

XXII. Mourning for the Pierced One

May 3, 2020 Zechariah 12:10-14

Theme: God pours out His Spirit of grace and faith on the elect to produce godly sorrow and sincere repentance leading to salvation without regret.

Aim: To ensure we sincerely mourn our sin that caused the pierced one to suffer and die in our place.

Key Verses: ¹⁰And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn (Zechariah 12:10).

Review

Last week in Zechariah 12:1-9, we saw that the LORD protects the City of God, His people of all ages, the church of Jesus Christ, from all its enemies. After introducing the oracle that includes chapters 12-14 of Zechariah, the LORD emphasizes His sovereign creative power and providence in the affairs of men. He is able and active to preserve His people.

Zechariah shows in verses 2-4 how God stuns the nations in a series of three pictures at an exhibition: a cup of staggering, a heavy stone, and panicked horses and riders. The intensity of these images increases in scope and magnitude, demonstrating the progressive nature of God's judgment that ultimately leads to destruction for those who fight against the LORD and His church. These images also show that our deliverance is due to God's sovereign grace alone; we contribution nothing to our salvation.

In verses 5-9, Zechariah turns his focus inward, showing how the LORD strengthens His people throughout all ages. Not only does He provide them strength, but He also grants salvation and security, from the least to the greatest. God will protect and strengthen all His children, no matter their station or relative importance. This is an important lesson for all believers to learn, that *throughout the church age, God protects His people against all enemies and gives even the weakest Christian strength to persevere until the end.*

Introduction

One of the most foundational, yet at the same most controversial, doctrines in Christian theology concerns the *ordo salutis* or "order of salvation." Although most Christians may think of salvation as the moment in time "when they asked Christ into their heart to be their Savior," salvation is actually a multi-step process that spans eternity past to eternity future. A full review of the fierce theological debates about the order of these various steps is beyond the scope of this work; suffice it to say that the crux of the matter has to do with man's role in the process.

In the Arminian view, which is the majority position of modern evangelical Christianity, salvation is a work of God; no man can save himself or make himself right in the sight of a holy God. However, the Arminian position holds that God's election is conditional, dependent upon man's response; and that God's call is resistible, contingent upon man's decision. Arminians teach that God grants prevenient grace, a gracious love of the sinner that comes before

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conversion (hence *prevenient*), which enables but does not ensure salvation. While humans cannot effect salvation for themselves, it is still their responsibility to hear the Word of God and embrace it in their fallen, unredeemed condition. Only upon repentance and faith of the sinner in response to the external, free call of the gospel will God justify and regenerate them unto new life.

In contrast, the traditional Reformed position, also known as the Augustinian view after Augustine of Hippo, understands that the natural man without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins (cp. Eph. 2:1), and therefore unable to choose God or respond to the gospel in any way at all. Thus, works of faith and repentance are completely impossible apart from God's free grace. The eternal decree of God predestined all that would come to pass in history. In His immutable wise and holy counsel, He chose or elected some unto regeneration and life; while the others He passed over and left to the consequences of His eternal justice, all to the praise of His glorious grace (Eph. 1:4-6; Rom. 8:29). In due course, He effectually and irresistibly calls all elect sinners unto Himself. Those who are effectually called are regenerated or made alive in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (cp. Rom. 8:30). Jesus tells Nicodemus, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (Jn. 3:7), referring to regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Only those who have already been regenerated from their spiritually dead condition can respond in true saving faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. Faith and repentance are sometimes combined into a single step of conversion.

In conjunction with repentance, God justifies sinners, a judicial act whereby He declares them not guilty and imputes the righteousness of Christ to them. The redeemed sinner is then adopted by God and made His child, a joint-heir with Christ to all the blessings of heaven (Rom. 8:15-17). Sanctification is the ongoing work of God's free grace whereby He progressively makes us more and more like His Son, Jesus Christ. Perseverance of the saints gives the elect assurance that their struggles of sanctification in this life are worth it, because our ultimate salvation will be finally accomplished through the preservation of Jesus (Phil. 1:6). The completion of our salvation is glorification, where the remnants of indwelling sin will be entirely removed, our bodies will be made perfect, and we will dwell in heaven forever with our God and our Savior.

