

Zechariah 12 - The Day of Salvation

Friday, July 27, 2012
5:08 PM

To Read:
Isaiah 53
Galatians 4

Introduction

- a. Sermon Introduction
 - i. This morning we are starting the second oracle in the book of Zechariah
 - 1) As we start this oracle, we are going to see that this oracle is much more 'fantastic' than Zechariah's other writings so far
 - 2) In fact, it becomes so fantastical that by Chapter 14, its fairly challenging to determine what is being talked about
 - 3) This last oracle is where Zechariah has the most similarity to revelation
 - 4) There is a definite eschatological (end times) sense to the second oracle in Zechariah - but it roughly proceeds from events near to events far away
 - a) We must remember that the last days are envisioned as starting with the Messiah, so eschatological predictions before the Messiah would include everything from the time of the Messiah to the Consummation
 - ii. Like the last oracle, this oracle covers three chapters in Zechariah
 - 1) And like the last oracle we will split it into three parts at the chapter divisions
 - 2) But there is a unity across the whole that must be kept in mind
 - iii. So, this morning, I want to start by reading through the whole of the second oracle, so that we have a sense of the whole before we dig into the parts
 - iv. Once we read through the whole oracle, we will focus in on Chapter 12, the start of the second oracle
- b. Read Zechariah 12-14
- c. Proposition and Outline
 - i. Proposition: God sovereignly proclaims protection and salvation for His people, and proclaims the He will accomplish both the subjective and the objective bases of salvation.
 - ii. Outline:
 - 1) Sovereignty and Kingship (verse 1)
 - 2) Attack, Protection and Salvation (verses 2-9)
 - 3) Repentance and Sacrifice (verses 10-14)

1. Sovereignty and Kingship (verse 1)

a. As opposed to the previous oracle, which was addressed to Israel's enemies, this oracle is addressed to Israel herself (verse 1a)

- i. Instead of, "The burden of the word of the LORD is against Hadrach..."
- ii. It is, "The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel..."
- iii. So, the first thing we should notice in this oracle is it is about something different, there is a change of subject
 - 1) It is not a continuation of the first oracle, there is something new being started here
 - a) This will become important later in point two
 - 2) We ended last week with the shepherds of Israel being judged and the flock being doomed to slaughter
 - 3) We do not start there this week, we start with a change of subject, so we need to keep that in mind as we start to consider this oracle

b. In addressing Himself to Israel, God starts by declaring who He is (verse 1b)

- i. He is the God who created the world
 - 1) This would indicate that He is the one with both the right and the ability to declare what will happen and bring it about
 - 2) The phrase is meant to draw us into awe of God, He has done what we cannot even reach
 - a) He placed the stars in the sky - we cannot even travel to the stars - we probably can't even see all the stars
 - b) He founded the earth - we cannot even explore the depths of the earth or change her course in the sky
- ii. He is the God who made man and the spirit of man
 - 1) This would indicate that He is not only generally in control of the world, but has control over mankind as well
 - 2) Also, this indicates that mankind has a special responsibility to God as their creator
 - 3) This phrase is meant to draw us into contemplation of our place before God
 - a) He is our creator
 - b) We are merely creatures
 - c) How should we listen to such a God?
- iii. He is the God who is LORD (adonai/YHWH)
 - 1) He is the one to whom allegiance is owed
 - 2) He is the one who is master of everything
 - 3) This identification is meant to draw us into contemplation of our responsibility to God as Lord and Master

c. This introduction overshadows the rest of the oracle and should not be forgotten

- i. To listen to this oracle rightly, we must first have our attitude affected by these statements
 - 1) We must stand in awe of God's sovereignty over creation and expect that His words are true and will come to pass
 - 2) We must consider God as our creator and our smallness as creatures before Him and listen to the one who made us
 - 3) We must acknowledge God as the LORD and be ready to respond in submission to what He says
- ii. So, as we go through the start of the oracle this morning, we need to keep these attitudes in our hearts, that we might listen rightly and apply the words rightly to our lives

