

Zechariah 4:8-10 – Promises to Leaders

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Gaebelin, Gill, Poole, Geneva, Barnes, Clarke, JFB, Calvin, Trapp, Henry, Phillips, Expositor, INT, 127 Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: A cousin had an interesting post on Facebook that read something like this: “You husband will always do what he says. You don’t have to remind him every six months to do it.” Sometimes you forget what you promised. Sometimes you don’t have the time to do the chore you promised. Sometimes you don’t have the ability to do what you promised. But not so with God! When he says something will happen...when he says he will do something...that is better than money in the bank. You can be 100% sure. This is what you will hear today. **Judah needed reassurance of God’s help to rebuild the temple, restore worship, and ready themselves for a worldwide kingdom.**

Our headings are:

Encouragement: You will build the temple

Encouragement: God will strengthen your faith

Encouragement: Kingdom Spreading will be steady

Our goals are: **That you will confidently move forward in kingdom building, even when the church struggles, knowing that God will fulfill his promises.**

Encouragement: You will build the temple

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..."**

1. Jesus spoke to Zechariah to pass on his encouragement to Zerubbabel, the civil leader of God’s people. Zerubbabel needed this encouragement as the people of God were few, the opposition was great, and other Jews were inclined to take the easy life of staying in Babylon. **Zerubbabel was quite disillusion because although the Jews had earlier laid the foundation of the temple, they had stopped when they were troubled by neighbors.** He thought God had abandoned them. He probably thought he had failed as a leader.

2. So God assured Zerubbabel, through the prophet, that he – Zerubbabel- would indeed complete the work that was started some 20 years before. God’s work in history was often done by a small number of people who believe and who were righteous. And this message was to bring that thought back to him.

3. This encouragement was not just that the temple would be built. It was attached to all that accompanied that temple: The Jews would restore worship and ready themselves for the expansion of the kingdom of Jehovah throughout the world.

4. This encouragement was not alone. You will remember that God had already pictured for the Zerubbabel that he and the people would have enough **strength and sustenance to do this work**. He did this by using the golden bowl which represented the people of God. (This was above the menorah which represented the presence of God.) The two trees at the sides of the golden bowls- would give a continuous supply of oil to the bowl. So the meaning was that Joshua and Zerubbabel would continue to provide the leadership for the people to complete the work.

5. Lessons:

a. The church is well nourished and encouraged by the Word and Spirit for kingdom work!

1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, **which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

b. God is pleased to use human agents, regular, unremarkable human agents to accomplish great tasks for him....just like he used a shepherd to rule Israel and expand his kingdom and like he used a young slave boy in Egypt to preserve the entire Jewish people. **So expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.** Your efforts might seem small – like talking to someone about Jesus... inviting someone to church...but God uses even little things to advance his cause.

c. Don’t give up. You may have talked to someone for years about Jesus. Don’t stop. You may have struggled with your children. Don’t give up. You may have been praying for healing...keep praying. Pray God’s promises.

d. Persistency in your work and persistency in your prayer are fundamental to building up the temple...the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Yes, Jesus Christ, the ultimate Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of the church and he is the great Cornerstone. And you are now called to build up the stones. And the wise man builds his house on the Rock.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Encouragement: God will strengthen your faith

8 ... **Then you will know That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.**

1. God assured Zerubbabel that after the work was completed he would be even more strengthened in his faith. This experiential knowledge would add to the faith of the people of God also. The seeming impossible – in the face of enemies- would be accomplished.

2. God's promise here was not simply stating a desire; God was stating a certainty! And only reason he could say that is because he is integrally involved in the work. This is why unless the Lord builds the house, they laborers labor in vain. He is the ultimate builder...of building...and faith.

3. This was the same kind of encouragement God gave through Haggai; so this was double assurance!

Haggai 2:3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? 4 'Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; **for I am with you,**' says the LORD of hosts. 5 '**According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you;** do not fear!'

