

# IT'S NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER

In 2 Chronicles chapter 20 we have the detailed story of Jehoshaphat's great victory when the "ites" came against him.

In this awesome chapter, God makes a powerful statement that is a theme throughout the Old and New Testaments. He says, "...for the battle is not yours, but God's!"

This statement is one that we would do good to plaster all over our home to always remind us... The battle is not ours! The battle is God's!

Another way of saying this in New Testament terminology is- We are saved by grace through faith, not of works lest anyone should boast." This is a principle that we see all throughout the Word of God and God desires us to understand- that we are saved, healed, delivered, victorious, et cetera only by grace and not by any works that we have done or effort on our part. This has been God's plan for mankind since Adam- God desires to do everything by grace!

Now I want us to turn over to Zechariah chapter four, but before we read it, let me give you the background of this prophecy...

This prophecy was directed towards Zerubbabel...

Zerubbabel was the governor of Judah during the days of Nehemiah and Ezra when the Temple was being rebuilt, and therefore was in charge of this great task.

This would obviously be a difficult task because of how great and awesome Solomon's Temple was originally. It was for this reason that Zerubbabel needed these encouraging words.

Now the rebuilding of the house of God is symbolic to us and can represent several things...

I believe one obvious application is that it can be a type and shadow of Jesus Christ rebuilding God's Temple, not with hands, but in our hearts and the "temple" of our bodies.

But I also believe that it can be applied to the progression in our spiritual lives as well... In other words, rebuilding the Temple is a metaphor for us building our spiritual lives and adorning our temple- which is our bodies. Now I am not talking about adorning our bodies in the way of physical appearance (i.e. what you wear or being in shape), but putting on the new man and adorning our temples with the nature and beauty of Christ. So building the Temple can be symbolic of us growing up in our salvation.

Do you remember Jesus' parable of the man who built his house on the rock? There were two men... both heard the Word, but only one did what he heard. The one's house who did not do what he heard immediately fell when the trials and tribulations came, but the one's house who did what he heard endured through the problems that came against it.

Another way of saying this is “building God a house” is what we do for God...

You see, Zerubbabel was a guy who wanted to do something for God. His heart, along with the rest of God’s people, was to honor God and become what they should have been all along. So any believer who has a heart to grow up to be and do anything that is pleasing to God is a perfect type of Zerubbabel.

Are you a “Zerubbabel”? Has He commissioned you to do something great for His name’s sake? Do you have a heart to do what is pleasing in His sight?

Well, this word from Zechariah is a word for you too... So let’s look at Zechariah chapter four and see what God is saying to the “Zerubbabel’s” of the church today...

It starts out by saying, “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.” (verses 1-2)

Now we understand from Revelations 1:20 that the “lampstand” represents the church- or you could say it represents the covenant people of God, which in Zerubbabel’s day would describe the Jews. The fact that there were “seven” further validates this because it was the seven churches in Asia Minor that were referred to by the Apostle John.

Then in verse 3 the angel went on to say that there were two olive trees by the lampstand, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left.

The significance of this part of the vision Zechariah had was that the olive trees that were planted on both sides of the lampstand were there to, as the Amplified Bible brings out, constantly feed the bowls of the lamps with oil.

You see, in there day they used the oil that came from olive trees to burn these kind of lamps. So olive oil to them represented a supply of something that was extremely needful and important.

We know through the things revealed in the New Testament that oil represents the anointing. And if you look ahead to the end of the chapter (verse 14), the angel tells Zechariah who the two olive trees represent. He says they represent the two anointed ones who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth.

Now Zechariah does not go into specifically who these two anointed ones are, but again, the New Testament does... Notice that they were standing beside God. To me, this shows that they had to be more than just a human. They had to be equal with God the Father themselves. So who would those two be? You got it... The Spirit and the Word! The two anointed ones are the second and third persons of the Godhead- The Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit- because both of these are referred to as anointed... Jesus is called the “The Anointed One” (i.e. Christ) and the Holy Spirit is referred to as “the anointing” (see 1 John 2:26).

So it is these two anointed ones of the Godhead that were going to supply the ability to Zerubbabel and the children of Israel to fulfill God’s will for their lives.

So let’s move on to what we are told next in Zechariah chapter four and see exactly the message that this prophecy was intending to communicate to all the “Zerubbabel’s” out there...

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (verse six)

The message that this vision of the lampstand and the olive trees was intended to communicate is wrapped up in this one statement that the angel said was the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel- “‘It’s not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

You see, God was saying that by the ability of His Holy Spirit was this awesome task going to be accomplished. It was not going to be by the might and strength that Zerubbabel possessed.

What are these words “might” and “power” referring to?

The word “might” deals with his collective strength... In other words, it focuses more on the amount of outside help that Zerubbabel had- such as, the number of people he had or the resources they had to work with. God was saying that he was going to do his work for God, but it was not going to be by the resources or outside help that they he had. It was going to be by the Spirit of God.

The word “power” deals more with Zerubbabel’s individual strength... It is referring to his own individual ability (i.e. his mind and strength) to bring this great work to pass. God was saying that he was going to do his work for God, but it was not going to be by his own cleverness, ability, or physical strength. It was going to be by the Spirit of God.

So how does this apply to us doing something for God?

It means that we are going to accomplish God’s will and do what is pleasing in His sight, not by any intrinsic values in ourselves or by any help from without, but only by the help of the Holy Spirit. This is a very important thing to understand, especially for us under this new and better covenant.