In summary, the Reformed view of the *ordo salutis* is:

1. Predestination
2. Election
3. Calling
4. Regeneration
5. Faith
6. Repentance
7. Justification
8. Adoption
9. Sanctification
10. Perseverance
11. Glorification

The above list is best understood logically, rather than chronologically. While it is true that some steps happen sequentially, others happen virtually simultaneously. The key Reformed distinctive in the above ordering is that regeneration precedes conversion (faith and repentance).

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This stands in stark contrast to Arminian theology, which, as described above, places conversion before regeneration.

Previously we considered the salvation steps of justification sanctification, and glorification in Zechariah 9:11-17, and the doctrine of effectual calling in our treatment of Zechariah 10:8. Although the passage before us today, Zechariah 12:10-14, touches upon regeneration and saving faith, the central focus is about repentance, which is the heart of our conversion.

WCF SC Q&A 87 says, “Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.” True repentance is composed of two separate elements. The first feature is grief and mourning for our sin, based on a recognition of its heinous nature, its destructiveness, and its odiousness in the sight of God. In the second place, mourning for sin must then naturally lead to a turning away from its practice and a turning toward God in humble reliance upon Him for grace to live in new obedience.

“Repentance unto life” must be distinguished from its deceptive and destructive counterfeit, worldly remorse. Remorse leads to grief, not for the sin itself, but for its consequences. Remorse is what the thief feels when he is caught red-handed, when the adulteress becomes pregnant, when the politician is caught up in a salacious scandal, when the homosexual contracts AIDS, when the drunkard causes a fatality accident, when the corrupt businessman is led away from his office in handcuffs. Their regret is not due to their actions, but for the resulting cost they will have to pay. The apostle Paul makes the difference clear:

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10).

The ultimate example of “worldly grief [that] produces death” is Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 26:12-14; cp. Zech. 11:12-13). After receiving his reward and betraying his Lord, “he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood’” (Mt. 27:3-4a). Judas regretted his decision, but his remorse did not lead to repentance, which would have resulted in confession of sin and a return to God. Instead, his grief led to death: “he went and hanged himself” (Mt. 27:5b).

In contrast to Judas Iscariot, the subject matter of Zechariah 12:10-14 is comprehensive mourning and repentance for sin, specifically the sin that led to the Messiah, the Holy One of Israel, being crucified on the cross to pay the penalty for that sin. But this passage is not simply a historical or theological treatment of the atonement, it is an intensely emotional and personal account. We need to put ourselves into this passage so that we too, can sincerely mourn *our* sin that caused the Pierced One to suffer and die in our place. With that in mind, the theme of the passage can be summarized as follows: *God pours out His Spirit of grace and faith on the elect to produce godly sorrow and sincere repentance leading to salvation without regret.*

Verse 10 is extremely rich and filled with all sorts of deep theological truths and important doctrines for us to unpack. It outlines fairly nicely into three phrases, each centered on an important verb: *pour*; *look*; and *mourn*. Verses 11-14 continue and expand the thought of mourning introduced at the end of verse 10.

A. Pouring Out the Spirit (Zechariah 12:10a)

1. Prophecy (12:10a)

¹⁰“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy...”