Did not God say in Isaiah 44 that Jerusalem would be rebuilt? Consider also:

Hebrews 3:3 For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as **He who built the house has more honor than the house.** 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who **built all things is God.** 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but **Christ as a Son over His own house,** whose house we are **if we hold fast the confidence...**

4. Lessons:

- a. You too will have your faith establish more and more. God's Word says: The Lord will reign until all his enemies become his footstool.** Haven't you seen how he has worked all over the earth building up his temple? God's kingdom is expanding...except in North American and Western Europe.
- b. But when God accomplishes anything through you, cry out: Grace, grace, God's grace!** The strength you have is only through Jesus.

Encouragement: Kingdom Spreading will be steady

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."

1. God assured Zerubbabel that he would build the temple, but he also wanted him to know that:

a. Rebuilding the temple, restoring worship, and getting ready to spread the kingdom over the entire world would be a process that would occur over time – not overnight. The Jews had to **learn than one block at a time builds great houses.** Seventy went into Egypt, 2.5 million came out. Twelve disciples preached and within 1 generation they had turned the world upside down. Three hundred soldiers conquered the Midianite army. The son of a shepherd conquered much of the known world and made silver undesirable in Israel.

b. The Lord would see that it was completely done. The Lord would continue to watch over the people to make sure that nothing hindered the work of the Lord.

Ezra 5:5 But the **eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews,** so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.

Proverbs 15:3 The **eyes of the LORD are in every place,** Keeping watch on the evil and the good.

Matthew 13:32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; **but when it is grown it is greater** than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

c. The Lord would make sure that the temple was built accurately. This was why Zerubbabel had the plumb line in his hand. All measurements would be accurate. Construction would not be a rushed or haphazard attempted...

2. And even then, the temple would not be as beautiful as the first temple. They would not have all the resources to make it as beautiful. The gold was gone. The beautiful temple vessels were gone. No

wonder the people started to cry when they saw that the building was just going to be a basic place.
Ezra 3:12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first temple, **weped with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.** Yet many shouted aloud for joy,

3. Yet, the temple would be more beautiful than the previous one.

Haggai 2:9 'The **glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,**' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

It would be greater because Jesus would come in. Yes, it would face some destruction, but the beauty of the temple was not the building. The beauty of the temple was the Lord who lived there.

4. Lessons:

a. What a strong encouragement, and warning at the same time! God sees every obstacle you face. Keep faithful in your duty.

Psalms 138:8 The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

Yes, **your faith may seem small but it will accomplish much.** Even if your faith is like a grain of mustard seed... it can grow large enough to be of benefit to others. **And so will the church.** Read about small things that grew in the life of J. Hudson Taylor or William Carey.

b. Expect there will always be doubters that the kingdom of God will be built up in a wicked world of opposition. They think the kingdom of God must remain small. They will try to talk you out of serving the Lord...out of evangelizing...out of investing your time and money in people's lives... But God's kingdom is never, ever, limited by the opposition of men. God sits in heaven and laughs when he sees feeble men opposing him. Don't worry about things at which God laughs.

Ephesians 3:11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

c. This warning of the Lord was also a warning to not treat Christ with contempt. He would come from the dry stump of Jesse, be born in backward Galilee into a poor home, despised and rejected of men, but was that glorious stone that would fall on the earth from heaven and grow and fill the whole earth.

Daniel 2:45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it **broke in pieces** the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Psalms 45:5 Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; **The peoples fall under You.**

It is interesting that John Calvin wrote very similarly about how Christians felt similarly bitter at the time of the Reformation!

Conclusion:

God encouraged the Jews with the fact that God would build his church...and he would do so using willing subjects. And when they saw his work, their faith would be strengthened to do even greater things.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Since you are in Christ's church, saved by grace, bow before him, and bend your back to work for him.

2. Don't despise the day of small things. So the youth group is small. Don't ignore it. New Horizon is doesn't have hundreds of members. Keep serving the Lord. The church in North America is not progressing rapidly. Keep plodding along. The faithful are being persecuted. Keep praying. The church has never been limited by numbers. **Be faithful, and when God is ready, the Church will expand.**

Finally, why not ask God to bring you into Christ's kingdom. There is no better, safer, and richer place in the whole world. On the other hand, there is no more dangerous place to be outside of Christ's kingdom. Jesus paid your entrance fee. He shed his blood so you don't have to shed your blood to please God.