

Lesson 21

When we ended last week, we were looking at Zechariah 12:10, and particularly at the phrase "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." We know with certainty from John 19:33-37 that this prophecy in Zechariah 12:10 was pointing to the crucifixion.

But we also saw an example of this looking and this mourning in Acts 2:36-37, where Peter's listeners looked upon the crucified Christ, understood what had caused that event, and then mourned because of their sin. The looking in verse 10 is more than just looking and seeing; it is looking and understanding. Only when there is understanding is it true that the looking is followed by mourning.

And notice that the ones who mourn in verse 10 are the ones who did the piercing. "They shall look upon me whom **they** have pierced." They did not literally drive the spear through Christ's body, but they pierced him. How? They pierced Christ the same way we all do - by our sin. Jesus died on that cross because of our sin. Our sin put him there, and it is because of our sin that Jesus was pierced. That is why we look and mourn.

John 8:28 - Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.

1 Peter 2:24 - Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Verse 10 is focused on Acts 2. The prophecy in the first half of verse 10 was fulfilled in Acts 2, and the prophecy in the second half of verse 10 was fulfilled in Acts 2. But that's not all - that second-half prophecy is also fulfilled every time someone hears the gospel and mourns after he understands what his sin has caused.

This mourning in verse 10 is the godly sorrow of 2 Corinthians 7:10. It is described here as the most intense mourning - the mourning one would have for an only son, or the mourning one would have for a firstborn son. No greater blow could befall a family in the days of Zechariah or perhaps in any day. The great intensity of this mourning over sin is further described in the closing verses of the chapter.

Zechariah 12:11

11 In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of

Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

Again we have a time frame in verse 11 - "in that day." That's the same time frame we have had for the prior verses - the same time frame that we see in Daniel 2:44 (which is the same time frame we see in verses 3 and 9), the same time frame we get from Acts 2 (which describes the events in the first half of verse 10), and the same time frame we get from John 19:37 (which quotes the second half of verse 10 and applies it to the first century).

We are still in the first century. That is when this mourning occurs, but, as we said before, that does not mean the mourning *ends* in the first century. We also mourn today when we think about what our sin has caused.

What is meant in verse 11 by "the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." The valley of Megiddon is where Josiah, one of the most beloved kings of the Old Testament, met his untimely death at the hands of Pharaoh Necho. His death caused great mourning.

2 Chronicles 35:24-25 - His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.

Verse 11 also mentions Hadadrimmon. What is that? Most commentators think that it was a small village near the city of Megiddo itself. Some identify it with the village Rummaneh that is about four miles southeast of Megiddo. In 2 Chronicles 35:22 we read that Josiah fought in the valley of Megiddo, and Hadadrimmon may have been the actual place where he was mortally wounded. (He was later taken to Jerusalem, where he died.)

The description of the mourning continues in verse 12.

Zechariah 12:12-14

12 And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their

wives apart; 14 All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

These three verses make the same point, but they do so using the technique of *emphasis by enumeration*. All of these families would be among God's faithful people who would mourn. Even the wives are mentioned, which further emphasizes the point that no one would be left out of this mourning. Verse 14 drives that point home - "every family" will mourn.

Why are these specific families mentioned - David, Nathan, Levi, and Shimei? Nathan was the son of David (Luke 3:31), and Shimei was the grandson of Levi (Numbers 3:17-18). The house of David was the ruling family, and the house of Levi was the priestly family. So these four names, along with the phrase "all the families that remain" include all of the royal family and all of the priestly family.

But what does this description mean? We have seen it before. These four names show a *combined royal priesthood*, which we know is the church (1 Peter 2:9). These verses are saying that everyone in the church - all families in the royal priesthood - would mourn because of their sin when they looked upon the one "whom they have pierced."

What does it mean that they will mourn "apart"? That means they would understand their personal responsibility for their sin, and their mourning would be personal. This description is not an image of the church mourning as a whole; this description is an image of each person in the church personally mourning because of his own sin and what his own personal sin has caused.

Five of the fourteen verses in this chapter are used to describe the intense mourning of God's people over their sin and what it caused. There is a lesson here for us. Do we mourn over our sin as we should? Do we truly understand what our sin cost God? Or are we sometimes flippant and dismissive of our sin? Sin is serious, and we need to make sure we always treat sin seriously. Sin is treated with the utmost seriousness in the Bible.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 Peter 3:18 - For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Zechariah 12 tells us what our reaction should be when we look both at our sin and at the cross of Christ.