In the first nine verses of chapter 12, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory of Judah were hard pressed by the gathered nations, the enemies of the City of God. Despite differences in theme and tone, verses 10-14 are intimately connected to what has just preceded this section. This can be seen by the repeated references to *the house of David* and *the inhabitants of Jerusalem* (cp. 12:5, 7, 8 with 12:10, 11-12). As we saw last time, these designations represent the entirety of the elect, from greatest to least in the City of God. Despite the descriptions being rooted in Old Testament language, the blessings contained herein are for the church of Jesus Christ, the spiritual heirs of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

The key promise here in verse 10 is the gift of the Holy Spirit: *And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy.* The verb “to pour out” implies a continuous, abundant stream or flow. This is not a drip-drip-drip of a leaky faucet or a trickle flow through a barely open valve; it is more like a gushing water hydrant or a firehose spewing a steady flood of water where it is most needed. “When God promises to pour out blessings He is not niggardly or stingy with His gifts. He is generous and bounteous in bestowing His grace upon His people” (Bentley, p. 202).

The designation of “a spirit” by the ESV instead of “the Spirit” represents an editorial choice of the translators; the NIV footnotes it as “the Spirit,” while both the NKJV and NASB use “the Spirit” in their primary translation. This usage is supported by other Old Testament prophets, who had previously predicted the *pouring out* of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God:

²⁸And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.
²⁹Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants (Isaiah 44:3).

And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God (Ezekiel 39:29).

The Holy Spirit that is poured out is characterized as *a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy.* *Grace* is God’s free and unmerited favor to us on Christ’s behalf. Our salvation, from first to last, is entirely due to God’s grace (Eph. 2:5, 8). The WCF Shorter Catechism calls both faith and repentance unto life “saving graces” (Q&A 86 and 87), because apart from the gracious intervention of the Holy Spirit in our lives, neither faith nor repentance is possible. *Pleas of mercy* can also be rendered as “supplication,” as it is in most other major English translations.

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The gift of the Spirit enables us to pray, to confess our sin, to repent. In Hebrew, the word for “supplication” is actually related to the word for “grace.” “The simplest way to understand the two kindred terms—‘grace and supplication’—is to view them in the light of cause and effect, for ‘grace’ is that which God bestows and the Holy Spirit conveys, and ‘supplication’ is the *fruit* of that *condition of heart*, or soul, which that same Spirit creates within us” (Baron, p. 445).

2. Fulfillment

The initial fulfillment of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was on the day of Pentecost:

¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

The apostle Peter equated the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost with the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy quoted above (cp. Acts 2:14-21). But the gift of the Holy Spirit was not restricted only to the apostles, for Peter told the assembled crowd that whoever confessed their sins and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), and “about three thousand souls” that day were added to the church (Acts 2:41). The apostle Paul declared that all the believers in Galatia had received the Spirit by hearing with faith (Gal. 3:2-5). This is true of all New Testament believers. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is part of the many spiritual blessings that the Christian receives through faith in Jesus (1 Cor. 3:16). This spiritual reality is another strong indication that the terms *house of David* and *inhabitants of Jerusalem* apply to the totality of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ.

The gift of the Spirit is life itself, which quickens our own spirits and regenerates us. In terms of the *ordo salutis*, the pouring out of the Spirit of *grace and supplication* is equivalent to the step of regeneration, which leads to faith and repentance. Since faith and repentance are both saving graces, they are not inherent within natural, fallen man. It is only by the grace of the Holy Spirit, poured out abundantly by God upon His elect, that we are regenerated, empowered to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ who cleanses us from our unrighteousness, and enabled to grieve for our sin, which “produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret.”

B. Looking at the Pierced One (Zechariah 12:10b)

1. Prophecy (12:10b)

...so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced...

The second key verb in verse 10 is “look”: *so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced*. The obvious meaning of *look* is to see visually with one’s eyes. This is what Moses required of the Israelites, when they were bit by poisonous fiery serpents in the wilderness. If a person was bit by such a snake, they needed to look at the bronze serpent Moses set up on a pole in order to live (Num. 21:9). But the example of the brazen serpent was not only an exercise in sight, it was also a test of faith. Jesus referred to this incident when He said to Nicodemus, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (Jn. 3:14-15). Jesus was making a spiritual application of looking upon the bronze serpent. If physical sight of that icon provided

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bodily relief from the deadly venom that threatened them, how much more do we need to look with eyes of faith upon Jesus, the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), in order to gain salvation from sin and spiritual death? Indeed, this concept of “looking on” someone or something in faith was previously employed by the prophet Isaiah:

⁷In that day man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will look on the Holy One of Israel.

