



Not by Power Nor by Might

– Julius Bednarz

Noting the enthusiasm with which the brethren carry on their fellowship at a convention, it really is very stimulating to see how glad the friends are to see one another, and it almost seems like (remember I said “almost”) that the discourses are arranged to have little intermissions between the fellowship! It is so good to see so many brethren from so many places still holding fast the wonderful truth of the harvest message.

For our lesson this morning we thought we would choose the 4th chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah. Since it is short I think we will read it right through because it will be mainly the basis for our thoughts. Zechariah the 4th chapter 1st verse:

“And the angel 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? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. 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. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. 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. 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. 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 thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be 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. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”

Now if you follow this chapter carefully, there is a vision given to the prophet, and an angel seemingly is introducing the vision to him. Of course, the vision is interesting and the prophet would have an interpretation. He is interested in these various features of this vision. He sees these two olive trees on either side of this wonderful golden candlestick and that these two olive trees seemingly are supplying the oil into the top bowl of the candlestick, and then this oil runs down into the seven branches, into the lights which are supplied by this candlestick. He continually asked the angel for an interpretation. What do these two olive trees represent? And if you notice carefully, the angel seemingly put off his question continually. He told them about Zerubbabel and a great mountain and about a head stone and about a plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel about seven eyes and everything else but his question. The prophet keeps on insisting – what are these my Lord? And, finally in the last verse he gets the answer. But, I am quite sure that even with the giving of the answer the prophet did not fully understand the significance of the vision. Nevertheless, it contained a lesson for the prophet which he in turn conveyed to Israel at this time.

Now to get the background of this chapter we must understand the situation in which the prophet found himself at this particular moment. The Israelites had left Babylon under the decree of Cyrus. Approximately 42,600 sturdy enough and willing

enough and having enough faith left Babylon to go back to Palestine to begin to rebuild the temple of the Lord. That was the commission – to go back there and begin building the temple; and so with earnestness and sincerity and effort to do the Lord's will, they began to build the temple. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was the governor of the people at the time, and Joshua who was the high priest (in some instances he is called Jeshua or Joshua but he is the same man); under the leadership of these two men, the people began with earnest the task of building the foundation of this temple. In short while the foundation was finished, and the people rejoiced to see what was the beginning of the rebuilding of this wonderful edifice in which in their former years some of them could still remember the glory of the one that was built by Solomon. Just about that time their neighboring Gentile enemies, hearing of the progress the Jews were making and fearing resurgence of their power under David and Solomon, began to hinder the work. They came in and made all kinds of trouble for the Israelites. Finally the discouragement worked. They stopped building the temple. Just the foundation was laid and that was all. They went about doing their own private thing. In other words they began building homes for themselves and making themselves comfortable in their home land and were overlooking the fact that this, for which they were particularly sent to their home land, was neglected. The Lord raised up two prophets. Not one, but two. Zechariah and Haggai who just precedes Zechariah in the Bible. These two men were sent to Israel to urge them to continue the work of the Lord. And, they succeeded in time but there was quite a period of time in which there was nothing done as far as the temple building was concerned.

If we turn back to Haggai's prophecy, which is just a page or two before Zechariah, we would like to read a verse or two concerning the circumstances around this cessation of work of the foundation. We read in the first chapter, second verse, *"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built."* You see the conclusion they came to so readily. They were purposely sent to build the temple of the Lord but because some enemies came in and began to hinder the work, they decided in their hearts at least that it wasn't the Lord's will for them at this time to build the temple. How quickly, how quickly they forgot. Isn't that sometimes the truth with us friends? We engage in some service for the Lord and with enthusiasm we begin it and make some progress and then what happens? The adversary sends some enemies our way and begins to hinder our progress in our way. So what do we conclude? It is not the Lord's will for us to do this now. We'll wait until some other time. Maybe he will indicate it in some other way. The Lord indicated in the beginning that this was his will that we should endeavor in this certain particular field to serve him.

But, because the adversary sent some of his emissaries to stop the work the flesh easily concludes that the time has not come for us to do this yet. Just like the Israelites did back there. Then the prophet goes on and says, *"Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?"* In other words the Lord was saying to the prophet, Look at yourselves. Your homes have roofs and ceilings and you are comfortable, but my house has just the foundation, no roof or walls. You are making yourselves more comfortable than the Lord would be in his house, speaking from that standpoint. Then he goes on, *"Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways."* In other words, think of what you have been doing. *"You have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat; but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; you clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."*

Seems like it just seeps out. What is the Lord saying here? Because you have overlooked your covenant with me and are overlooking my will in the matter, I am withholding the blessings temporal that you seek so much. You go and raise food and continually eat but you are hungry. You are drinking but you are always thirsty and you are continually clothing yourselves but you are never really warm. You are earning money but you put it into a bag and it has seeped out, disappeared, my blessing is not upon you in basket and store.

