

Zechariah 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

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. The angel's question mah attah ro'eh (מָה אַתָּה רֹאֶה, "what do you see?") demands careful observation. Zechariah responds with detailed description of what would become one of the Old Testament's most significant symbolic visions. The **candlestick all of gold** (menorah kullah zahav, מְנוֹרַת זָהָב כָּלָה) recalls the seven-branched lampstand in the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 25:31-40), representing Israel as light to the nations and God's presence among His people.

However, Zechariah's lampstand differs from the tabernacle menorah in crucial details. It has **a bowl upon the top of it** (vegullah al-roshah, וְגִלְלָה עַל־רֹאשָׁה)—a reservoir supplying oil to the lamps. The **seven lamps** (shiv'ah neroteha, שִׁבְעָה נֵרוֹתֶיהָ) represent completeness (seven being the number of perfection). Most remarkably, there are **seven pipes to the seven lamps**—literally "seven and seven" supply channels, meaning forty-nine pipes total (seven pipes feeding each of the seven lamps). This elaborate supply system ensures abundant, continuous oil flow without human intervention.

The vision's emphasis on self-sustaining oil supply anticipates verse 6's message: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." The

lampstand burns continuously not through human effort (priests daily filling lamps, Exodus 27:20-21) but through supernatural supply. This prefigures the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Church—believers shine as lights (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:15) not by human strength but by the Spirit's continuous empowerment (Acts 1:8). Revelation's seven lampstands represent churches (Revelation 1:20), and Christ walks among them, sustaining their light.

Historical Context

The tabernacle's menorah required priests to daily trim wicks and refill oil (Exodus 27:20-21; Leviticus 24:1-4). This labor-intensive maintenance symbolized Israel's dependence on human mediators and continual sacrifice. Zechariah's vision revolutionizes this imagery: the lampstand sustains itself through supernatural oil supply, pointing beyond Levitical system to new covenant reality where the Spirit indwells believers directly.

The vision came during temple rebuilding when the returned community lacked resources, manpower, and political power to complete the work. The supernatural lampstand assured them that God's Spirit, not human ability, would accomplish His purposes. This spoke directly to their discouragement: they need not depend on Persian patronage, financial resources, or popular support—God's Spirit would empower the work.

Church tradition saw the lampstand as Christ (the light of the world, John 8:12) or the Church illuminated by Him. The seven lamps pointed to the sevenfold Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 1:4; 4:5). The inexhaustible oil supply prefigured Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out permanently on believers (Acts 2:1-4). Protestant Reformers emphasized that the Church's light depends entirely on Word and Spirit, not human tradition or ecclesiastical structure—only Spirit-empowered proclamation of Scripture sustains the Church's testimony.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the self-sustaining lampstand challenge reliance on human methods, strategies, or resources to accomplish spiritual work?
2. What does it mean practically for believers to be 'lamps' supplied by the Spirit's inexhaustible oil rather than burning out through self-effort?
3. In what ways does this vision's emphasis on continuous supply encourage you when feeling spiritually depleted or insufficient for God's calling?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ	וַיֹּאמֶר רַ
And said	And said	And said	And said	And said	And said	And said
H559	H559	H559	H559	H559	H559	H559
H413	H413	H413	H413	H413	H413	H413
H4100	H4100	H4100	H4100	H4100	H4100	H4100
H859	H859	H859	H859	H859	H859	H859
I have looked	I have looked	I have looked	I have looked	I have looked	I have looked	I have looked
H7200	H7200	H7200	H7200	H7200	H7200	H7200
וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ
H2009	H2009	H2009	H2009	H2009	H2009	H2009
and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick	and behold a candlestick
H4501	H4501	H4501	H4501	H4501	H4501	H4501
כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ	כָּל הַ
H3605	H3605	H3605	H3605	H3605	H3605	H3605
all of gold	all of gold	all of gold	all of gold	all of gold	all of gold	all of gold
H2091	H2091	H2091	H2091	H2091	H2091	H2091
וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ
H1543	H1543	H1543	H1543	H1543	H1543	H1543
upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top
H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921
H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218
וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ
H7651	H7651	H7651	H7651	H7651	H7651	H7651
of it and his seven	of it and his seven	of it and his seven	of it and his seven	of it and his seven	of it and his seven	of it and his seven
H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216
lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps
H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921
וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ
H834	H834	H834	H834	H834	H834	H834
upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top
H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921
H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218
וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ	וְהִנֵּה הַ
H4166	H4166	H4166	H4166	H4166	H4166	H4166
pipes	pipes	pipes	pipes	pipes	pipes	pipes
H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216	H5216
lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps	lamps
H834	H834	H834	H834	H834	H834	H834
upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top	upon the top
H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921	H5921
H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218	H7218

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 4:5 (Parallel theme): And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Revelation 1:12 (Parallel theme): And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

Jeremiah 52:19 (Parallel theme): And the basons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away.

Zechariah 5:2 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

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