Chapter 13

Before we look at Zechariah 13, let's go back to Acts 2, which helped us understand verse 10 of Zechariah 12. Acts 2 told us *when* the pouring out of the spirit in verse 10 was fulfilled, and Acts 2:36-37 gave us an example of the mourning that was also described in verse 10.

Acts 2:36-37 - Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

What happens next? Peter was asked that question at the end of Acts 2:37, and we know how he responded.

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

How does Zechariah answer that same question? What happens next?

Zechariah 13:1

1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

We sing about a fountain:

There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins; And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.

Is that the fountain we see here? A fountain filled with blood? Or do we see a fountain filled with something else? Let's forget the lyrics of that song for a moment and ask this question: with what do we *expect* a fountain to be filled?

Jeremiah 2:13 - For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Jeremiah answers our question, but we didn't need Jeremiah to tell us what we already knew - fountains are filled with *water*. And this fountain in verse 1 is no different.

I'm not criticizing that song. (Believe me - if I started criticizing songs I wouldn't start with that one!) It is simply using poetic language to correctly link the waters of baptism with the blood of Christ - but fountains are filled with *water*, not with blood. When we see a fountain, we should think *water*, not blood. So what then is verse 1 telling us?

What is the time frame? Verse 1 refers to something that would occur "in that day." That's the same time period that we saw in Chapter 12 - the first century.

In that day - in the first century - a fountain would be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. What is that fountain? Well, what was provided in the first century that involved water and was for sin and for uncleanness? Didn't Peter answer that question in the verse we just read from Acts 2?

Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Zechariah 13:1 **links water and sin** in the first century. Acts 2:38 **links water and sin** in the first century. Each verse follows mourning over the death of the good shepherd. Perhaps this book of Zechariah is not as difficult as some commentaries make it out to be because that seems pretty straightforward to me! **Zechariah 13:1 is an Old Testament depiction of baptism for the remission of sins!**

But verse 1 says that this fountain would be opened "to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Does that mean that baptism is for those already in spiritual Israel? I thought that baptism was how one became part of spiritual Israel in the first place. The answers to those questions are yes and yes.

First, baptism is how one becomes a part of spiritual Israel, the church. How do we know that? This verse right here in Zechariah tells us that - this fountain is for sin and uncleanness. No one can enter the church until they are made clean, and that cleansing occurs at baptism.

Ephesians 5:26-27 - That he might sanctify and cleanse it with **the washing of water** by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, **not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing**; but that it should be holy and **without blemish**.

But the efficacy of baptism does not end there. Baptism continues to cleanse those who remain faithful to God. How do we know that? John tells us that the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us from sin.

1 John 1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

And Paul tells us how we come in contact with that blood.

Romans 6:3-6 - Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?** Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death:** that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been **planted together in the likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Baptism is how we enter the kingdom, and that same baptism is how faithful children of God remain in the kingdom. Baptism makes us clean, and that same baptism keeps us clean.

That baptism is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5. That one baptism is water baptism (Acts 8:38). And it is water that fills this fountain here in Zechariah 13:1. There is no other water in the first century or in any century since that is for sin and uncleanness.

Acts 22:16 - And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Can we find the gospel plan in the Old Testament? Yes! We have seen it right here! We saw faith when we saw those who looked unto the pierced one. We saw repentance when those same people mourned over their sin and over what it had caused. And we just saw baptism in this fountain for sin and uncleanness.

The links between Zechariah and Acts 2 are amazing! In Zechariah 12 and 13 we have seen the outpouring of God's spirit, we have seen those who look at the one they pierced and finally understand what they have done, we have seen those same people mourn over their sin and no doubt wonder what they must do, and we have seen the answer: wash in the fountain for sin and uncleanness.

What else would happen in that day? Keep reading.

Zechariah 13:2

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

Verse 2 has the same time frame as verse 1 - "in that day," which is the first century. Verse 2 tells us that three things would happen in that day. First, idols would be cut off out of the land. Second, prophets would pass out of the land. And third, unclean spirits would pass out of the land.

What does it mean that the names of the idols would be cut off out of the land? We could view that statement broadly as just a general statement about idolatry (as most commentaries do) or we could view that statement more narrowly.