⁸He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands, and he will not look on what his own fingers have made, either the Asherim or the altars of incense (Isaiah 17:7-8).

Those who look are the same as those who have had poured out upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication: every person within the elect church of God. However, upon whom are they looking? At first, verse 10 says *they look on me*, that is, the LORD, who has been the speaker all throughout the twelfth chapter of Zechariah. But in the next phrase, we read: *on him whom they have pierced*. In this amplification of the object of our gaze, there are two very important things to notice. First, there is a grammatical change; the personal pronoun *me* is changed to the third-person pronoun *him*. Second, if the object of our vision is the LORD (who is the one speaking in the first person throughout chapter 12), in what way can He be “pierced,” since God is a spirit and does not have a body as we do? These observations require further examination, since they have proven a stumbling block for many, and especially for Jews who have rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

The use of both the first and third-person pronouns for God touches upon one of the profound mysteries of the holy Scriptures, one that is only hinted at in the Old Testament, but ultimately revealed in the New: the Trinity. While it is true that “the LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Dt. 6:4), it is also true that “there are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory” (WCF SC Q&A 7) (cp. Mt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14). Although the truth of the Trinity is fully revealed in the New Testament, particularly the role of the Son, Jesus Christ, it remains a “mystery” in how one God can at the same time exist in three persons.

While the Father—the LORD God—is prevalent in the Old Testament, and the Holy Spirit is mentioned upon occasion (and as early as Gen. 1:2), the identity of the Son, Jesus Christ is hidden in types and shadows. In prophecy, He is Isaiah’s Servant (Is. 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 52:13-15), the Righteous Branch (Jer. 23:1-5), the Son of David (Mt. 22:42-43; cp. Ps. 110:1), the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14), the Son of God (Ps. 2:7), the Anointed One (Ps. 2:2)—the Messiah. He appears, for those who have eyes to see, in pre-incarnate theophanies as the Angel of the LORD (e.g., Gen. 22:11-15; Ex. 3:2; Num. 22:22-35; Jdg. 6:11-22; 13:13-20). But He is only fully and completely revealed as Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, in the New Testament.

Here in Zechariah 12:10, we have a hint at the tri-partite nature of our one God. The LORD (the Father) is the one who both pours out the Holy Spirit and self-identifies (he/me) with the one whom *they have pierced*. To the unconverted commentator, this sort of language is an unsolvable mystery. How can God be both the speaker and another person who is pierced? How can God be pierced in the first place? After all, He is a spirit, and only a man can be pierced. Thus, all sorts of fanciful interpretations of this verse ensue, whereby it is the nation of Israel which is pierced, or God is pierced when His name is blasphemed, or some other deflection of the plain and true meaning.

However, to the Christian, to the one who has had the Spirit of grace and supplication poured out on him, the mystery of both the pronoun shift and the piercing of the Lord are easily resolved.

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The pierced one is both God and man; He is both one with God the Father and yet distinct from Him. He is the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Fulfillment

This is not the first Old Testament prophecy to predict the piercing of the Messiah. It was previously described in both the Psalm of Crucifixion and the portrait of the Suffering Servant:

For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet (Psalm 22:16).

³He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:3-6).

David's psalm of crucifixion, Isaiah's prophecy regarding the Suffering Servant, and Zechariah's prediction of the piercing of God were fulfilled in the death of Jesus at Golgotha. The apostle John, in his passion account, specifically applies Zechariah 12:10 to the crucified Savior:

³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced" (John 19:31-37).

