

PostExilicProphets 22-01-26a

This is Wednesday, the 26th of January, 2022. We're continuing our study in the book of Zechariah. We're in chapter 12.

We have already prayed, so we're going to cut directly to the chase here. The first part of this second burden, you remember there were eight visions, four sermons, two burdens. This is the second of the two burdens.

The first half of each of these sets of revelations deals with the first advent of Jesus, the first coming. And the second half or section deals with the second coming. So since this is the second burden, chapters 12 through 14, this will be looking forward to the second coming.

All of it is pertinent. All of it is applicable for us, whether we are looking back at history or forward in prophecy. All of these things are written for our instruction.

It all has wonderful promise and wonderful application. This second burden covers the three chapters, chapter 12, chapter 13, and chapter 14. And this first chapter divides into two equal parts.

One is the coming deliverance of Judah. That's how it's labeled in your New King James. We looked at that last time, and we saw that God is going to make Jerusalem, as it is surrounded by the nations, a cup of drunkenness and a heavy stone.

And if they try to deal with this stone, they're just going to get cut. This apparently is sort of a flinty stone. It's got sharp edges, and it's going to reduce people to ribbons.

So the second part of this, as you see in your New King James, says, mourning for the pierced one. And notice he has already pierced because he has already come the first time as we look at this from our perspective. And there is going to be recognition at this belated period in Israel's history.

They're finally going to recognize that the Messiah already came in fulfillment of what we saw in the first burden. And once they realized that he came and they missed him, and instead of the glorious king and kingdom that they were expecting, he was pierced. According to prophecy, wounded, bruised by his stripes were healed and so on.

They are going to recognize this. So we pick up tonight in verse 10 of chapter 12. Let's read this together.

Seeing the summary of the first half in verse nine, it shall be in that day, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I think a lot of these nations are Islamic and they have an interest in Jerusalem because of their traditions, because of their beliefs. This is where Muhammad ascended to heaven and Michael and Gabriel took him up there.

This is largely invented mythology that's not in the Quran at all. And the second part of this is their belief that it wasn't Isaac that Abraham took to the top of the mountain, but Ishmael. And that this is the place where that sacrifice took place.

And this is why you have the Dome of the Rock Mosque there. It is called Al-Aqsa because of the notion that Muhammad traveled from a near holy place to a far holy place. It's only one verse in the Quran that talks about this.

And the far place in Arabic is Al-Aqsa. So they've labeled this place the far mosque and that's their primary interest in it. And come to find out most even Islamic scholarships are pretty sure that this was a dream that he had because Michael and Gabriel opened him up and sluice out all of his sins and badness, which he needed because that night when he has this dream, he was at his 13 year old female cousin's house making hay with her.

So he needed sluicing out. And then they replace all of this badness with goodness. They fill him with wisdom and knowledge and understanding and divine revelation and the rest of it.

So I'm back up and then pop him up to heaven and he passes a tree. And it's real interesting if you research this at all, and I'm not gonna waste a lot of time on it, but if you go to the traditions of Zoroastrianism, this is where all of this comes from. It's a pale imitation of they've got their tree, they've got their guy that flew to heaven and passed this tree and went to these different levels and met different prophets and such.

It's just warmed over Zoroastrianism and it has just about as much value. But my whole point in bringing that up is when it talks about this cup of drunkenness, it's an irrational and unfounded interest in Jerusalem that drives a lot of the Arabic world, a lot of the Muslim world. It's not even grounded in reality.

It's not like something actually happened there. It's not Mecca, it's not Medina. It's their third holiest site, but it has only become that in very recent times.

You can trace a lot of the interest in the last 100 years to Yasser Arafat and his uncle. His uncle fluffed all of this mythology up back in the 1920s and 30s as Jews were starting to return to the land and starting to take occupation long before 1948 and the initial resistance, they needed a religious reason for it. And so they started adding to the tradition and making this an issue.

So this cup of drunkenness is gonna be this irrational feeling that they need to take this city back for themselves because it's their third holiest city, but it's gonna be the focus of all their attention. So that was the first part. What is our point of application looking at this promise of deliverance by God to his people? This is an overwhelming presence.

They are going to be surrounded. All this army presence, this confederation of nations is gonna look unstoppable and it is gonna look quite hopeless. But God gives his people this promise.

And unlike the preterists who like to say all prophecy in the Bible has already been fulfilled, any

of it that you can't find earlier was all done between 40 and 70 AD. There's been no time when all of the nations surrounded Jerusalem and then God delivered them as it says in verse nine. I will destroy, I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

That just has not happened. So preterists have to spiritualize this away and say, we're the new Israel and all of our enemies. And oddly enough, there is an application to that effect.