I think the narrower approach is better. Why? Because there is a link between this verse in 13:2 and a verse that we studied earlier in 11:17 - "Woe to the **idol** shepherd that leaveth the flock!" That verse in Zechariah 11 used a Hebrew word for "worthless" that was usually reserved for idols and false gods, but that verse used the word to describe first century Roman emperors. I think Zechariah 13:2 is describing the same thing.

Those Roman emperors, and especially Domitian, thought they were gods and demanded worship as gods. Every emperor called himself "divus" or "sebastos," which means divine. On his coins, Nero referred to himself as "The Savior of the World." The emperors took as their title the Latin word "dominus," or its Greek equivalent "kurios," which means Lord, and which is used in the Bible as a title for Jesus.

But, of course, those emperors were not gods. Instead, they were false and worthless idols. Domitian was assassinated in AD 96. He was cut off out of the land. His name was not remembered, meaning that he was not remembered as a god, which is how he had wanted to be remembered. It also means that his name was not honored after his death, which history confirms. Upon Domitian's death, we are told that the Roman Senate was:

Overjoyed ... and assailed the dead emperor with the most insulting and stinging kind of

outcries ... Finally they passed a decree that his inscriptions should everywhere be erased, and all record of him obliterated.

And who did this to Domitian? Who cut him off? Verse 2 answers that question - God cut him off along with his fellow emperors. Here is how Paul described that same first century event.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 - And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

But was that the cutting off of an *idol*? Read what Paul wrote a few verses earlier.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 - Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

That is what the first half of verse 2 is describing. What about the rest of verse 2?

What does it mean that prophets and the unclean spirits would pass out of the land? I think that means just what it says. During the first century time period, the office of prophet would cease, and the ability of unclean spirits to invade and possess people would come to an end.

In 1 Corinthians 13:8 we read that prophecies would come to an end, and that same verse tells us *when* that would happen - when that which is perfect is come (1 Corinthians 13:10). I think that which is perfect there is the perfect word of God, which we know was completed in the first century.

And doesn't that make sense? What would a prophet tell us today? That Jesus is coming? He has already appeared the first time, and we already know he will appear a second time, so why would we need a prophet when we have the Bible to tell us these things? The office of prophet came to an end in the first century when there was no longer any need for a prophet, and that is something this verse in Zechariah is telling us.

What about the unclean spirits? They would also pass out of the land in the first century. There is no demon possession today, and there hasn't been since the first century. And, again, doesn't that make sense? Although there is much we don't know about the subject of demon possession, it seems to have been part of God's plan in the first century to confirm the word through signs and wonders.

Mark 1:27 - And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves,

saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Mark 16:20 - And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

Matthew 12:28 - But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Today, we have the complete word of God. We don't need a continuing demonstration of signs and miracles to confirm it. And we have the sign of the resurrection - if men fail to believe that, what other sign or miracle would convince them? Isn't that what Jesus said?

Matthew 12:39-40 - An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Demon possession went away in the first century, and that is what verse 2 is telling us would happen.

But *why* is verse 2 telling us these things? Because of what we saw in verse 1 and in the preceding chapter. Because the promises have been fulfilled in Christ and in his church. Because God loves and provides for his faithful remnant. Because the eternal kingdom of Christ has the perfect word of God.

And those false gods that sought to destroy the church? They are cut off. And prophets? We have no need for them. And unclean spirits? They are cut off and will no longer afflict the people of God.

So what if someone today were to tell us that they were a prophet sent by God? How should we handle that situation? Verse 3 answers that question.

Zechariah 13:3

3 And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

Verse 3 is the logical conclusion of verse 2. If prophets have ceased in the land, then logically it follows that if anyone tells you he is a prophet, then he must be a false prophet.

Joseph Smith, the infamous false prophet of the Mormons, thought he was mentioned in the Old Testament, and you know what, he was right! He is being discussed right here in Zechariah 13 along with every other false prophet since the first century!

Verse 3 makes its point in a very graphic manner. If someone tells his parents that he is a prophet, then his parents will know he is lying, and they will thrust him through and kill him. Although that all sounds very harsh to our ears, this verse is simply restating what the old law had to say about false prophets.

Deuteronomy 18:20 - But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

And the reference to one's own parents reminds us of a similar passage from the old law.