We need to look upon the pierced Savior in faith if we are to be saved from our sins. He "was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities." It is not enough to assent to the historical data regarding the life and death of Jesus Christ. Mere knowledge of facts is not the same as saving faith. "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" (James 2:19). True saving faith requires *me* to look upon the Savior and see His suffering, to know that it was *my* sin that pierced His brow with a crown of thorns and pierced

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His hands and feet, nailing Him to that tree. It means taking responsibility for the Roman sword that pierced His side to ensure that He was dead, realizing that the Lord of life died in *my* place. It means throwing *myself* upon His grace and mercy, thanking Him for His substitutionary atonement, and trusting Him for *my* justification. True saving faith is present only in the one who has received the spirit of regeneration, whose eyes have been opened, who can truly look on Him whom *my* sins pierced.

C. Mourning for Sin (Zechariah 12:10c-14)

1. Prophecy (12:10c-14)

...they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. ¹¹On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹²The land shall mourn, each family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹³the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself, and their wives by themselves; ¹⁴and all the families that are left, each by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Putting together the first two phrases of verse 10, we have God the Father pouring out God the Holy Spirit upon the church, regenerating them via saving grace and giving them the ability to look in faith upon God the Son, Jesus Christ. And as they look upon Him whom they have pierced, we come to the third key verb in this verse: *mourn*. Their response is one of deep grief; it is the mourning of true repentance: *they shall mourn for him*. Mackay characterizes this mourning:

“Mourn” refers to the beating of the breast in deep distress.... True repentance goes hand in hand with a correct appreciation of what took place on the cross. As one for whom Christ died, the individual acknowledges his personal part in piercing Him. This induces deep sorrow, which is only mitigated by recognition of the fact that it was love which led to this identification of God with the sinner, and that Christ’s sufferings are efficacious to atone for sin (Mackay, p. 237).

Zechariah characterizes the depth and extent of this mourning in three different ways. First, he describes *personal repentance* and compares it to the grief of mourning over the death of a son: *as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn*. Losing a child may be one of the most bitter and grievous trials anyone could possibly face. Losing your firstborn makes it even worse, but consider the depths of grief when that child is your only begotten son (cp. Jn. 3:16). For the Jew, whose position in society was tied up to his tribal and familial ancestry, the loss of a son, an only son, meant the end of the family name. It was a situation of proverbial grief in Israel:

I will turn your feasts into mourning
and all your songs into lamentation;
I will bring sackcloth on every waist
and baldness on every head;
I will make it like the mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day (Amos 8:10).

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O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth,
and roll in ashes;
make mourning as for an only son,
most bitter lamentation,
for suddenly the destroyer
will come upon us (Jer. 6:26).

Secondly, our mourning must not only be private, but there is a place for *public repentance* as well. In verse 11, the prophet says that *on that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo*. This is a reference to the grief that followed the death of the last righteous king of Judah, Josiah, in 609 BC:

²⁰After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him. ²¹But he sent envoys to him, saying, “What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you.” ²²Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. ²³And the archers shot King Josiah. And the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” ²⁴So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. ²⁵Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a rule in Israel; behold, they are written in the Laments. ²⁶Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his good deeds according to what is written in the Law of the Lord, ²⁷and his acts, first and last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah (2 Chronicles 35:20-27).

Zechariah refers to *Hadad-rimmon*, which is an otherwise unknown place name, composed of the names of two Canaanite gods, located *in the plain of Megiddo*, which is where Josiah was mortally wounded. The national grief at Josiah’s death was very great. Baron explains:

His death was the greatest sorrow which had till then befallen Judah, inasmuch as he was “the last hope of the declining Jewish kingdom, and in his death the last gleam of the sunset of Judah faded into night.” In that great mourning for Josiah the prophet Jeremiah took part, and wrote dirges for it (2 Chr. 35:25), and the national lamentations over him continued and became “an ordinance” in Israel, which survived the seventy years’ captivity and continued “to this day,” in which the chronicles were closed. It was worthy, therefore, to be referred to by the prophet, and to be compared with the still greater and more bitter mourning of repentant Israel in the future (Baron, pp. 451-452).