Have you ever felt that way brethren? Has there ever come a time in your experience that you have felt that somehow you wondered if the Lord's blessing was really upon you as an individual? Have you sometimes felt a lack of enough providential leadings and overruling to demonstrate to you definitely that the Lord is guiding you? Have you fed upon the Lord's word and you still seemingly were never satisfied? Have you drunk deeply of the Lord's word and yet seemingly were not filled as you should have been at the fountain of grace? Have you continually pressed around you the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation that the Lord provides and yet you don't have that full assurance or feeling that this is the Lord's arrangement for you? Are you going out in some of your spare time (very little) to give out the word of the Lord and try to earn wages as it were from him and that little that you do earn you never see any evidence of it around you? What is the trouble brethren? It may be that the trouble they had back there is the trouble we have here. It might be that we are neglecting the work for which we have been called; i.e., the building of the spiritual temple of the Lord. Instead of putting all of our effort into that which we have been called for, we spend most of our time making ourselves comfortable in this present world, at home in this body, and then with just what little time is left (just a little bit of it), we devote to the building of the temple of the Lord. As a result we never have the full assurance, the warmth, the comfort, the feeling of the Lord's blessing that we so much crave and desire.

You see, brethren, when we made a consecration to do the Lord's will we promised the Lord that we would give our all, our strength, our very best as represented in that right shoulder of the ram of consecration. But, sometimes, we give our best to making ourselves comfortable in this present world, surrounding ourselves with the – did you say needs or wants? Did you ever consider in your mind the difference between the Lord's supplying your needs and supplying your wants? If you have dear friends, there could be a margin of miles apart between the two thoughts. The Lord promised to supply our needs. But, our wants could be so numerous that we could never satisfy them, and so we go about in supplying our wants, and as a result we find so little time left to build the temple of the Lord. As a result, the blessing which we so much need is lacking. Just like the temporal blessings were lacking back there in Israel.

But, we are happy that through the work of these two prophets in their midst, Zechariah was a younger prophet just coming in upon the scene and Haggai a gray-haired old man, but notice how beautifully they worked together in doing the Lord's will. As a result the Lord blessed their ministry. Eventually Israel returned again under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, and they began to rebuild the temple and in time it was finished. The purpose of this vision given was evidently one means of stimulating the Jews to go back to the work of rebuilding this temple.

To them what could this vision have meant? They evidently got some lesson, some blessing from it although we can see most readily that there is a greater fulfillment on behalf of spiritual Israel. To them this golden lampstand, this candlestick, could have represented the nation of Israel. Were they not to be the light bearers to all nations? That is what the promise was. The Lord would use them as instructors for all the

surrounding heathen nations. Then, these two olive trees, one on either side of the candlestick to the Jew it might have represented the leadership of their people as represented in Zerubbabel, their civil arrangement and Joshua the priestly or spiritual arrangement. With the Lord's blessing coming through these two into the nation of Israel itself they would be the light-bearers and the leaders of all the people. Now that stimulated them! They said, "well, this is fine. The Lord's promise, as he gave it originally through Moses, still holds true on our behalf today." So, with this stimulus they continued to build.

Let us go now through this prophecy verse by verse and see how in more detail we can get the lesson from it. In the sixth verse we read, *"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."* This work (the Lord is telling them through the prophet) which I have commissioned you to do will not be accomplished by your physical might, your ability to over-power these enemies who are coming in from every side to hinder you. No, but it is by my spirit and by my power that I will overrule these incidents and if you cooperate with me, with the leadings of my spirit, this which seems impossible to accomplish can be done most easily. *"Who art thou,"* he says in the 7th verse, *"O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."* The enemies who came in upon them seemed as big an obstacle as a mountain would be in the path of an individual. It was insurmountable seemingly. But the Lord says, *"Who art thou, O great mountain?"* That is the way the Lord looks at it. To the Israelites it might have seemed like an insurmountable obstacle in their path. *"Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."* In other words, you Israelites, you follow my leadings through Zerubbabel and that which seemingly cannot be set aside or gone around, I'll make it just like a plain. This obstacle will be removed completely if you follow my leadings through my chosen servant Zerubbabel. Yes, it will be just like a plain. Just walk right straight through with the greatest of ease.

