

Zechariah 12:1-14

August 31, 2022

V. Oracle Concerning Israel (12:1-14:21)

A. Repentance of Judah (12:1-14)

In the previous chapters, we saw Israel's disobedience and their rejection of Yahweh. We think in particular of the two staffs that Zechariah had broken last week in chapter eleven, symbolizing the severance of God's blessing and unity over Israel. Yet, even with their rebellion, God wasn't done with them.

Another oracle (a fancy word for prophecy) begins in Zechariah 12, and will extend through the end of the book. In these three chapters, we once again see God's work of bringing Israel back around to repentance, with His favor returning, as well.

In vv. 1-9, we read how God will strengthen Israel and make them impenetrable to their enemies. This is the *LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him* (v. 1). We once again see how God's work of creation gives us grounds for trusting in His abilities to do what He has set out to do, including making all things new!

In this case, He is going to utterly protect Israel from the surrounding nations. They will be an immovable stone (v. 3), and their leaders will be a fire that will *devour all the surrounding peoples* (v. 6). As a result, *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem* (v. 6). (Soap Box: The city of Jerusalem is a focal point of Old Testament prophecy. It simply won't do to interpret this spiritually!)

Just as He had done in the past, the *Angel of the LORD* will go before the Israelites on their behalf, paving the way to victory (v. 8). The Angel of the LORD was the preincarnate Son in the Old Testament; now, He is known and will conquer as Jesus!

Not only will God bring about political deliverance and change, but He's also going to bring about a spiritual deliverance, as well. In v. 10, He tells Israel that He *will pour... the Spirit of grace* upon them. This is a parallel to what we read in Joel 2:28, which Peter quotes on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:17.

The Holy Spirit is a pivotal player in bringing about the heart change that is necessary in order for humans to have a right relationship with God. He ministers to us today in ways that were not available before Jesus' death and resurrection.

Yet, we await an even fuller pouring out of the Spirit, such as is also mentioned in Ezekiel 36:26-27 with the fulfillment of the New Covenant. When Jesus returns and all the aspects of the New Covenant are brought about, God's Spirit will *cause you to walk in My statutes* (Ezek 36:27). There will be a total heart transformation in the lives of the Israelites as a result of their Messiah's work.

And it is this total heart transformation that will cause them to view their Messiah's work differently. In Zechariah 12:10, after the Spirit is poured out on them, God says that *then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

Their eyes will finally be opened, and they will gasp with grief over their actions done in their former spiritual blindness. This piercing not only can refer to the nails hammered through his wrists and ankles, but the Hebrew word all the more means "to stab," which is what the soldiers did to ensure that Jesus had died (John 19:34). Thus, we have in John 19:37 that this action was a fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10.

The grief will be present, like it was *at Hada Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo*, likely a reference to King Josiah's murder at the hands of the Egyptians in 609 BC, as recorded in 2 Kings 23:29-30 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-35. Such will be their grief when they come to terms with how they previously treated their reigning Messiah!