Whatever we are facing by way of opposition, whether it is physical, whether it is health, whether it is social, whether it's political, whether it is principalities and powers, we can take the promises of God to his people for deliverance to the bank. Just remember, this is an ultimate future deliverance. I've been, as I think I mentioned to you, I've been listening to a really good book called Letters from a Skeptic where Dr. Greg Boyd exchanged letters with his father who was an agnostic slash atheist, sort of grew up in the Catholic church and threw that all over and thought it was bunk and reached the age of 70 without ever doing anything about Christianity.

And so they exchanged these letters back and forth. One of the, and he asks really good questions and Dr. Boyd gives really good answers. But one of the things that came up in that discussion was when you look at the problem of evil in the world, children starving with famines and natural disasters and man's inhumanity to man, Pol Pot, Hitler, Stalin, name your monster, and thousands if not millions of people suffer at their hands.

If there were a God who was good and he's all powerful, how could this happen? And one of the components of the answer to that question is this life is not all there is. If in this life only we had hope of justice, if in this life only we felt like justice should be served and that God should reconcile and deal with and judge and eliminate evil, if this life is all there was, well, that would be a strong argument against God. One of the reasons that we know that there is a God and he is the God of the Bible is he is the God who is going to raise people and execute justice and judgment and vindication for those who seek him and find him and follow him and are obedient.

There is going to be vindication, there is going to be rectification, there is going to be an eternal weight of glory compensating our momentary light affliction as Paul puts it. But that hinges on the God of life, the God of love and God loves us. And even though we undergo what from our perspective may be horrific persecution or horrific suffering of various kinds, there is ultimately going to be our vision of seeing this put right.

Well, there's a picture of that in this first part of chapter 12. And that is the application for us. God's promise to his people is sure.

Many, many people have read Zechariah as Israelites and as Jews and have suffered and died and never saw the nations that surround them and those who crushed them and who murdered them and afflict them have never seen that put to right. But the promise of God stands and it is going to be fulfilled at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Israel is going to be vindicated and God is going to fulfill all of his Old Testament promises to those who

have paid attention and have responded to God's call.

It's the same for us. So now we move to verse 10. I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication.

How many times have we seen this promise? I will pour out my spirit on all flesh in Joel chapter two. This is specifically the spirit of grace and supplication. What does this mean? Recognition of God's grace.

We constantly talk about Paul's addressing in his epistles the difference between law and grace between Sarah and Hagar and where Israel was under the law and was a demonstration of the knowledge of sin comes by the law. Now there's going to be the spirit of grace. That's what we enjoy now.

We already have the spirit of grace. We live in the age of grace and it's such a wonderful privilege to be here. That spirit is going to be poured out when the Lord Jesus returns, resuscitates the Old Testament saints and adjudicates who's going to be in the land and who's going to be out for the duration of the millennial kingdom.

It is also a spirit of supplication. You don't find much by way of supplication. It is exceptional in the Old Testament.

You see Hannah making supplication. You see those who are in extreme circumstances, the widow in Elijah's day. But in general, you don't find much by way of supplication.

And when they do, it is under the ritual mechanisms of the law. Having the spirit means they will be able to do what we can do now. We can, in everything, give thanks and by prayer and supplication, make our requests known to God.

They will get that spirit. They will understand grace and they will be able to make their supplications directly to God through the Holy Spirit, just as we do now. We have a foretaste of that.

Then with that spirit, with that grace, with that ability to communicate with God, they are going to look on me whom they pierced. Very interesting use of the first person singular pronoun here. They will look on me whom they pierced.

Who is speaking? Well, you look at verse one. This is the burden of the word of the Lord and it's small caps. This is Yahweh.

Verse four, in that day says the Lord, Yahweh. Verse seven, the Lord will save the tents of Judah. So this is the Lord speaking.

They will look on me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only begotten and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn. Now, this is a simile.

Their grief is going to be like that. It doesn't mean it is fraught, but it doesn't say they will mourn for the firstborn or they will mourn for the only begotten. But there's a strong clue here that he is going to be an only begotten and he is going to be a firstborn.

He is the only begotten of the father and he is the firstborn out from the dead. Both of those are New Testament scriptures. And so there with the spirit being poured out, this recognition is going to come.

And then in verse 11, in that day, there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem. Now, in that day, who's going to live in Jerusalem? Who is going to be the primary recipients of this spirit of grace and supplication? Who are the ones who are going to mourn? We are told that they are in Jerusalem. This is not all of the resurrected Old Testament saints.

It's not like God's going to thwack them with a magic wand and they're suddenly going to mourn for him whom they pierced and that they're all going to believe in Jesus. Who is going to do this? We're given the specific location. From other passages, we know that God is going to cause them when he resuscitates Israel, he is going to cause them to pass under the rod.

Only some of them are going to enter the land. And of those who enter into the kingdom premises, the tribal inheritances that we saw in Ezekiel, only a subset of those are going to live in Jerusalem. How is that determination made? The very same way that the determination is going to be made on who is going to dwell in the new Jerusalem.

Who is qualified for that? You think of Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. You think of Joshua and Caleb and Daniel and Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. You think of Job and you think of Ezekiel and you think of Isaiah and you think of the good kings of Judah, like Asa and Josiah, and David himself for all their faults had a heart for the Lord.

