God in the power of God. Israel's testimony, of course, shall ultimately find fruition in the age of the kingdom, and the present age in Zechariah's day is simply an illustration of the age to come. As one looks at the lineaments and features of Joshua and Zerubbabel, they finally merge into what will be specifically stated in the 6th chapter, the vision of the union of the two offices in the one man whose name is the branch. And Zechariah will detail that in a later vision. May the Lord help us to bear these lessons in mind? Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these wonderful prophecies which lay such great stress upon the great truth, that salvation and sanctification and service are all, if approved of Thee, of the Lord. Enable us, Lord, to grow in grace. Make us, Lord, unhappy with the present spiritual rut in which we often find ourselves, and may we earnestly seek to know Thee better and to serve Thee more acceptably. For Jesus' sake. Amen.