

## Sermon for Morning Prayer The Eighth Sunday After Trinity

### Lessons:

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the fourth Chapter of Zechariah [**ZECK-are-eye-uh**].

“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 [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bell**], saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bell**] 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 [**ZAIRübb-uh-bell**] 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 [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bell**] with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the twentyfourth Verse of the third Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.

“... Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as

many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

### **Text:**

From the First Lesson: "[T]he word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel [**ZAIRübb-uh-bell**] 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." In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

### **Introduction:**

Zechariah, whose name means "God has remembered", lived and worked among the Jews whom Cyrus the Great had permitted to return to the territory that, until the Babylonia exile, had been the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He was a contemporary of, and a co-worker with, Haggai [**HAGG-eye**], and began prophesying in the second year of the reign of the Persian King of Kings Darius [**Dar-EYEuss**]. That was 520 BC, when Zerubbabel [**ZAIR-übb-uhbell**] was Darius's [**Dar-EYE-ussez**] Satrap [**Sat-TRAP**] or provincial governor in Judah.

As M. D. Easton, a late 19th Century Bible commentator, put it:

"His book consists of two distinct parts, (1) chapters 1 to 8, inclusive, and (2) 9 to the end. It begins with a preface (1:1-6), which recalls the nation's past history, for the purpose of presenting a solemn warning to the present generation. Then follows a series of eight visions (1:7-6:8), succeeding one another in one night, which may

be regarded as a symbolical history of Israel, intended to furnish consolation to the returned exiles and stir up hope in their minds.” Following those visions, “[t]he symbolical action, the crowning of Joshua (6:9-15), describes how the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of God’s Christ.”

### **Theme:**

In other words, Zechariah’s mission was to hearten and direct the efforts of the returned exiles as they worked to restore the Jewish nation under Persian administration. And, do not forget the final phrase in our quote from Easton: “the crowning of Joshua (6:9-15), describes how the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of God’s Christ.” In accordance with the traditional Christian view, the Old Testament is the preparation for the New, so important events and prophecies not only describe historical events in the Old Testament period but are, theologically and doctrinally, related to fuller revelations of their meanings in the context of the New Testament. This concept of the continuity of the contents of the two major phases of Biblical revelation is especially important in connection with passages such as today’s First Lesson.

### **Development:**

Today’s First Lesson relates the fifth of Zechariah’s eight visions. The candlestick with seven lamps that the angel showed the prophet appears to refer to the menorah which, even until today, is a symbol of Jewish worship and, in this context, in the first instance refers to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Thus when the angel explains that “the hands of Zerubbabel [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bell**] have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it”, the angel is telling Zechariah, in order that he may tell the people, that God has promised that Zerubbabel’s [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bellz**] efforts will be successful and the Temple will be rebuilt. In other words, the traditional worship of Israel will be reestablished in the sacred capital of the nation.

This is a promise of more than just the restoration of the Aaronic [**AIR-ahn-ick**] sacrifices, however. For as we previously quoted from M. D. Easton, the final section of Zechariah’s book “describes how the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of God’s Christ.” In other words, the seven lamps and the Temple they represent are both *types*, or scriptural foretellings, of the New Testament Church

that will be founded by Our Lord's Incarnation and earthly ministry. So God's promise, as relayed by the angel in the vision to Zechariah and by Zechariah to the people of Judah in his book, is in the end the promise that the Church will be constructed among mankind as the beginning of the promised coming of the Kingdom of Christ.

The links in the argument may be a bit obscure, so let me repeat that. God had the angel show Zechariah the seven-lamped candlestick -- a symbol of the Jewish religion and of that religion's temple -- as a sign that the Davidic Temple would be rebuilt among men. And, indeed, that was in fact done. However, the rebuilding of that earthly Old Testament Temple was itself a *type* or prophetic promise of the establishment of the spiritual New Testament Temple, which is Christ's Church.

### **Conclusion:**

The Old Testament Temple thus prefigures and foretells the New Testament Church, but there are important differences between them.

As Zerubbabel [**ZAIR-übb-uh-bell**] and his workers built the old Temple, so Jesus Christ built the new one. That old Temple, built in stones and mortar, could, and did, fall and be rebuilt yet again, only finally to fall into rubble. The new Temple, the Church, built in men's hearts and souls, will stand until the end of the age.

Most importantly, the old Temple served only those who were born Jews or, very rarely, adopted into the Jewish people. The new Church serves all men and women who permit it to, because as Paul wrote to the Galatians in today's Second Lesson, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Therefore, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for [w]e are all one in Christ Jesus. And if [w]e be Christ's, then are [w]e Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

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*August 2, 2009.*

*1 Psalms and Lessons for the Church Year (1943), THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxx (PECUSA 1928/1943).*

*2 Zechariah 4:1-10 (KJV).*

*3 Galatians 3:24 - 4:7 (KJV).*

*4 Zechariah 4:8-9 (KJV).*

*5 M. G. EASTON, ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY, 3rd ed. (Thomas Nelson 1897), s.v. Zechariah.*

*6 Ibid.*

*7 Ibid.*

*8 Zechariah 4:2.*

*9 Ibid.*

*10 Galatians 4:4b-5 (KJV).*

*11 Galatians 3:28-29 (KJV).*

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