

Zechariah 12:10-14

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All of the Jewish people, its rulers and priests and commoners, will mourn for God, whom they pierced. They will mourn so profoundly as though they had lost their firstborn son. Because of this mourning, God will pour His favor on all of Israel.

This is a clear allusion to the future event of Israel one day recognizing Jesus as their Messiah and repenting for rejecting Him. It seems that in doing so, then Jesus will return and deliver Israel, and rule as her King and God.

In Zechariah 12:6-9, the LORD promised to destroy all of Judah's foes, giving her victory over them and elevating her to prominence. In this section, He informs Judah that her deliverance would include cleansing and reconciliation. A major part of that reconciliation will be at long last accepting Jesus as their Messiah. Verse 10 includes a graphic prediction of a prophecy of Jesus being pierced, which was fulfilled during His crucifixion:

I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn (v 10).

Verse 10 describes a time when Israel will *mourn* over Jesus's death (*Me whom they have pierced*) as the Egyptians mourned over the loss of their *firstborn* during the plagues God brought on Egypt (Exodus 12:30). The implication is that Judah/Israel will understand that Jesus was crucified on their behalf and be greatly distressed that His death was caused by their sin. But this will be met by God pouring out upon them *the Spirit of grace*. The implication is that Jesus will be received by Israel.

It would seem to fit that this description of *the Spirit of grace* being poured out upon the Jews matches Paul's description of a future time when they would receive Jesus as their savior and Messiah:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.’
‘THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’”
(Romans 11:25-27)

The quote that begins with “The Deliverer will come” is from Isaiah 59:20-21. The concept of God taking away the sins of Israel occurs multiple times in the Old Testament, for example in Jeremiah 31:33, Isaiah 27:9, and here where God pours out *the Spirit of grace* upon Israel.

God begins verse 10 by saying *I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication* (v. 10).

The *house of David* may refer to the descendants of King David, to whom the LORD promised to raise a descendant who would occupy “the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:13). That descendant is Jesus (Matthew 1:1). However the phrase *house of David* can also be used to refer to all of Judah (1 Kings 12:19). In this passage it seems to refer to the leadership within Judah, particularly those in Jerusalem who are leading the battle to defend Judah from its attackers (Zechariah 12:5).

When taken together with the phrase *and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem* it would seem the implication is that the promised deliverance includes everyone in between. That would fit the assertion of Romans 11:26 that “all Israel will be saved.”

This will take place when “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” which occurs during a pause of the “prophetic clock” described in Daniel 9. ([See our Commentary on Daniel 9](#)) Daniel 9 predicts a time of Israel consisting of 490 years. The “clock” stopped at 483 years, when Jesus was rejected by Israel. It will start again after the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in,” which is the gap in time spanning between the 69th and 70th week of years (7 year periods) during which the events prophesied for Israel are completed.

The *house of David* is a phrase used in scripture to refer to the descendants and royal lineage of King David, to whom the LORD promised to raise a descendant who would occupy “the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:13). However the phrase can also be used to refer to all of Judah (1 Kings 12:19). In the immediate context of this passage, it seems to refer to the leadership within Judah, particularly those in Jerusalem who are leading the battle to defend Judah from its attackers (Zechariah 12:5).

The *inhabitants of Jerusalem* were those living in the city. These two references represent all the people living in Judah. Since they belong to God, He will *pour out the Spirit of grace and of supplication* on them.

The verb *pour out* can have a literal sense of causing liquids such as water and blood to flow from a container into another vessel (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 4:9). For instance, in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses told the people of Israel that when they slaughter animals to eat meat at home, they are to drain the blood and *pour it out* on the ground like water (Deuteronomy 12:16). However, in our passage, the meaning is figurative and implies abundance. The LORD said He would bestow abundant *grace* on His covenant people, prompting them to respond with *supplication*.

The term *grace* denotes God’s favor. In the case of being justified in God’s sight through the shed blood of Jesus, God’s *grace* or favor is given to us as a gift, because of what Jesus did for us by taking on the sins of the world (Colossians 2:14). What is required to receive that *grace* is

to have sufficient faith to look upon Jesus, hoping to be delivered from the deadly venom of sin, as Jesus described to the learned Nicodemus (John 3:14-15).

God's grace to forgive our sins is an immense blessing, causing the recipient to be accepted fully in the sight of God (Ephesians 1:6). The term *supplication* means asking for something earnestly. It is a human disposition to do something. Thus, the *Spirit of grace and supplication* is the *Spirit* that bestows *grace* on the worshipers and leads them to prayer. The implied prayer is to receive God's grace.

The purpose, the LORD stated, is *so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced*.

The pronoun *Me* stands for Jesus since He is the One who was *pierced*.

