**The Great Day of the Great Lord – part 2**

Zechariah 12:10-13:5

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**Scriptures:** Zechariah 12:10-13:5; John 19:31-37

**Series: Zechariah**. Sermon 16 of 19

**Theme:** Zechariah prophesies of the coming Day of the Lord when the sacrifice and grace of God in Christ will be seen by all

**FCF:** We can loose heart in the midst of our own sin and struggles in this life

**Proposition:** Press on – Christ is coming!

**Introduction**

Militant Jihadist Islam seeks to dominate the world by military means, using the threat of physical violence to subjugate people.

Whereas God’s work of recreation is certainly a global conquest as we saw in part 1 of this two-part sermon, His work of delivering his people flows out from a supernatural activity of His Spirit in their hearts. You can see this very clearly in verse 10: “*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication*”.

A generous, plentiful giving of God’s spirit had been promised during the Babylonian exile by the prophet Ezekiel (39:29 “*I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD*.")

Just as it was God’s great work in **conquest** for His people in the Great War fought by Christ at Calvary, so here also it is God’s great work of **deliverance** for His people through the inward transformation of their hearts. Here in verse 1 we have the astounding reason given as to why the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem have received ‘a spirit of grace and supplication’ **so that “***They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son*”

Which brings us to:

1. **The Great Grief (internal renewal)**

It is the gift of God’s Spirit which enables Jerusalem to grieve over someone who has been ‘pierced’. The Spirit is one of ‘supplication’; the desire for God’s favour and ‘grace’. The word ‘pierced’ here is used of a fatal stabbing by a sword or a spear (Num 25:8). This is mourning over somebody who has been violently killed.

Who then was the one who was pierced? There may have been a historical figure, the Lord’s representative, who was killed back then around the 5th century BC. **We don’t know**. However, what **we do understand** is likely already in your minds from your knowledge of the Bible and in particular John 19:31-37. After Jesus had said “It is finished”. He died.

The Jews did not want to have the body of a descendant of Abraham remaining on a cross on the Sabbath day because the OT law stated "*And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse*” (Deut 21:22- 23) So the Jews asked Pilate to command the soldiers to break the legs of the three men being crucified at Calvary that day. With broken legs, a person could no longer push themselves up to gain a breath and death through suffocation came much more quickly. The soldiers found the two criminals with Jesus still alive and dutifully broke their legs. However, the Scriptures testify: “*But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs*” (John 19:33).

Perhaps he was only pretending to be dead? Perhaps he was in a coma? Perhaps he had fainted from the pain of crucifixion? These were perhaps possibilities in the mind of one of the soldiers there that day. So, wanting to be absolutely sure he took a spear and pierced Jesus’s side, causing a flow of blood and water to come out. The historical fact that Jesus really did die at Calvary is so critical to the gospel of salvation that writer John underscores that the one pierced really was dead by saying: *“The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe”* (John 19:35) John also links this Roman-style death certification by piercing Jesus with a spear as being a fulfilment of Zechariah 12:10.

Why mourn over the death of Jesus? Because, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, sorrow over personal sin is a great grief over the death that Christ died, as he bore the wrath of God against that sin on the cross. Remember Jesus said of the Holy Spirit **“***When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment*” (John 16:8)

So, the prophecy here speaks of a great mourning over the death of Christ for sin in ‘Jerusalem’. It will be great like the grief over the death of King Josiah in the plain of Megiddo. When, as we heard in part 1, “*all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him*” (2 Chron 35:24).

There are two lines of descent of who are grieving in Jerusalem: **The royal line** - Nathan here was a son of David – 1 Chr 14:4) and **the priestly line** – Levi and his grandson Shimei (1 Chron 6:16-17). The reference in v 12 to *‘each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves’* indicates the genuine nature of the individual personal repentance for sin.

The houses, the family lines of David, Nathan Levi and the Shimeites are all Jewish. Does this mean that there will be a great turning back to the Lord in a mass national repentance of Jews when Christ returns? This is the teaching of many North American evangelical churches, who connecting this text in Zechariah to Romans 11, where in v26 Paul writes “*And so all Israel will be saved*”.

What can we say?

Firstly, that there has, as yet in human history, been no national repentance by the Jews, recognizing Christ on the cross as the fulfilment of this OT prophecy.

**It is possible** on the ‘day of the Lord’ when Christ returns that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Lord may bring many people of ethnic Jewish decent to true repentance. This could conceivably happen when those Jewish people literally look upon the resurrected body of the Saviour who was ‘pierced for their transgressions’.

**It is also possible** that when the Lord returns, many of Jewish descent present on the earth at that time will realise that Christ is indeed the promised Messiah and will grieve because it is too late to believe upon him, because He has come as judge to “*tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty*” (Rev 19:15).

Notice that whilst the ‘spirit of grace and supplication’ is poured out in this prophecy on the ‘house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem’, we know that the Holy Spirit has been poured out on many from every tribe, tongue and nation, beginning at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13).