They made mistakes, but these wonderful, you think of Joseph, you think of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and you think of the stellar figures, I'm leaving a lot of them out. You go through the roster of heroes of the faith, the by faith Moses and Jeremiah and all of these wonderful figures of the Old Testament and people like them will be dwelling in Jerusalem. And when this spirit is poured out, they are going to immediately recognize in history, the crucified Christ.

And they're going to mourn for the loss that their nation has experienced by missing him. They're going to mourn me whom they pierced in verse 10. And it's going to be a deep grief.

Those who have lost a child, any child, but especially your first child, your firstborn, your only begotten, it's an intense, intense form of grief. In that day, verse 11, there shall be a great morning in Jerusalem, like the morning at Hadad-Remen in the plain of Megiddo. And you think, well, most commentators think that Hadad-Remen was a guy and we're not real sure who he was.

It's possible that it's a place, that it's a city in the Vale of Megiddo, the Valley of Armageddon, and we've lost all notion of where it was or what happened there. And we just said, well, the

important thing is it's going to be a great morning and then they just blow right on. I looked at commentary after commentary after commentary.

And I finally just went in and started doing concordance studies and word studies on my own and found something really fascinating about this particular reference. It is like, you remember in Matthew, we talked about the reference to the 30 pieces of silver and how people say, well, Matthew made a mistake because he attributed the quote to the wrong prophet and it's in our Zechariah passage. Well, this is another one of those and it's really interesting.

And so let me just move a little bit beyond it because I'm going to use the second session to talk about that. And I don't want to run myself short here in the next couple of minutes, but we're going to take a look at that. So just put a sticky note by that, that we're going to come back to it.

But look at verse 12. The land shall mourn every family by itself, the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves, the family of the house of Nathan. You remember when we went through this when we were doing Kings and Prophets and the fact that the house of David and these primary clans of the house of David are going to be in the land.

Why? Who is going to rule the millennial kingdom? David and the sons of David up to and including the Lord Jesus himself. But the sons of David cut off shortly after Hezekiah and some of those guys have sort of disqualified themselves. And so it's mainly going to be those faithful kings in the line of David in Judah.

And there's just a handful, but these clans of David are going to be, notice it says in the land, these clans because the promise of God is He will bless up to a thousand generations of those who love Him, of those who pay attention and do what they're supposed to do. Those people are going to be in the land. But after three generations of those that hate Him, they're cut off.

And you can see that. And we have seen it in the line of the kings and other places. So these, all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

And that ends chapter 12. So what is the interpretation and application for us? Why is there mourning? Obviously, if the Messiah came and you missed it, there's going to be mourning. But what was the purpose of His coming? What was His mission? What did He accomplish? This impinges on what our attitude ought to be when we recognize sin or we recognize evil or we recognize shortcoming in our own lives.

And we realize the distance between what God is hoping to do for us, is planning to do for us and what we recognize and lay hold of. And the distance between the perfect plan of God and our understanding and laying hold of it can be a source of great grief. Would've, could've, should've, but I was short-sighted.

I was occupied with earthly things. I was occupied with short-term goals. I was too much in this world.

And this is a product of the judgment that determines who is in the land and who is not, who is in Jerusalem and who is not. And look at the amount of grief, even for the people of God who have just now received the Spirit. And this gives them insight and understanding of what the nation has been from the time they left Egypt until the time they go to Babylon, looking specifically at the emphasis on the kingdom of Judah, the Southern kingdom.

But how much better for us to examine ourselves now, to judge ourselves now, to grieve now, recognize now because we've got this spirit of grace and supplication. We can go through this process now so that we do not have to do it later. The intense grief is for those who are outside where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But everyone has a period of mourning looking at what God gave us by way of potential and how far short we can fall. So this, I think, is a point of reflection for us. If we sit and just read these five verses and think about our own lives, do we really wanna wait until the judgment seat of Christ where it is shown to us the difference between what was potential and what actually happened in our lives, what we went for? I would rather try to go through that process now since I've already got the spirit.

I pray Psalm 51, show me my hidden faults. Try me, see if there'd be any wicked way in me. Let me grieve over that now.

Let me mourn over that now while I've still got time. Wouldn't it have been great if Israel had gone through this process while Jesus was here the first time? Then history would be radically different, wouldn't it? Jesus could have brought the kingdom in, would have had a whole different method of atonement and self-sacrifice, didn't have to be at the hands of the Romans, didn't have to be with the rejection and scorn of his own people. Still would have taken place, but under vastly different circumstances.

So our opportunity is to be educated by the example of these Israelites because we've got the spirit of grace and a supplication now. Let's avail ourselves of his convicting ministry, his ongoing presence. And we've got the rest of our lives to leverage these wonderful potentials that God has given us.

Well, we're gonna come back and look at verse 11 in detail when we come back from the break.