

Grace, Grace Unto It

By George Davis and Michael Clark

In this article, we draw your attention to one example that addresses a major problem in the remnant believers today and gives the answer that is so desperately needed.

The apostle Paul acknowledged that the events of the Old Testament "happened. . .by way of example" and as such "were written for our admonition." (see 1 Corinthians 10:11). We go back to a time after 70 years of Babylonian captivity, when another remnant was returning to the land of their forefathers to rebuild the temple of God that lay in ruin. It is amazing how thoroughly their situation corresponds to that of those of us who long to see the restitution of all things--that glorious bride without spot or wrinkle. The lessons that they learned are as relevant as ever. Most of these "children of the captivity" could only imagine Zion and the glory that filled the temple on the day of its consecration.

What must they have felt when they saw the desolation of that beloved city? What did they think when they looked at the mountain of rubble where the temple once stood? The size of the task must have been overwhelming. But God had said, "[My house shall be built](#)" ([Zechariah 1:16](#)). It seemed that every force of hell withstood the edict to rebuild. When the adversaries of Judah heard that the children of the captivity were rebuilding the temple, they came to Zerubbabel, who was assigned the task of rebuilding the temple. They wanted to help with the construction. Beware of adversaries offering to help! Zerubbabel turned them down flat. They did not take this rejection lying down, but troubled the workers until the building finally ceased. (See [Ezra 4:23](#)). God sent prophets such as Haggai and Zechariah to motivate the people. Prophetic proclamations resounded throughout the land.

In the Old Testament, Moses constructed the tabernacle of meeting from the pattern he saw on Mount Sinai. But as the old covenant with Israel was coming to an end, the prophets started getting visions of the tabernacle and its furnishings in other forms. Ezekiel's vision was far different from that of Moses. The one we would like to bring to your attention is Zechariah's vision of the golden lampstand in the heavens. Zechariah chapter four is relevant to our time.

Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord. So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" (Zechariah 4:1-7, NKJV).

Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees--at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:11-14, NKJV).

It is important to note that this message was for Zerubbabel, whose name literally means born in or seed of Babylon. During Israel's long captivity, most of those who had once seen Solomon's temple and the glory of old Jerusalem had died off. A new generation was born that had never lived under the direct rule of God but had known only the government of their captors. The idolatrous Babylonian way of life had an affect upon them. Many had received Babylonian names, which contained the name of Babylon's chief deity, Baal. Imagine for a moment what it must have been like for those who had been born in Babylon and steeped in the knowledge and values shared by that society, to be sent to Zion to rebuild a temple they had never seen. It is certain that they possessed the ability to erect such a structure, for they had seen it done many times in Babylon and may have participated in the building. It is reasonable to assume that Babylonian building techniques were part of the learning of the Chaldeans that Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be taught to the well favored and skillful Hebrew children (Daniel 1:4). They were undoubtedly trained in the crafts used to build the hanging gardens, erect the Ishtar gate and raise the many monuments to Babylon's kings.

Nebuchadnezzar's boast reflects the heart and attitude of the builders of Babylon, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling-place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30 WEB).

Note: The name Nebuchadnezzar translates "may Nebo protect the crown." Nebo was the god of scholarship and was known as Hermes to the Greeks. This name is from where the word hermeneutics comes from, a subject still taught in Bible Schools. Today church scholars believe that their scholarship will protect the church from all error. This, too, is of the Babylonian mindset and rooted in the original sin, "if you eat of this tree, you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

But what strange words are these: "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD." He who laid the foundation will also bring forth the capstone. He who authored the work will finish it. From beginning to end, the work of God is God working by His Spirit. God is the Author and the Finisher. He (Zerubbabel, a type of Christ) shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" From the first to the last, it is all grace. God left nothing to man's imagination or ingenuity. The might and power of man were useless. Everything was done by the flow of God's Spirit. What we see here is a twofold working of God to bring His people into an understanding of His ways. First, to bring the power and might of man's flesh to nothing. And second, to empower by His Spirit those who have learned the first lesson.

The first thing that those born in Babylon had to learn was that God's purposes cannot be accomplished by Babylonian might and power. The second lesson was that from beginning to end, from the laying of the foundation to the bringing forth of the capstone, all that is eternal is fulfilled by God's grace. There is no room for boasting or improvisation. The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel is an example and admonition to us today.

Five Were Wise and Five Were Foolish

What is the message that they convey? In Zechariah the seven lamps are fed directly from the Source, God Himself. These lamps each have their supply of holy oil, unction from God Himself to be lights in the world. The Golden Bowl, the Son of God who stands at the Head of the church is the Fountainhead through Whom "all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and ligaments, grows with God's growth" (Colossians 2:19 WEB). From the Golden Bowl, the oil that represents God's

Spirit is conveyed by many golden pipes (a figure of the means of Divine grace) to the people of God with no intermediary priests.