By this time you probably have guessed or have known before I started it that Zerubbabel was a type of the greater Zerubbabel, Jesus, who is the governor of the people as the prophet spoke about him in Micah 5:2 and referred to in Matt. 2:6 – that governor – the leader of the people whom the Lord will raise up in time to lead all the people and rule over them in his kingdom. Zerubbabel was the governor just at that time. And, before Zerubbabel, our mountain-like obstacles can be done away with too. Remember, Jesus referred to some of these. He said if we have some faith – well, as much as a mustard seed – we could say to this mountain, "be removed" and it will remove itself. Now you know yourself that the Lord didn't mean for you to come up to Mount Everest or some other such as Mount Hood and say all right mountain get out of my way and it will go away. No, the Lord did not mean that. This is a figure of speech again in which if we in our service of the Lord in which we are engaged in and know full well that he directed us into this particular path, if we have the faith enough to say be removed, through Christ in following in his footsteps, this obstacle will just disappear. It is the Lord's promise that it would and it has never failed the Lord's people all down through the Gospel age – even to this day and it will not fail to the very end. Yes, before our Zerubbabel any great obstacle will just vanish and the way will be as plain as a flat tableland. Again, not by our power, not by our might, not by the influence that we can exert as human beings or can draw upon some earthly power or earthly influence, or our position in this world or this life can we bring to bear upon a certain condition which exists among us in our class or as individuals in our spiritual life can we draw upon those powers and expect the Lord to bless them in accomplishing his will. No, it

is by faith in looking to our Zerubbabel that by his power and by his might that this which we cannot accomplish in any other way will be done for us by him.

Then he goes on and says in the 9th verse, *"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it;"* What a comfort to those Jews back there! Now you know that Zerubbabel superintended the building of this foundation. He will be there when that temple is finished. His hands will be directing the work when that house is done, To Israelites back there it meant why surely this can be accomplished. Zerubbabel laid the foundation and the Lord says that he will be here when the final stone and timber is laid. So let us get into the work and build. Our Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the spiritual temple nineteen centuries ago. He will also finish it. The Lord's promise is that our Zerubbabel, Christ, will complete the building of this antitypical spiritual temple. He goes on in the 10th verse and says, *"For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven;"* Now whoever the seven were back there in Israel who were Zerubbabel's assistants we can't tell you the names – it doesn't make too much difference. As far as the lesson for us is concerned, it is of some import. You know, Zerubbabel was to be the plummet man – the director of the work. He would see to it that the lines of that temple were built according to specification. Nothing out of line – any corner or any wall. Our Zerubbabel is also holding the plummet. Every stone in this antitypical temple, these living stones that Peter speaks of that are being placed into this temple, friends, are being measured by our Zerubbabel, Christ. If we are not in line with truth and righteousness and in line with his will, that stone will be rejected and set aside. He is measuring every one of us every day, every moment; in every incident he is measuring us. How do we react to this, or that, or the other thing? In what spirit do we enter into our employment? At home with our family? Or in the ecclesia? When little incidents come up, how do we react to something which may be unfavorable to us? Do we rebel and try to show our way about it, manifest our will in the matter; or do we remember, the Lord shall fight for you? The Lord will do your fighting. Not by your power, not by your might, but by my spirit these things will be settled just the way I want them settled and not what may be your will or your way.

Yes, our Zerubbabel is measuring every stone in this antitypical temple. Every moment, every hour, every day the Lord is watching the influences with which we are surrounded and how we react to them in the doing of his will. And, *"with those seven;"* it says, *"they are the eyes of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth."* These seven eyes, wisdom – the complete wisdom of God as shown to us in what? In his overall great plan of the ages in which he has revealed to us and the part to which he has invited you and me to have in that plan right now is. The directing wisdom of the Lord through whom our Zerubbabel is working in making sure that all of us come in contact with this divine wisdom as expressed in his plan which is assisting us in the doing of his will. Yes, and we are grateful that the Lord has revealed to us in his great wisdom this great plan of the ages so that through this plan we understand his ways. Also, through this plan we can see his character revealed therein which only stimulates us all the more to continue the work at hand – the building of the spiritual temple of the Lord – for we, the apostle Paul says are co-workers together with him. Yes, we have been invited to have a part in this work of building the temple. Oh, the Lord is building it! Yes, it is his power and it is his might that is responsible eventually for the structure and its completion, but he has asked us to have a part in it – to cooperate with him in this great outworking of his plan as it affects the church in this Gospel Age. Thus, we have that great blessing of being co-workers together with him. *"For who hath despised*

the day of small things?" the question is asked. So, the Israelite looked about him and looked at that foundation; he said, think of it, so many thousands of us came and after all a few years of our effort just a mere foundation. Why, when will we ever build this temple and then the whole city? Eventually the walls were built and the city was built but that was many years after, looking about them and noticing such meager results, they could have begun to despise the day of small things.

