

ZECHARIAH 12

LOOKING UPON THE PIERCED ONE

In Galatians 4:25-26, the Apostle Paul makes a distinction between “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children”; and “Jerusalem that is from above, that is free, and is the mother of us all.” The former is the remnant of the Jewish religious system, which rejected the Lord Jesus; and the latter is the Christian Church – the spiritual Jerusalem – where God has chosen to put His name. In the last chapter, we read words of doom to the former; but now, in this chapter, the prophet speaks of the blessings of the latter. Many precious promises are here made to the Gospel-Jerusalem, by Him Who declares His power to fulfill them and make them good (verse 1).

It is here promised that the attempts of the Church’s enemies against her shall be to their own ruin, and they shall find that it is at their own peril if they do her any hurt (verses 2-4 and 6). On the other hand, the endeavors of the Church’s friends to do her good shall be pious, regular, and successful (verse 5). The Lord promises that He will protect and strengthen the lowest and weakest who belong to His Church, and He will work salvation for them (verses 7-8). And as a preparation for all this mercy, and as a pledge of it, He says that He will pour out upon them a spirit of prayer and repentance – the effect of which shall be universal and very particular (verses 9-14). These promises were very precious indeed to the pious Jews who lived in the troublous times under Antiochus Epiphanes and other persecutors and oppressors, before the appearance of the Messiah; and they are still precious, in every age of the Church of Christ, for the directing of our prayers and the encouraging of our hopes.

The vision itself refers to a time when the Jewish people were back in their own homeland, but were still in a lamentable condition of unbelief. And at that time, it is said that the deadly hate of the heathen nations of the earth would become universal, and all the nations of the earth would be gathered together against Jerusalem. But their confederacy would be overwhelmed with infinite disaster. Then an assurance is immediately given, in which it is promised that in that awful day, the Lord shall save and defend! (verses 7-8) The long-rejected Messiah – accompanied by His Bride, the Church – will appear in the clouds to the support of His brethren, just as Joseph interposed on behalf of his.

Let us now turn away from this side of the picture and consider the effect that this saving interposition will have upon the people of God themselves. “In that day,” says the prophet, “shall there be a great mourning” (verse 11). “In that day there shall be a fountain opened” (chapter 13:1). “It shall come to pass in that day, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land” (chapter

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The prophet speaks of the peril and ruin of His people’s enemies – verses 1-9
- ❖ He speaks of the repentance and sorrow of those who pierced the Messiah – verses 10-14

13:2). We will examine the first part of this threefold effect – the “great mourning” – in the remainder of this chapter.

There is no hesitation in the prophet’s speech. “There shall be a great mourning” – not because the Muslims had desecrated the sacred places, nor because of the ruins and destructions of bygone days, nor because of the bitter sufferings of the much-hated Jewish nation. Rather, “there shall be a great mourning” by each individual, as he or she reflected bitterly upon their personal rejection of the Messiah – the One Who was driven through those streets and crucified without the gate. But this mourning would be a lonely experience: “every family apart, and their wives apart” (verse 14). Each one will feel personally concerned; each will feel as though he or she were chiefly responsible; each will take to his own heart the crucifixion of the Messiah, and will utter wails of personal confession: “I have sinned; I pierced His hands and feet; I am of all men most miserable, and of all sinners the chief!”

Yes, we long for the day when the words of this chapter shall be fully and entirely fulfilled – in a physical sense – among our Jewish neighbors! We hope that the time is not far distant when the Jewish nation as a whole shall look upon Jesus and recognize Him as their long-awaited Messiah, and when they shall bow the knee in repentance and submission to His Kingly and Priestly rule. But there is also a great spiritual application for us to learn. Here we see the method which the Spirit of God delights to use for the breaking of our hardened hearts; they are broken upon the broken heart of Jesus! They are pierced by the sight of His piercing. They mourn when they look upon Him Whom they have pierced.

Sinners who are seeking forgiveness often seem to think that they must bring some kind of sorrow as a condition of acceptance with their Savior. If only they could feel an adequate sorrow for their sin – then they would be assured that they might bring their tears as a price for His mercy, and as a reason why He should save them. But the problem is this: we can never feel an adequate sorrow for sin! To wait for this would be to wait forever. To postpone coming to the Lord Jesus until our tear-bottles are full would be to postpone coming to Him until it is too late. Besides, the fact of the matter is that we shall never get the right kind of sorrow for sin until we have seen Jesus, and until we are admitted into a relationship of love with Him! When we have looked upon Him Whom our sins have pierced, we shall then mourn as a loving parent would bitterly grieve over the passing of a dear son or daughter. When our soul understands what sin has cost the Lord, then our hearts will melt in true Godly sorrow, just as icebergs do when they float down into warm Southern seas.

Lord Jesus, we praise You as the One Who was pierced for our iniquities, and Who was lifted up on the cross so that persons from all the ends of the world may look unto You and be saved from their sins! Amen.