In the tabernacle of Moses it fell to the priests to regularly fill the lamps and keep them full. If they failed in their duties the lamps burned out. Zechariah's lampstand depicts a constant flow of the Spirit of Grace proceeding from God Himself, unaided by the priesthood. The message that this imagery conveyed was reduced to these few words, "Not by power nor by might but by My Spirit," says the Lord. . .he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'"

So how is it in today's churches? Do the faithful rely on the Spirit as their source of unction or oil (see 1 John 2:27)? An honest appraisal will show that the faithful run to other men, seeking to be renewed weekly (weakly) by them. How often we hear them say of their churches, "I am really getting fed there." Or more commonly, "I am just not getting fed there." That is the point. We are never supposed to have any other source of feed except the Good Shepherd!

The seven lamps in Revelation chapters two and three are symbols of the seven churches and the seven spirits of these churches. Jesus is seen walking among them and pronouncing judgments. In this vision of Zechariah we see the Church as it should be. Seven is the number of completion or perfection. Each of the seven churches are fed directly from the source, the Two Olive Trees. Two is the number of witness and these depict the work first of Jesus in establishing the church on earth and then the work of the Holy Spirit who continues to guide her.

Jesus told a parable of two types of virgins (depicting believers in his kingdom) who had lamps burning and a source of oil. One group ran out of oil in the very hour of darkness that it was needed the most.

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: "Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!" Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise answered, saying, "No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go

rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Matthew 25:1-13, NKJV).

Five is the number of God's grace. Some had grace to have a lamp, but not enough grace to see the work through to the end. It takes both grace and grace to go out to meet the Bridegroom when He comes. As Paul told the foolish Galatians, you can not finish the work started in the Spirit by the flesh.

The problem is that today we have a church that has already lost its source of oil. We have foolish virgins following in the steps of the fallen churches in Revelation chapters two and three. We see Babylon the Great that knows no other way but the might and power of carnal men. Having only a form of godliness, this fallen church does not know the true source of power, the Spirit. Today's church members are foolish virgins. They do not seem to know where to go for oil. When trouble comes, they do what they have always done--run to other virgins.

Today we have the builders in control of the church. Might and power are the bywords of this hour. All the latest means and methods are employed. Instead of "Grace, Grace," we hear "works, works." We hear, "Let us make ourselves a city! Let us build a church that will attract the masses, that we might make a name for ourselves." This is the heart cry of corrupt man and his city of the flesh. This corruption was first manifest in ancient Babel and finally perfected in Babylon the Great and her daughters, living in opulence, corruption and whoredoms with her merchants, constantly bleeding the saints (See Revelation chapters 17 to 19).

On the other hand, the wise virgins get their oil from the source. They are fed with that constant flow that is not dependent upon the ministry of the priest.. Their oil comes down into their lamps from Jesus and His Spirit alone. They are plumbed into the Head, the golden bowl above the lamps. Lamps that depend on the priest or minister to come around and fill them soon run out of oil when the hour of darkness comes. The foolish ones are now on their own without the priest to fill their lamps. Only the wise virgins

who go to the Source for oil will make it through the day of trial to see the coming of their Bridegroom.

Over the last thirty years or so a remnant has come out of the harlot church trying to recover the glory of the former house that lies in ruin. They talk about the glory of the early Church. They hold to Jesus' promise, "I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." Everywhere they look they see nothing but institutional rubble that is nothing like the infant church that was victorious and turned the world upside-down. This remnant was also born in Babylon and are children of the captivity as much as Israel ever was.

This remnant is learning that God will not allow His purposes to come to fruition through the power and might of flesh. Though born into a system in which the end justifies the means, this remnant sees the deplorable state of the current church for what it really is, and contends daily for change. They no longer value large programs and buildings but nurture and cherish the presence and power of the living God above all else. They seek no blessing except God Himself and they know that unless He builds the house, all their labor is in vain. They have no Church except His body, wherever it is found. They have no ministry but Christ! They no longer study revivals of the past in hope of getting everything just right and achieving the same results. They have discovered that He is the only One who revives and builds His kingdom.

The current systems, both institutional and home based churches, resemble a mountain of rubble left behind by Babylon more than a temple made of living stones. The reason this madness has prevailed so long, lies in the fact that unbroken men, more concerned with methods of building than with the leading of the Spirit, still want positions of power and might. Choosing every program and activity of our church in faith and asking God to bless what we do may seem well and good, but the real question is not what God will bless but what He has chosen.