And that is why this question is asked, *"Who hath despised the day of small things?"* Why do you despise the day of small things? The day in which we are living is really the day of small things is it not? Therefore we should not be discouraged when things are seemingly small. Eventually that temple was reared up; eventually the city was built and the walls were put up and Israel was once again firmly established in their home land. So it is with us friends. Seemingly our lives are made up of so many small things. Our ecclesia efforts are so many small things. Week after week and month after month you take your handful of tracts and distribute them through your neighborhood, your city, then look around in your class and wonder well just what results do we see from all this work? There is no one coming into the truth you hear some friends say. What is the use of going out to these same old homes in these same old cities giving out the same old tracts? What good is it doing? Look at the results – nothing! Yes, they are despising the day of small things. But, you know friends, the law of averages is on our side. If you continue month after month and year after year, eventually you will see results because you never have despised the day of small things. When you find one hearing ear you are stimulated and encouraged to go on and touch someone else and find some more hearing ears. Eventually you know what happens? A new member joins the class. Another new member joins the class and before you know it, another new member joins the class. But you say, how did these come in? I didn't have too much to do with bringing these particular ones in. That's the way the Lord is blessing you. You were so busy giving out tracts wherever you could and you made follow-up calls and you advertised your meetings. Eventually, the Lord gave you some wages. He put those wages in a bag that there weren't any holes in. You could rejoice in those wages. Why? You see that enthusiasm that begins to show itself in an ecclesia when some new members come in. Did you ever see the glow on the faces of the friends when some new interest is found? Who is going to despise the day of small things? Friends, that's the worst thing we could do – to start saying in our minds, well I think it is about time I stopped doing all of this. There is no result that I can see. On the law of averages, you are the winning side. Look at any ecclesia around you. that has endeavored to do just this, week by week, month by month and year by year. I know a few. Eventually, I saw new members come there and they are sticking and they love the truth just like those who were there and interested and drew them by their work. Yes, they are now rejoicing in the truth because that ecclesia did not despise the day of small things.

Look at the life of Jesus. Let's go even further back than that. Our Heavenly Father who gave this question. When he created this planet he could have used some miraculous way by which he took this which was once without form and void, our planet, and in just a few miraculous moments – waving a wand Hollywood style like – finished earth, ready for man's habitation. Did the Lord do it that way? No friends, the Heavenly Father took 42,000 years to prepare just this planet earth for man's habitation – his everlasting habitation. How slowly the Lord worked! If you watched it year by year (if you were there – probably the angels wondered) how slowly does our creator work. Eventually the finished product was shown. Never despise the day of small things!

Then Jesus comes upon the scene. He was the promised Messiah. This was the one all men looked forward to. All hearts were in expectation of him. Truly we may expect great things from this leader, from this governor, from our saviour. And so they watched him. Remember how he was born? In a manger. Could you have thought of a more lowly place to bring a saviour into the world? You couldn't, not if you racked your brain. Our creator did. How lowly a beginning could the saviour have had than in a manger. Who hath despised the day of small things? Then, when he grew up to be a man, he began preaching the word of the Lord. How many followers joined him? Did the great men of Israel espouse his cause and join up with him? No friends, they despised him and rejected him and they tried to thwart his purposes continually. Nevertheless there was Jesus with just those twelve humble men, but look at him! A few fishermen, a tax gatherer there, a net mender there. Oh, maybe somebody who was a little prominent in his neighborhood, but not too much. Just the common folk; and you mean to tell me this man is the saviour of the world, this great one whom we have been expecting? Was it easy to despise the day of small things? Yes, it was. The leaders of Israel despised that day of small things, but friends, remember the 7th verse where it says, *"and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."* Oh, but you say that had a fulfillment in Jesus day. Yes, in a partial sense. When he road into Jerusalem didn't they cry grace, grace unto this stone? Yes, and when the shouting seemed to rise up in momentum, the leaders said why don't you stop this noise? They are shouting too much. The Lord said, Oh no, if these people don't shout the stones will shout because the prophecy by Zechariah had to be fulfilled. So, there was a shouting of grace, grace unto him in a measure. But friends, that wasn't the real fulfillment of this prophecy. They would yet bring forth the headstone. Again, now we could change the picture for just a moment to the pyramid arrangement when the last stone is set up on top of that pyramid, pictured by Christ himself, a perfect pyramid. Then will the world cry grace, grace be unto it. Oh friends, look in the book of Revelation the 5th chapter where it says every intelligent creature is taking part in a universe-wide anthem (praising whom?) him that sitteth upon the throne and the lamb forever and ever. Yes, they will cry to this headstone, thank you Lord, grace, grace be unto it. Yes but you notice, the day of small things. Who hath despised the day of small things? Look at the finished, the end result. Yes, when that temple was built there, what joy there was in Israel – eventually to see that beautiful edifice set up, a place of worship where Jehovah could dwell!