Deuteronomy 13:6-9 - If thy brother, the son of thy mother, **or thy son, or thy daughter**, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; ... But thou shalt surely kill him; **thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death**, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

So what is the point being made here for the *new* covenant? Are we to kill false prophets? No, and we know from the rest of the Old Testament that few false prophets met that fate even under the old law. The point being made here for the new covenant is the same point that was being made under the old covenant, and it is the same point that Jesus made in Luke 14.

Luke 14:26 - If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And it is the same point that Jesus made in Matthew 6.

Matthew 6:33 - But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The kingdom of God must come first. If someone is harming that kingdom, then we must expose and correct that person - **no matter who it is**. If even the parents of a false prophet are to have this attitude toward him, then what does that say about our attitude? If a man's own parents reject his false prophecies, then what does that say about how we should respond to that false prophet? The Bible says that the kingdom must come before everything else - even our own families.

But having that attitude will cause conflict in the home! That attitude will divide up our family! You mean like this?

Luke 12:53 - The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Did Jesus say, seek ye *second* the kingdom of God? Seek ye *third*? No. We either put the kingdom of God *first*, or we reject it entirely. Those are the only two options.

Zechariah 13:4-5

4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: 5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

These verses look at some false prophets (certainly not all false prophets) who recognize their error and are ashamed because of it.

The point here is that the understanding that prophecy had ceased would be so widespread that people would be ashamed to ever make a pretense of being a prophet. That is certainly the attitude that we in the Lord's church have about modern-day prophecy, but that cannot be said for many religious organizations around today. We see people on TV every day who have no shame at all in calling themselves a prophet! We see large religious groups following modern-day false prophets and leading people to their ruin!

Why does verse 4 mention "a rough garment"? Elijah had been "a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins" (2 Kings 1:8). Apparently Elijah's dress had by Zechariah's day become a

costume worn by pretenders who wanted others to see them as prophets. That is the deceit we see in verse 4, and deceit such as that would also come to an end once everyone understood that prophecy had ceased. Once everyone knows that prophecy has ended, it becomes very hard to convince people that you are a prophet! Even dressing up like Elijah won't help!

Verse 5 gives another illustration of this dramatic change. Those false prophets who saw the error of their way would readily admit to not being a prophet. Instead, they would admit that they were instead just a farmer or one who cares for cattle. They would be exposed for what they really are.

Verses 4 and 5 are intended simply to make the point that everyone in the remnant will know that prophecy has ceased, and so they will not be easy prey for false prophets and other pretenders. And if a false prophet rises up in their own midst, they will deal with him appropriately. not by killing him, but by completely rejecting him and exposing him.

Zechariah 13:6

6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

To whom is verse 6 addressed? We really have only two choices - either verse 6 is addressed to the Messiah, or verse 6 is addressed to the false prophet described in verses 3-5.

If it is the latter, then verse 6 is pointing back to verse 3, and the wounds in the false prophet's hands are the wounds inflicted on him by his parents because of his false prophecies - that is, wounds inflicted by his family members (his friends).

Or perhaps those wounds are ritualistic wounds inflicted on him by his fellow false prophets (his friends), such as those inflicted by the Baal worshippers in 1 Kings 18.

1 Kings 18:28 - And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

Or perhaps the answer in verse 6 is a lie - the people see evidence of the ritualistic wounds that characterized false prophets, and the false prophet falsely responds that he got those wounds in a brawl with his friends.

If verse 6 is addressed to the false prophets, then verse 6 is just a continuation of the same thoughts we saw in verses 3-5 - namely, that false prophets will be recognized as such by all.

The alternate view (and a view that is much less popular among commentators) is that verse 6 is describing the Messiah, and, in particular, is describing the wounds he suffered on the cross.

A big criticism of this view is that it requires the pronoun "him" in verse 6 to point all the way back to the one who was pierced in Zechariah 12:10. But Zechariah has frequently bounced back and forth from some topic to the Messiah, and so we could be just seeing another example of that here. And this bounce need not be all the way back to Zechariah 12:10 - Zechariah was describing the work of the Messiah just a few verses earlier in Zechariah 13:1.

It's true that no New Testament writer ever points back to this verse in reference to Christ, but the very next verse is a Messianic prophecy, and so we cannot argue against a Messianic reading of verse 6 based solely on context. The real question is whether verse 6 belongs with verses 3-5 or instead belongs with verse 7 (which we know is in reference to Christ).

#Zechariah