Finally, Zechariah describes *comprehensive repentance* in verses 12-14. In these verses, each and every family of Jerusalem, from the greatest to the least, and every member within that family, are called to mourn. “The separation of the clans or families, and the women by themselves, is to indicate the depth of sorrow felt, and also the fact that it was not an event where the professional mourners were present to whip up the grief. There was no need for that, so deeply felt was the anguish” (Mackay p. 238).

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A total of four different families are called upon to mourn. The first two, *the house of David*, and *the house of Nathan*, one of David's many sons (2 Sam. 5:14; cp. Lk. 3:31) represent the greater and lesser extent of the royal or kingly line. The other two, the *house of Levi*, and the *family of the Shimeites* (Shimei was a grandson of Levi; Num. 3:19) symbolize the greater and lesser extent of the priestly line. Since the royal line of David and the priestly line of Levi were the houses for the two most important hereditary offices of Israel, their inclusion in this command to mourn shows the importance of the repentance that this grieving represents.

This repentance is comprehensive in nature, because in addition to the totality of the royal and priestly houses, *all the families that are left* are also called upon to mourn. "No family and no individual will be satisfied to have others mourn in their stead. There is no vicarious mourning or substitutionary repentance in God's church" (Bentley, p. 204).

2. Fulfillment

How is the prophecy to mourn at the sight of the pierced one fulfilled? As we have seen regarding the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, there was an initial fulfillment at the day of Pentecost of the repentance foreshadowed here:

³⁶Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." ³⁷Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls (Acts 2:36-41).

The crowd who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon was "cut to the heart," that is they mourned their sin, especially as the apostle called them to look upon Jesus Christ, "whom you crucified." They looked upon the pierced one in faith, and they grieved their sin. Their response was immediate: "What shall we do?" Some three thousand souls responded positively to the gospel message and were added to the church that very day.

The same response is required of each and every individual Christian in the church of Jesus Christ. We have to receive the Spirit poured out upon us, we must look upon the One whom *our* sins pierced, and we must repent of that sin, mourning its grievousness, turning away from it and turning in faith toward the Savior. This is the *personal repentance* that each individual must do for himself. "There is no vicarious mourning or substitutionary repentance in God's church."

However, there is a place for *public repentance*, as each individual sinner, redeemed by the Lord, takes his or her place within the body of Christ. The Presbyterian Church in America requires all members to take five basic vows, affirming their Christian faith. The first membership vow is: "Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?" The second vow is: "Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of Sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?" To join the church of Jesus

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Christ, to identify with Him publicly, you must look to Him in faith and confess and repent of your sin publicly.

The aspect of *comprehensive repentance* in verses 12-14 is fulfilled as the total number of God's elect are added to the visible church. Young and old, male and female, rich and poor, important and insignificant, all are being added daily to the City of God as they heed His effectual call, are regenerated by the Spirit, look to Jesus in faith, and repent of their sins.

There is one final aspect of this prophecies fulfillment that we must also consider. Both Matthew in his gospel and John in his apocalypse allude to Zechariah 12:10 as they describe the mourning that shall take place upon the second coming of the Lord Jesus in glory:

Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen (Revelation 1:7).

When Jesus comes in glory in His second advent, “every eye will see Him, even those who pieced Him.” But the wailing and mourning that Matthew and John describe by “all the tribes of the earth” is not the godly repentance that we have been discussing. Rather, it is akin to the worldly remorse experienced by the betrayer, Judas Iscariot:

Now Jesus presents Himself to you as Savior, but then He will come as Judge. Now God grants the spirit of grace and supplication to all who look upon His Son, but then it will be a spirit of terror and despair when all will see His pierced Son returning in His wrath (cp. Rev. 6:15-17)... Then they will be sorry for their sin; then they will mourn the pierced Christ, not unto salvation but unto destruction because of their unbelief. This is the legacy of sin in this world; all will sorrow for sin—some now in faith unto salvation, others then through unbelief unto eternal condemnation, in terror when the day of His wrath has come (Phillips, p. 277).