2. Attack, Protection and Salvation (verse 2-9)

a. Observation

- i. There will come a period when the people of God would come under attack (verses 2-3, 9)
 - 1) The attack will be against both the privileged (Jerusalem) and the weaker (Judah) (verse 2)
 - 2) The attack will come from all of the nations (verses 2-3, 9)
- ii. God will protect His people and give them victory over their enemies (verses 2-6)
 - 1) Three images that promise to make Israel strong against her enemies
 - a) A cup of wine that is too strong and destroys the drinker (verse 2)
 - b) A stone that is too heavy to lift and destroys the lifter (verse 3)
 - c) A fire that will destroy the sheaves that come up against it (verse 6)
 - 2) Three clear statements declaring that God is the one who protects Israel
 - a) It is God who will strike the horses of the nations with blindness (verse 4)
 - b) It is God who keeps His eyes open to protect Israel (verse 4)
 - c) It is God who strengthens Jerusalem (verse 5)
- iii. In the midst of battle, God will not only protect His people, but save them to the uttermost (verses 7-9)
 - 1) God will save Judah and Jerusalem (verse 7-8)
 - a) Judah and Jerusalem will be saved together
 - (1) This is a hard theme to be sure we have interpreted right, but the emphasis appears to be that of privilege versus the weak
 - (2) The attack against God's people will be against the strong and the weak (verse 2)
 - (3) But salvation will come for both the strong and the weak (verse 7)
 - (4) And it will come in such a way that the strong will not be able to boast over the weak (verse 7)
 - (A) The passage says that salvation will come to Judah first so that Jerusalem's glory does not surpass Judah (verse 7)
 - (B) But, two verses earlier notes that Judah will look on Jerusalem as the one being saved (verse 5)
 - (C) Neither Jerusalem (the strong) nor Judah (the weak) will have priority in salvation - the glory and the power belong to God
 - b) Salvation will come to all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, even those extremely weak, and lift them up to royal estate (verse 8)
 - 2) God's chosen king will be exalted in salvation (verse 9)
 - a) He will be like God and called the angel of the LORD
 - b) He will go before His people in salvation

b. Explanation

- i. As we consider this prophecy of Zechariah, we must first determine who it applies to - who are Judah and Jerusalem in this prophecy
 - 1) Paul tells us in Galatians 4 that there are two Jerusalems - the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem
 - a) Galatians 4:25-26 - Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
 - b) In the oracles of Zechariah, much is said about Jerusalem, and partially contradictory
 - a) In the first oracle, Jerusalem is promised a king that will bring salvation (chapter 9), but is ultimately destroyed (chapter 11) because they did not walk in God's promises (chapter 10)
 - b) In the second oracle, Jerusalem is promised adversity and attack, but is ultimately saved and established in her place (chapter 12)
 - c) There is a clear line of division between the oracles, even the announcement that this is a new oracle in chapter 12
 - d) My conclusion (as well as Matthew Henry's) is that, in general, Galatians 4 is the interpretative lens to look through at these passages
 - (1) The first oracle deals *primarily* with the earthly Jerusalem, although promises that are made carry over to the heavenly Jerusalem
 - (2) The second oracle deals *primarily* with the heavenly Jerusalem, and the ultimate salvation that will be worked on her behalf

- c) So, Judah and Jerusalem in this passage must represent the church
 - a) It is the church that will come under attack from her enemies
 - b) But God will protect her from attack
 - c) And God will work salvation for her that will establish her on her place and will exalt her king
- ii. Using this interpretive lens, most of the passage makes a lot of sense
 - 1) The church will face many enemies, in fact all of the nations will try to destroy it using various means
 - 2) But God will protect His church and make it so that those who try to destroy it will ultimately fail and destroy themselves
 - 3) But, God will not only protect His church, but will provide salvation for His church
 - 4) This salvation will come to all of the members of the church, both the weak and the strong, without reason for boasting
 - 5) And the result of salvation will be to exalt Christ, the head of His church
 - a) Christ is the son of David who can rightly be called 'like God' and named 'the Angel of the LORD'
 - b) Christ is the king who goes before His people in salvation
- iii. But, just like above, the Judah/Jerusalem theme is still hard to interpret
 - 1) What I am sure about
 - a) That salvation will come to all of the people of God
 - (1) John 6:37 - All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - b) That salvation will come in such a way that no one can boast about their privileged status
 - (1) I Corinthians 1:26-31 - For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."
 - c) Matthew 20:1-16 - "For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last."

- 2) What I am less sure about, but may be indicated here
 - a) There may be a very specific outworking of this prophecy
 - b) Verse 7 seems like a very specific statement and reminds me of much of Romans
 - c) If we see Jerusalem as the Jews who are chosen by God and Judah as the Gentiles who are chosen by God, there is a strong parallel of much of Paul's thought
 - d) The Jews (Jerusalem) are privileged in their status
 - (1) Romans 3:1-2 - Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 - (2) Romans 11:28 - As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.
 - e) But, salvation will come to the Gentiles (Judah) first, so that all are equal in salvation
 - (1) Romans 11:11-14 - So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.
 - (2) Acts 13:46 - And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.
 - (3) Romans 11:25-26 - Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved...
 - (4) Romans 11:30-32 - For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

c. Application

- i. We must rest our hopes in these promises
 - 1) When attacks come against the church and the church appears weak in this world, we must remember that it is God who has saved His church
 - 2) When attacks come against the church and the church appears weak in this world, we must remember that it is God who will protect His church
 - 3) So, we must look back to salvation and forward to protection from God
 - a) If God promises good crops, we should ask God for rain
 - b) If God promises salvation and protection, we should seek God for salvation and protection
- ii. We must glorify the king who leads us forward
 - 1) Christ is the king from the house of David who is like God, the angel of the LORD
 - 2) It is Christ who has won salvation for us and goes before us
- iii. We must not boast in our salvation, whatever the appearance of our status is
 - 1) Whatever reasons we might be tempted to boast in our status or our salvation, we must remember that it is God and God alone who saves, and He has done it in such a way that none of us has the right to boast
 - 2) Instead, we should be humble, glorifying God, saying, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the Lord of hosts, their God"

