

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



“The God Who Finishes What He Starts”

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 4:1-14; Ex. 27:20-21; Lev. 24:2-4; Ps. 127:1; Is. 40:4-5; Hag. 2:3; 2 Chr. 16:9

We all know what it is to begin something with excitement and then discover that finishing it requires more than we seem to have. At the beginning, the vision may feel clear and the possibilities may seem endless. But then the work becomes difficult, obstacles rise in front of us, and progress moves more slowly than we expected. What once inspired us can begin to feel overwhelming. We may even wonder whether we misunderstood God or whether the work will ever be completed.

That is the heart of Zechariah 4. Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of the Temple, but years of opposition and discouragement had brought the work to a halt. The foundation was there, but the house remained unfinished. Into that discouragement, The Lord gave Zechariah a vision of a golden menorah continually supplied with oil. The message was that the work did not ultimately depend upon Zerubbabel's strength. The God who had called him to begin the work would also supply what was needed to finish it.

1. GOD SUPPLIES WHAT HIS WORK REQUIRES

Zechariah sees a solid gold menorah with a bowl above it, seven lamps, and channels carrying oil to the lights. On either side are two olive trees continually supplying golden oil. Under the Torah, B'nei-Israel were commanded to bring “*pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually*” (Ex. 27:20). But in Zechariah's vision, the oil flows directly from a source ADONAI Himself has provided. No one has to beat the olives, carry the oil, or continually refill the bowl. The light is being sustained by an uninterrupted supply from God.

That is why the heart of the vision is found in ADONAI's word to Zerubbabel: “*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach!*” says ADONAI-Tzva'ot (Zech. 4:6). The work would not be finished by Zerubbabel's *chayil*—his valor, wealth, or military force—or by his *koach*—his personal strength, power, or capacity. It would be finished by the Ruach of ADONAI. We may be called to work, obey, build, and remain faithful, but we were never called to manufacture the oil. What God begins through His Ruach must also be sustained and completed through His Ruach.

2. GOD MAKES A WAY THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN

After declaring that the work will be accomplished by His *Ruach*, the LORD speaks directly to the obstacle: “*What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain*” (Zech. 4:7). The mountain represents everything standing between Zerubbabel and the completion of the Temple—the rubble, opposition, discouragement, limited resources, and the overwhelming size of the assignment. The work was real, the

resistance was real, and Zerubbabel's weakness was real. But none of those things could overturn the purposes of ADONAI.

The mountain would not merely become smaller; it would become level ground. Zerubbabel would bring out the capstone with shouts of *"Grace, grace!"* The final stone would be placed, and the people would recognize that the completed work was the result of God's favor. *"Unless ADONAI builds the house, the builders labor in vain"* (Ps. 127:1). The God who calls us does not promise that there will be no mountains. He promises that no mountain can finally prevent Him from accomplishing what He has determined to do.

3. GOD DOES NOT DESPISE THE SMALL BEGINNING

ADONAI then asks, *"For who despises the day of small things?"* (Zech. 4:10). Some of the people remembered Solomon's Temple and looked at the rebuilding effort with disappointment. Haggai records their response: *"Who remains among you who saw this House in its former glory? So how do you see it now? Does it not seem as nothing in comparison in your eyes?"* (Hag. 2:3). The people compared what was beginning in front of them with what had existed before and concluded that the new work was insignificant.

But ADONAI did not despise the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand. His eyes ranged throughout the whole earth, and He rejoiced to see Zerubbabel continuing the work. The foundation was not the completed Temple, but it was still evidence that the work had begun. The plumb line was not the finished house, but it was evidence that the Builder had not abandoned His purpose. We must not call insignificant what God has chosen to begin. A small act of obedience, a quiet return to prayer, a first attempt at reconciliation, or the early stages of a calling may appear unimpressive, but small beginnings are often the place where God begins revealing His faithfulness.

CONCLUSION

ADONAI gave Zerubbabel a clear promise: *"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this House. His hands will also finish it"* (Zech. 4:9). The same hands that started the work would place the final stone, but only because the Ruach of ADONAI was supplying the oil, removing the obstacles, and watching over every stage of the process. Zerubbabel's responsibility was not to possess enough strength for the entire assignment. His responsibility was to remain faithful to the God who had called him.

Perhaps there is something God began in your life that now feels unfinished. Perhaps discouragement, opposition, failure, or delay has convinced you that the work will never be completed. Perhaps you have been trying to finish through your own strength what can only be accomplished by His Spirit. Bring that unfinished place before ADONAI today. Lay down your dependence upon your own valor and capacity. Name the mountain that stands before you, and place the small beginning back into His hands. Trust the God who supplies the oil, levels the mountain, rejoices over the plumb line, and finishes what He starts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the continual supply of oil in Zechariah's vision reveal about the way God sustains the work He begins?
2. Why was the message "*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach*" especially important for Zerubbabel and the returned exiles?
3. Where in your life are you presently trying to accomplish something through your own strength, ability, or resources?
4. What "great mountain" is standing between you and something you believe God has called you to do?
5. What small beginning have you been tempted to dismiss because it does not yet look important or successful?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI-Tzva'ot, thank You that You do not call us to accomplish Your purposes through our own strength. Forgive us for relying upon our own valor, wisdom, resources, and ability. Fill us afresh with Your Spirit, and supply the oil that keeps the light burning. Teach us to remain near You and to trust that whatever You begin, You are able to sustain. Speak to every mountain standing before us and make the rugged ground a plain. Keep us from despising the day of small things or judging Your work only by what our eyes can presently see. Help us remain faithful with the plumb line in our hands, trusting that You rejoice over obedience and that You will finish what You have started. May our lives shine with the light of Your presence and bear faithful witness to Messiah Yeshua.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.