There was a literal fulfillment of this piercing that is recorded in the New Testament. According to the gospel of John, when the Jewish soldiers crucified Jesus Christ with the two other men on each side of Him, they broke the legs of the men but left Jesus's legs intact because He was already dead:

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.”
(John 19:34)

Since the soldiers *pierced* Jesus, the writer of John declared it was a fulfillment of the words of Zechariah:

“And again another Scripture says,
‘THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.’”
(John 19:37)

Of course, the crucifixion of Jesus was a prime example of how Israel rejected their covenant partner. And since Jesus is both God and man, when the Jews *pierced* and crucified Him, they killed God in the flesh. Therefore, the prophetic prediction in Zechariah is noted as a literal event in the gospel of John. At the time of John, the Jews looked upon the crucified Jesus and mocked Him (Luke 23:35). In the future, they will realize what they did, and mourn.

Connected with the prediction from Romans 11:25-27, there will come a time after the time of the Gentiles is completed where the Jews will recognize Jesus as their promised Messiah and receive Him. At that time, all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26).

Returning to the book of Zechariah, the text says that the repentant Jews will *mourn for Him* [God], *as one mourns for an only son*. To *mourn* is to feel sorrow or lament for the death of someone. Mourning over an *only son* is devastating and is one of the most tragic incidents that can happen to a family structure.

According to Jeremiah, this type of mourning is “a most bitter mourning” perhaps because it ends every hope for the family's future (Jeremiah 6:26; cf. Amos 8:10). Likewise, the repentant Jews will express their deep sorrow for rejecting their Suzerain God. Indeed, *they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn*.

In ancient Israel, parents attached great value to their firstborn sons. A married couple would give their firstborn male priority and preeminence in the family, assigning him the responsibility and privilege of leading the family. Thus, the firstborn male represented human strength and vitality (Genesis 49:3; Psalm 78:51).

Thus “the first offspring of every womb” would become the primary heir of the family (Exodus 13:2; Numbers 18:15). Accordingly, it would be a tragic situation for a family to witness the loss of their firstborn. It would be akin to the passing of a monarch of a country. The LORD likened the *weeping* of the Jews to the lamentation *over a firstborn* to show the depth and genuineness of their sorrow.

An example of this type of mourning and weeping is when all of Egypt mourned at the death of their firstborn during the night of the Passover (Exodus 12:30). This indicates a genuine repentance, which would indicate the reason they are looking upon Jesus is to receive Him, as in John 3:14-16.

The LORD continued the theme of sorrow begun in the previous verse and introduced the temporal phrase *In that day* to refer to the future time when this event will transpire (v. 11). Combining this prophecy with the passage in Romans 11:25-27, it would seem this event of Israel turning to Jesus will take place sometime near or during the 70th week of Daniel, as prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27. Jesus spoke of this prophecy in Matthew 24:15, citing the “abomination of desolation” as a sign of His coming.

Zechariah’s prophecy continues: *there would be great mourning in Jerusalem*. The people will cry bitterly to express their sorrow for having *pierced* God. They will ask Him for forgiveness and turn to Him in faith. They will *mourn like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo*.

The term *Hadadrimmon* is a compound of the names of two Canaanite deities: Hadad, the god of the storm (also known as Baal), and Rimmon, the god of thunder and the chief deity of the Arameans of Syria (2 Kings 5:18). There is no biblical reference to *Hadadrimmon*, so it is uncertain to modern readers what event is being referred to in the phrase *the mourning of Hadadrimmon*. There is a string of Jewish and Christian tradition that connects this passage to the slaying of King Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:24-25). As stated in 2 Chronicles 35:

“And all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations.”
(2 Chronicles 35:25)

So this reference could connect with a tradition of mourning. In any event, it is clear that Zechariah’s intent is to provide an example of great sorrow that will be expressed by the people because of their treatment of *Me whom they have pierced*. It is important to note that *Me* in the phrase *Me whom they have pierced* undeniably refers to God as well as to Jesus (who was pierced). This demonstrates that Jesus is God.

That the *Me* in verse 10 refers to the LORD is clear from examining the context of Chapter 12, which begins with “Thus declares the LORD” (Zechariah 12:1) and continues with the LORD speaking in first person:

- “Behold, I [the LORD] am going to make... (Zechariah 12:2)
- “I [the LORD] will strike... (Zechariah 12:4)
- “And in that day I [the LORD] will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:9)
- “In that day I [the LORD] will make the clans of Judah like a firepot... (Zechariah 12:6)
- “I [the LORD] will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him... (Zechariah 12:10)

Therefore, Zechariah 12:10 prophesies that Jesus, who was *pierced*, is also the LORD. One of the Jews’ primary objections to Jesus was that He claimed to be God, which they claimed was blasphemy (Matthew 26:64-66). But here in Zechariah we see a clear prediction that 1) the Messiah would be the LORD 2) the Messiah would be *pierced*, and 3) the Jews would come to a point of recognizing that He was *pierced* and *mourn for Him*.