Jesus said, "[Every plant that my father has not planted shall be utterly plucked up.](#)" Are we living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God or are you living in presumption--ignorantly asking Him to bless our Ishmaels? God is picky. He will not sustain things that do not originate with Him and will never return glory to Him. Though we do good works with good intentions, if we do not abide in the workings of God, hearing and obeying Him, we can never expect His blessing. It is Christ's building that

matters to God, not ours. Remember, "it was the Stone which the builders rejected that has become the Head of the corner." By choosing our own designs, we will always reject the Foundation, Cornerstone and building of Christ.

Abiding In His Completed Work

Paul wrote to the Ephesian church,

. . .even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:5-10, NKJV.

It is all about Christ Jesus and what HE has done. Some are beginning to see through "ministry" today and are looking for a deeper Spirit-wrought expression of reality in their lives. They are learning that their best is simply not good enough for God's building. They hold to the words of Christ, the Zerubbabel of God, who said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." He who began the work will certainly finish it, bringing forth the capstone with shouts of "Grace, grace, unto it!" Not just grace but "Grace, grace" from beginning to end. Grace for the foundation of the temple of living stones and grace to bring His bride into her fullness. From beginning to end, this work is all about the power and grace of God.

When adversaries trouble the building, the prophetic proclamation resounds again, "not by power or by might but by My Spirit." Our first tendency is to do something, even if it is wrong, or worse yet, take to ourselves the arm of the flesh to deal with those who oppose our efforts.

You cannot partake of the unending flow of oil from the two olive trees that stand beside the Living God, while continuing to build by Babylonian might and power. You cannot know the grace of God and still depend upon your own life-source. The power of the soul quenches the presence of God by its very nature and invites the great

deceiver to make himself at home. You cannot be dependent upon carnal power and might and know the mighty working of God's Spirit in your life.

Being caught without ample oil in our lamps is equated by Jesus to not knowing Him. All our Christian lives we have been told the importance of knowing Jesus, but here and in two other parables the emphasis is on Him knowing us! All the virgins know Him, but does He know them? Does His flow of life find expression and channel through them? The key here is the meaning of the Greek word translated know.

W. E. Vine in his Dictionary of New Testament words speak of the deeper meaning of this word *ginosko*, translated know in the above passage.

ginosko:

In the NT *ginosko* frequently indicates a relation between the person "knowing" and the object known; in this respect, what is "known" is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship, e.g., especially of God's "knowledge," 1 Cor. 8:3, "if any man love God, the same is known of Him;" Gal. 4:9, "to be known of God;" here the "knowing" suggests approval and bears the meaning "to be approved;" so in 2 Tim. 2:19; cp. John 10:14,27; Gen. 18:19; Nah. 1:7; the relationship implied may involve remedial chastisement, Amos 3:2. The same idea of appreciation as well as "knowledge" underlies several statements concerning the "knowledge" of God and His truth on the part of believers, e.g., John 8:32; 14:20,31; 17:3; Gal. 4:9 (1st part); 1 John 2:3,13,14; 4:6,8,16; 5:20; such "knowledge" is obtained, not by mere intellectual activity, but by operation of the Holy Spirit consequent upon acceptance of Christ. Nor is such "knowledge" marked by finality; see e.g., 2 Pet. 3:18; Hos. 6:3, RV. The verb is also used to convey the thought of connection or union, as between man and woman, Matt. 1:25; Luke 1:34.

Our idea of knowing God and God's idea of knowing us are quite different. There will be many surprised people in that Day of Judgment, people who have done great works in His name and yet hear Him say, "I never knew you."

In our western (Greek) way of approaching knowledge, we accumulate facts and say that we know something. All we have to do to get a degree is parrot back what we have read and heard from our professors. Because of this, we are blind to the depth of God's ways and what is written in the scriptures. In the eastern (and Hebrew) way of

approaching knowledge, there must be relationship, connection and union of the student with the teacher, which transforms the student into the same image as the teacher. In the mind of God, our Teacher, this makes all the difference. (See also Matthew 7:21-27).

The oil we need as wise virgins does not come from our own efforts nor from other virgins mentoring us. It comes from the Word of the Lord, and the Spirit of Truth. The difference between wise and foolish virgins is where they go to get their oil.

We may heap up our "righteous deeds" unto heaven as a great mountain before God, but they will all be cast down as nothing before the feet of Jesus in the end. Will He say to us, "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity"? If the works we offer Christ are not done through intimate union with Him, but are done in our own might and power, though they might be done in His name, they are iniquity to Him. Christ wants us to come into His presence singing the praises of His grace, acknowledging what He has done. Grace, grace that not only saved a wretch like me, but more importantly, keeps me from my own dead works and kingdom building.

Only those who know Jesus' covering, who know Him as the Author and Finisher of their faith, can appreciate Him and cry out, "Grace! Marvelous Grace!" Only those who know Him as the Head (golden bowl) from whom all life flows can be knit together with the increase of God. These are wise virgins who go to the Source for their oil.