3. Sacrifice and Repentance (verse 10-14)

a. An Attitude

- i. As we come to verse 10, the topic changes somewhat, from the protection and salvation that God will work for His people to the attitudes that accompany salvation
- ii. In salvation, God will change His attitude toward them
 - 1) He will pour out a spirit of grace (verse 10)
 - 2) God's attitude changes from that of judgment to that of granting undeserved blessing
- iii. In salvation, God will change their attitude toward Him
 - 1) He will pour out pleas for mercy (verse 10)
 - a) God's people will have their attitude changed so that they recognize sin and desire mercy from God
 - 2) He will cause them to mourn over sin (verse 10-14)
 - a) God's people will have their attitude changed so that when they recognize sin, they deeply mourn for it
 - b) The mourning will be significant (verse 11)
 - (1) It will be like the mourning for an only son
 - (2) It will be like the mourning at Hadad-rimmon - not clear exactly what this is, but it is likely a pagan cult who mourned the death of their god every year at winter
 - c) The mourning will be universal among God's people (verse 12-14)
 - (1) The whole land shall mourn and all the families of the land
 - (2) Even the houses of David and Levi (the kings and priests) will mourn
 - d) The mourning will be sincere (verse 12-14)
 - (1) Every family will mourn by themselves and the wives will even mourn by themselves
 - (2) This is not merely a ritualistic ceremony or a group dynamic, it will be sincere grief
 - iv. These attitudes are the subjective basis of salvation
 - 1) Subjective means those things enacted in the subjects of salvation
 - 2) A change of attitude is enacted in both subjects of salvation
 - a) The first subject, the author of salvation changes His attitude towards those being saved
 - b) The second subject, the one needing salvation has his attitude changed toward God and sin

b. An Action

- i. Embedded in this prophecy of changed attitudes is a brief glimpse of the objective basis of salvation as well
 - 1) Objective means those things enacted outside the subjects of salvation
 - 2) So, Christ work on our behalf is the objective basis of salvation
- ii. The changed attitudes will happen when they look on Him whom they have pierced
 - 1) This is a clear reference to Christ
 - a) Christ is the one who is pierced through for transgressions
 - (1) John 19:37 - And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."
 - b) Christ is the only son who is mourned
 - (1) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - 2) This is, at least, a cloudy pointer to the deity of the Messiah
 - a) The statement reads , "when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced"
 - b) The speaker is 'The LORD', so 'me' is God
 - c) The one who is pierced is identified as God Himself
 - 3) This is an indictment of the people of God
 - a) It is the people of God who will pierce the Messiah - they will look on Him whom they have pierced
 - b) All humanity is guilty of the death of Christ - it is all of our sin that put Him on the cross
 - c) So, this statement indicts the sinfulness of God's people

- 4) This is the harbinger of salvation
 - a) When they look on Him whom they have pierced, THEN they will mourn
 - b) It will be through looking on the sacrificed Messiah that the people will have their attitudes changed
 - c) The sacrificed Messiah will bring these attitude changes about, both the people's changed attitude toward God and God's changed attitude toward the people

c. The Application

- i. These are attitudes that we must have in salvation
 - 1) We must mourn over sin
 - a) We must mourn sincerely and significantly over our sin
 - 2) We must seek God with pleas for mercy
 - 3) These are the attitudes that are proper for the people of God
- ii. We must look on Him whom we have pierced
 - 1) We must continually look on Christ for salvation
 - 2) Our mourning for sin is not without hope, Christ bore the penalty and promises full salvation
 - 3) So, look on Christ and mourn for sin, so that He will raise you up
- iii. We must rest in God's changed attitude toward us

Conclusion

At the start of the second oracle this morning:

- a. We saw God proclaim Himself as the sovereign king who is in complete control of everything
 - i. Therefore we should stand in awe of Him
 - ii. Therefore we should believe what He says
 - iii. Therefore we should relate to Him as creatures to the Creator
- b. We saw God promise salvation to the Heavenly Jerusalem
 - i. All of the church will face many enemies, regardless of their status in this world
 - ii. But God will protect them from all of them
 - iii. And He will save them to the uttermost, regardless of their status in this world
- c. We saw God promise both the subjective and the objective bases for salvation
 - i. The subjective basis would be changes of attitude
 - 1) God would change His attitude to show grace to the people
 - 2) God would change His people's attitudes to desire mercy and mourn for sin
 - ii. The objective basis would be the sacrifice of the Messiah
 - 1) God Himself would be the one who was pierced
 - 2) And when the pierced one is looked upon, then the changes of attitude are effected