The first two of these prophecies have transpired, the third is yet in our future (as of 2023). But it is as certain to come to pass that Israel will mourn that they crucified Jesus as the first two are certain to have already occurred. As the Apostle Paul asserts:

“and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,
‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.’
‘THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’
(Romans 11:26-27)

This passage from Romans 11 quotes Isaiah 59:20-21. The prophecy that God will cleanse Israel and give them a new heart is a theme that runs throughout scripture (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

The people of Judah lamented Josiah’s death (2 Chronicles 35:25) which took place on the *plain of Megiddo* (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). The *plain of Megiddo* is also referred to in scripture as “Armageddon” (Revelation 16:16). The English word “Armageddon” translates the Hebrew Har-Magedon. “Har” means “hill” in Hebrew and “Magedon” is a form of Megiddo. The site of the ancient city of Megiddo is a “tell,” which is a mound composed of debris from many civilizations dating back to the Neolithic age, and is now therefore an elevated hill. It overlooks the *plains of Megiddo*.

Revelation foretells that the “kings of the whole world” will gather together at “Armageddon” in order to fight in “the war of the great day of God” (Revelation 16:14-16). This last war of this age appears to be won by the return of Jesus, accompanied by a heavenly army, as predicted in Revelation 19:11-19. It could be that the mention of *the plains of Megiddo* here in Zechariah 12 is a clue that the return of Jesus will be triggered by the Jews mourning over the One *they have*

pierced, indicating that their turn to Jesus as Messiah might go hand-in-hand with His return to earth.

This would seem to be in keeping with the promise of Peter that if the Jews would “repent and return” then the Lord would “send Jesus” to bring them the “times of refreshing”:

“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you.”
(Acts 3:19-20)

It could be that the “kings of the whole world” will gather in the *plains of Megiddo* as a staging area to march on Jerusalem, which is roughly fifty miles south of *Megiddo*. This could dovetail with Chapter 14, which says “For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2). If this is the case, then the return of Jesus in Revelation 19 might correspond with the predicted events of Zechariah 14:1-8.

The passage continues speaking of *the inhabitants of Jerusalem* mourning over the Lord, *whom they have pierced*. It will not only be those in Jerusalem mourning over Jesus, but *the land will 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 by itself and their wives by themselves* (v. 12).

Jerusalem will not be alone in their repentance. The entire *land* will mourn. In fact, the lamentation will extend to *every family by itself* (v. 12). Each *family* will lament its guilt for having rejected their covenant partner, Yahweh, whom they *pierced*. Then, the LORD outlined specific Judean clans that will mourn, thus showing the extent and universality of the sorrow. Zechariah’s prophecy began by saying, *The family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves*.

The *house of David* refers to the descendants of King *David* (vv. 7, 8, 10). They and their *wives* will *mourn*. Moreover, *the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves* will mourn. *Nathan* is probably the son of David, one of “the children born to him in Jerusalem” (1 Chronicles 14:4; 2 Samuel 5:14; Luke 3:31). If this is correct, then the *house of Nathan* refers to those descended from *Nathan*, David’s son.

That *Nathan* is particularly noted is another indication that this passage is speaking specifically of Jesus. Jesus’s mother Mary is descended from David’s son *Nathan* rather than Solomon, who was heir to the throne (Luke 3:31). Accordingly, Mary’s offspring was not subject to the curse placed on one of the last of the kings of Judah prior to the exile:

“For no man of his descendants will prosper
Sitting on the throne of David
Or ruling again in Judah.”
(Jeremiah 22:30)

Mary’s offspring was not subject to this curse because she was not descended from the line of Solomon. Jesus was the adopted son of Joseph, who was descended from Solomon (Matthew 1:6). Therefore, Jesus had the legal right to the throne, through the line of David’s son Solomon,

but was not subject to the curse of Jehoiakim as His mother was of the line of David's son Nathan.

Additionally, the mourning will extend to *the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves* (v. 13). The *house of Levi* means the descendants of *Levi* who served as priests before the LORD (Deuteronomy 18:1-5). They will mourn to express their deep sorrow.

The next group in line to lament will be *the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves*. According to the book of Numbers, Shimei was one of the grandsons of Levi (Numbers 3:16-21). His clan was a part of the priestly line. Thus, the text of Zechariah lists two representatives of the royal family and two of the priestly family. This would indicate that the rulers of Judah will recognize Jesus as Messiah, and mourn that they *pierced* Him. This is likely connected to Paul's assertion that "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26-27).

Although the royal and priestly lines bore more responsibilities, they were not the only ones who would mourn for having pierced God. For this reason, the LORD concluded the section by saying, *All the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves* will mourn (v. 14). Everyone sinned against the LORD and needed cleansing and purification. The good news is that God is willing to reconcile to all those who confess their part in piercing Him by their wicked actions and rebellion.

Biblical Text

¹⁰ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. ¹¹ In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. ¹² The land will 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 by itself and their wives by themselves; ¹³ the 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; ¹⁴ all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.