Conclusion and Application

¹⁰“*And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.*”

The theme of Zechariah 12:10-14 has been: *God pours out His Spirit of grace and faith on the elect to produce godly sorrow and sincere repentance leading to salvation without regret.* In his commentary on this passage, Phillips emphasizes four key teachings about godly sorrow and repentance. Many of his points have already been covered in the exposition of the passage, but as a means of review, I have summarized them here.

The first point is that *godly sorrow is the heart of true repentance*:

God always desires our hearts (cp. Pr. 23:26; Dt. 10:16; Ps. 51:16-17)... What truly heals the breach and restores what has been damaged in the relationship is sorrow from the heart. How often, when long arguments have failed to reconcile two people, or have

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even made things worse, genuine tears of remorse quickly restore them. So it is in our relationship with God... God's loving heart desires not merely to win the argument but to win our hearts back to Himself. Jesus taught this in the parable of the prodigal son (cp. Lk. 15:18-20)... This is a picture of God's loving heart for us, and the sorrow for sin He desires as the heart of our repentance (Phillips, pp. 269-270).

Secondly, *godly sorrow is the gift of the Holy Spirit*:

Charles Spurgeon explains: "It is always a creation of the Holy Spirit... There never was any real godly sorrow, such as worketh repentance acceptable unto God except that which was the result of the Holy Spirit's own work within the soul." ... "Genuine mourning for sin comes as a gift of divine grace." ... This mourning is spiritual, which is why it is called "a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy." This is why it always leads to prayer... True mourning, which rises up to be received by God, always grieves for the sin and not just for the situation into which it has brought me (Phillips, pp. 271-272).

The third point is that *the object of godly sorrow is the Lord Jesus Christ*:

This is the sight that makes our hearts to mourn; God's perfect Son pierced, crucified because of us. What is it about Jesus that causes such sorrow when we see Him pierced? First, it is His loveliness, the excellence of Him who bore our sins... We mourn because of the beauty and the excellency of Him who is pierced. Second, we sorrow to see what suffering He endures... In that light we see, to our grief, the gravity of our sin. It is here, upon His body and in His spiritual torment on the cross, that we see just what we have done—what is the work of our hearts and of our hands. It is, says the prophet, our iniquity that God has laid on Him (Is. 53:6)... Sorrow for Christ's suffering is a true sign of spiritual life in the breast of a sinner. It marks the beginning of salvation, a true return to God, and it charts the path of true spirituality all through a Christian's life. "When they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him" (12:10). This can only be said of the Israel of faith—those on whom God has poured the Spirit of His grace (Phillips, pp. 272-274).

Finally, *saving repentance results from saving faith in Jesus Christ*:

We may sorrow for the consequences of our sin without mourning for sin itself and without looking to Christ in faith... Mourning for getting caught in sin is a far cry from what our text describes; such sorrow neither changes us nor makes us right with God. Saving repentance is always joined to faith in Jesus Christ... Faith looking to Jesus is the only kind of repentance that will save. You may beat your breast and tear your clothes, you may resolve to be a better person, but unless you look in faith to Him who was pierced, you are not reconciled to God. The devil is delighted with a moral man who will not look to Jesus—who will not come to Him in godly sorrow—because repentance without faith leads us away from and not toward the forgiving arms of our loving God. There is no true mourning for sins that does not come from the cross. It is only there, where we see the testimony of God's redeeming love alongside the evidence of His terrible wrath, that any of us can be honest about ourselves (Phillips, pp. 275-276).

May God grant us His Spirit of grace and supplication so that we sincerely mourn our sin that caused the pierced one to suffer and die in our place. Amen.

For next time: Read Zechariah 13:1-6.