The Apostle Paul was the one that God gave this full revelation to... In Romans chapter seven he explains the utter frustration that comes to the man or woman who tries to keep the law in their own power. He says that although they have it in their heart to do what is pleasing in God’s sight, they lack the ability to do it because of the weakness of their flesh. But in Romans chapter eight Paul provides the solution to this dilemma... It’s the Holy Spirit! You see, before Romans chapter eight the Holy Spirit is only referred to once or twice, but in chapter eight alone He is referred to scores of times. The conclusion? If we are going to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law, we are going to have to walk and be led by the Spirit of God. We cannot really please God with the arm of the flesh. It is only by the Spirit of God that we can live a life of pleasing God.

In regards to this... For us to become all that God intends for us to become in our spiritual lives, we are going to have to depend fully upon the grace of God and not on our own might and power.

Again, “might” refers to collective strength and outside help. This means that we are not going to be perfected by anyone else’s help but the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual development is not going to come from spending x amount of time listening to other preachers sermons... It is going to come from hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. It is not going to come from hanging out with other believers... It is going to come from spending time in God’s presence and fellowshiping with the Holy Spirit.

Now I am not discounting the importance of listening to teaching tapes and reading books that are godly because they are good in their place. What I am saying though is that you are not really going to grow apart from spending time with God Himself. His presence will transform you faster and greater than any other persons presence will, and just one word from God will impact you more than thousands of words from man. Of course, God can speak to you and affect you through these natural things, but there is no substitute to just you and God fellowshiping together.

Again, “power” refers to your own individual strength... This means that you are not going to grow up spiritually in your own strength. You cannot will it to happen. It is only going to happen through your personal fellowship with Jesus Christ and through the ability of the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 1:19 says, “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”

Abiding in the Vine (i.e. the Vine of that Olive Tree who is called “The Branch”- see Zechariah 3:8)

Now there are several things that the Apostle Paul mentions in Romans chapter eight that are keys to building up this tent for the Lord. But two of them specifically are the two “anointed ones” that are mentioned in Zechariah’s prophecy...

‘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!”’(verse 7)”

This verse has always reminded me of Jesus’ words to His disciples that “whosoever shall say to this mountain, ‘be removed and be cast into the sea’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things that he says shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he says.”

In the prophecy, the “mountain” is confronted... Not a literal “mountain”, but the seemingly impossible task in front of Zerubbabel (and perhaps, visually, the huge pile of rubble from the previous Temple Solomon had built). The prophecy states, “Who are you, O great mountain?” This is a statement of disdain and disrespect... You could interpret this phrase this way- “Who are you, mountain? You are nothing to God’s Spirit! You might seem great and insurmountable in the natural, but to God you are a piece of cake.”

Likewise, when we are doing something for God, in the natural, it might seem too difficult or impossible. This is when we are to prophecy to our “mountain” with disrespect and say, “Who are you, O mountain of carnality?” “Who are you, O mountain of debt?” “Who are you, O mountain of disease?” “You are nothing to my God!”

The prophecy continues- “Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!” In other words, “You might seem like a mountain right now, but you shall be completely removed!” What an awesome statement of faith! It totally looks beyond the insurmountable problem before it and looks with the eyes of faith to the eventual manifestation of God’s promise.

You see, it is important for these things to come out of our mouth. As Jesus said, we must speak to the mountain! He didn’t say we are to speak to God about the mountain. He said we are to

Speak directly to the mountain. It is only when we “prophecy to our mountains” that they will be removed and become a plain before us.

Notice the next statement in this prophecy... “And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”

Bringing forth the capstone describes the completion of rebuilding God’s house. In other words, it describes them reaching their goal. And what was the response going to be? They would be shouting and praising God for His grace!

You see, when we do things for God the right way, which is by the power of His Holy Spirit and not in our own ability. The response will be a resounding- “It is all a product of the grace of God! It was done by God’s grace!”

In Ephesians 1:3-5, we have a list of different things that God has done for us in our salvation, and in verse 6 Paul says that the result of all of these things that God has freely given us would be... “So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.” (NLT) This should be the response to everything in our lives, including everything we accomplish in pleasing God- “Thank you God for the grace that enabled me to do that!”

The problem is that too often we try and build these things in our own strength. As Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless God builds the house they labor in vain who build it.”

We can see that we- the people of God (i.e. the lampstands)- have these two anointed ones (i.e. the olive trees) there to supply us with what we need to be “on fire” for Him and to make our “light” shine before men.

This

You see, this the reason God told them to not be afraid or dismayed... It was because it was not even their battle! It was God’s! Are you ever afraid of God losing any of His battles? Of course not! Well, the only reason why we get afraid when challenges come our way is because we see them as our battles and, therefore, huge and insurmountable. But if we saw them as they are in truth- God’s battles, and not ours- we would be unflappable!

Now this powerful phrase has a whole range of applications to our lives.

As previously stated, these “ites” that Jehoshaphat had coming up against him were types and shadows of the kingdom of darkness that we wrestle against in our dispensation. And these demonic forces manifest themselves in many different ways...

Their effects are sin, carnality, depression, oppression, sickness, disease, poverty, and basically any other curse that can be named. So when it is written that the battle is not ours, but the Lord's, this applies to any of these "ites" that come against us today.

So a good question would be- What are we to do when these "ites" rear their ugly heads if the battle is the Lord's?

That's a good question Trey. I think I'll answer that one☺. The general answer is found in the following verses...

However, the following needs to be said first...