It makes sense to understand this apocalyptic, symbolic, writing as saying: On the house of David, under the reign of great David’s Greater ‘son’, King Jesus - within the community of saving faith, God has poured out a spirit of grace and supplication. It makes sense to interpret these references to Old Testament Israelites as finding their fulfilment in the saving Christ’s work for all Abraham’s spiritual descendants, all who are in Christ, heirs according to promise (Gal 3:29)

What we can say **with certainty** is that when men and woman, boys and girls become conscious of having been born again by the renewing work of the Holy Spirit (3:3), there is deep sorrow over their personal sin which Christ bore in his body on the cross. Each born again Christian weeps over his/her part in Christ’s suffering at Calvary:

In the words of hymn 287 – O Sacred Head, now wounded:

“*mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.*

*Lo, here I fall, my Saviour, ‘tis I deserve thy place*”

King David rightly said of his treason against God: “*Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”* (Psalm 51:4)

How is it for you when you ‘look on him whom you have pierced?” Do you believe that Jesus Christ was afflicted by God, in part because of **your** personal sins? Do you believe that he was pierced, in part, for **your** personal transgressions? Do you believe that he was crushed, in part for **your** personal iniquities?

If you answer is ‘Yes’, then you have received the spirit of grace and supplication…these prophecies point to your own experience of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is more!

1. **The Great Grace (13:1-6)**

A major washing is in view at the start of chapter 13: **13:1** *"In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity”*

As we have already seen, like the spirit of supplication and grace, this is **not only** for Jewish peoples who turn in repentance to Christ, but for anyone from any tribe, tongue or nation. The word ‘fountain’ is used of water source…a spring… a continuous supply of fresh water. This fountain is opened up on the day of repentance, the day of mourning over sin. Notice that this is not a small cistern – with a limited holding capacity. This is a fountain. The idea here is of a supply that will never run dry: a metaphorically unlimited supply from a vast subterranean reservoir.

This is a single fountain…. there is but one source of this cleansing water. This is a free Fountain – the water comes with no price tag, as the prophet Isaiah (55:1) says: *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost”*. This precious living giving water comes from a fountain. It gushes out. There no need to draw - as from well. No effort is required…. just drink!

Water was of **incredible value** in the dry land of Israel…as it is on the Canterbury Plains in an El Nino year. We read in Psalm (107:35): He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs. This is a fresh, living giving, fountain. This is a bountiful fountain for all the house of David, for sinners who inhabit the holy city of Jerusalem.

This fountain provides a thorough cleansing for all the spiritual descendants of Abraham. (Gal 3:29) When a young or older person grieves over their sin and calls out to God to cleanse, to forgive, to pardon, to make them pure…. Then the fountain prophesied by Zechariah becomes their spiritual shower.

Have you experienced the crispness of clean sheets, the feel of freshly laundered clothes on your thoroughly clean and sweet-smelling skin? Spiritually, do you know what it is to be clean before your God? All your sin washed away? Forgiven, not remembered, not held against you. There is no greater freedom, no greater joy, no greater peace.

But you ask, how is this possible? Only in Christ who is portrayed both as the **greatest cause** for the sinner’s grief because he was pierced for our transgressions and as the **only source** of cleansing power for the sinner’s dirt.

Sinners all, we need to come to the Fountain...to Christ

Sinners all, we need to keep coming to the Fountain...to Christ

As Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929) expresses it in the hymn “Rock of Ages”:

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die*.

What will life be like on the day when Christ returns? On that day of the Lord, brothers and sisters, we will be truly clean, never to be dirty again: Rev 7:14b-15: *"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them.*

Then there will be no more idolatry. No more worshipping of false gods. No more will our hearts have ‘inordinate desire’ when we exchange the blessings of God for God Himself and elevate parts of the creation about the Creator. This is pictured in OT terms in the last 5 verses of our text: Idols will be removed from the land together with those who promote false worship: the lying prophets. Those who continue to prophesy lies will be pierced through by their own parents. According to OT law, false prophets were to die by the sword (Deut 13:12-15). On the coming Day of the Lord, false prophets will be ashamed of their words and will refuse to wear the traditional garments of hair, characteristic of prophets like Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; also Matt 3:4). They will deny that they are prophets, and they will say of the wounds, likely self-inflicted during idolatrous worship (1 Ki 18:28), that they received them from their friends. The idea likely being in a friendly brawl or even from sexual partners in idolatrous worship (Hos 2:7-13; Eze 23:5,9)

The overall image here is of a cleansed land. Washed free from any false worship. A place where the 1st commandment – ‘*You shall have no other gods before me*’ - is always obeyed.

The great grace of God is that He cleans up His people so that they can live in a world which will be made new as a clean world. A place with no more grief, no more sorrow. The place where Christ dwells with His people forever. This is the place where the dead resurrected to life in Jesus live.

Brothers and Sisters, this is the goal towards which we “press on in order that we may lay hold of that for which also we were laid hold of by Christ Jesus”

Brethren and Sisters, we should not regard ourselves as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing we are called to do: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14

AMEN