Yes, friends, how much greater the joy will be when this antitypical spiritual temple is eventually reared and set and become the meeting place between God and man throughout the whole Millennium. Oh, what rejoicing, what joy there will be; especially the crying of grace, grace unto the headstone of that temple. Yes, who hath despised the day of small things? Friends, if we don't learn any lesson than just this one, it will be worth all of our time and it will give us so much help in anything we may undertake in the days to come in the way of serving the Lord – never despise the day of small things. Look at us! Just a small people. What can we do in any given eight or twelve hour day (our wide-a-wake day) that would really set the world on fire? We never do anything of that sort, do we? No matter if we combine all of our efforts together, we'll never set the world on fire. If every saint the world wide over became suddenly wakened up with all the fullness of zeal and love that it is possible for a saint to muster together and worked together in one concerted effort to make the Lord's word and plan known throughout the whole earth do you think we would set the world on fire? No, we would make some people stand up and take interest. We are not going to convert the world

at this time anyway. Let us do what we can. Let us make known his plan as far and wide as we can and the Lord will do the rest for us. He will take over where we finish. Where we can't go any further, the Lord's power of his promises, of his holy spirit, will complete the work as he has promised – much to our joy and to the joy of the whole world.

This angel again as he is speaking about Zerubbabel and these different scenes in this wonderful vision in Zechariah is looking at those two olive trees and still looking for an answer. He says, my Lord, what are these two olive trees on either side of this golden lampstand? The angel finally tells him, "*These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*" It is through these two that the oil is supplied into this candlestick. Well now, our understanding of the candlestick is that it does not represent Israel back there but it represents spiritual Israel in this gospel age. They are the lampstand of the Lord. They are the candlestick; they are the light of the world. Yes, and from whence comes the supply of oil or holy spirit that is continually flowing into this lampstand to continue it to be the light of the world? You know, it can come from two sources – the old and the new testament. That is the only source of the holy spirit. That is the only source from which influence, power can come which enlightens the church and enables them to be the light bearers of the world. Just those two – just those two olive trees. And friends, we can't graft any branches of our own planting or making into those olive trees. The Lord will not have it.

If we think that the position we may hold in the world or our means or influence in any segment of society in which we may be found, that we can graft these into the Lord's arrangements and that through this influence and enlightenment will come to the Lord's people, we are sadly mistaken. The Lord will not have the grafting of any branch of our own planting into any one of his two olive trees to supply oil into this golden candlestick. No, the Lord has arranged only these two witnesses – the old and the new testament that supplies the oil, the enlightenment, the power, the influence which makes the church what it is today – still today the light bearers of the whole world. Now aren't you glad that the angel finally gave Zechariah the answer? Aren't we glad friends that the Lord sent another angel to us in this harvest period and he helped us to interpret this vision. Yes, it is true that there are only two witnesses that supply the oil, but how glad we are that in order to understand these the Lord has given gifts to the church – the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, helps, governments, etc. Why? To assist us in understanding the meaning. To assist us to get all the oil it is possible to get out of these two witnesses – the old and the new testament.

We thank the Lord that here we find ourselves in the end of this harvest period practically, still rejoicing, still drinking deeply from these two sources of oil supply that keeps the church, the remaining members here on earth as still the light bearers of the world. "Ye," Jesus said, "*are the light of the world.*" And so, not by power, not by might, (any of our own origin or manufacture, not by any grafting of any branch of our own planting or growing into this Lord's arrangement, no) but just wholly leaning upon the Lord and working in harmony with his arrangement for the church's welfare can the church continue to be the light of the world.

(This talk by the late Brother Julius Bednarz was given at a Paterson, NJ convention and has been transcribed from a tape recording)