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GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTISTS

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Sermon preached by our Pastor, Mr. J. Delves, at "Ebenezer"

Clapham on Sunday evening 8.8.76

Hymns 1028, 764, 827

Reading: Zechariah 12 and 13

Text: Zechariah 12.10

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn!"

These prophecies, as you know, in great part refer to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the fulness of time and that fulness of time has come. He has appeared upon this earth and in our nature, sinless, accomplished the will of God in the redemption of His people; and if we are rightly exercised, the point will be with us whether or no we really have part or lot in the matter. I have come to the closing days of my life and my mind dwells much upon the end and the importance of being found ready. I hope I have had some intimation of the Lord's favour to me even in this and He has said, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee".

In the verses I have read are three striking points, one is praying, the second is looking and the third is mourning. It is said "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications". This remarkable work of the Holy Spirit has been continued through all these generations and will be to the end. Nothing short of a Holy Ghost religion will take us to heaven and if we possess it we shall not come short at last. It is a wonderful mercy for poor sinners, such as we, to feel in our souls a good hope through grace. By the house of David we may understand the church of God and every living member of it, here referred to collectively, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications". The reference here, as you know, is to the Jews in particular; but

every Gospel promise has relation to all the redeemed family of God from creation to the end of time, and real religion consists in the divine operations of the Holy Spirit. As it is here stated "I will pour the spirit of grace and supplications upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem"; I will pour it upon them. If we are going to heaven we must pray our way there. There is no other way. We must pray all the time until we have done with time and the things of this world. O what a glorious prospect is before the Lord's dear people! They are a praying people, not prayer made up of themselves but the effect of the pouring of the spirit of grace and supplication upon them. There is a great difference, as you know, both in secret and in public prayer. Sometimes those who are engaged in it feel a spirit of bondage and are not able to express themselves as they would; at another time they have a spirit of liberty and they are enabled to wait upon the Lord and to have communion with Him. O dear friends what a wonderful mercy it is not to be religious, but to have a religion that will take us to heaven, not a religion that will terminate when we die, but a religion that will consummate in everlasting joy, peace and happiness. How short time is; even at the longest our life is like a tale that is told, it is soon gone. Here the Lord's people are said to be "the inhabitants of Jerusalem", the Jews in particular, but all the redeemed of the Lord are included in this, and it is said, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced".

"They shall look upon me". This of course is not literally true of the Lord's people, except those who may have been there at His crucifixion and were graciously affected thereby; but it is a wonderful mercy to feel in our hearts something of the grace of supplication and of looking upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Actually if we are of the Lord's redeemed people we are all a party to that piercing, to His sufferings, His agony, His death upon the cross. We cannot estimate the cost of our redemption. My old

pastor used to say eternity will not be too long to praise and bless Him for what He has done for us poor, guilty sinners who must otherwise have perished for ever. What a blessing it is to feel a good hope through grace. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced". I do not know how it may be with you but I seem to know just a little of this as I felt it many years ago after the Lord appeared to me, blessed my soul, and enabled me to walk in His ways. I remember something of this looking upon Him Whom I had pierced. What a wonderful mercy to have a religion that will take us to heaven. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced". This look then is a look of faith to Christ. It looks to Him in all that He is. Faith is directed to Him by the Holy Spirit. Faith looks to Him. What do you need? Why, say you, what I feel to need is the pardon of my sins. Then you must look to Him for it; He has that pardon to give, He has paid the price, has suffered the penalty, He has appeased divine wrath, He has opened the way to heaven and He has that peace to give. How sweet it is. I remember a long time ago feeling the only thing between my soul and heaven was my last breath; and so it is with the Lord's dear people, when they come to the close of their pilgrimage they have nothing to do but breathe their last breath and go to heaven. Blessed prospect - "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced". How far can we go in this? Can we feel that we have had that sweet look of faith wherein we could see a way to heaven through Calvary? I believe I have felt that. That is the only way and it is the only way that my soul needs. Oh to have a view of Him! Faith views Him in His sufferings and death, faith views Him in His resurrection from the dead. The grave could not hold Him, death could not hold Him, no power could hold Him beyond the moment that the grave burst open and He came forth a mighty Conqueror over sin, death and hell. How sweet it is to feel that we have a living Jesus. He has paid the price, He has appeased justice, opened a way and grants an abundant entrance into that everlasting kingdom.

"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" and they shall mourn for him". This is the effect of it, they shall mourn for

Him. This mourning is a godly grief for sin, the sins that wounded Him, occasioned His death. We are the cause of it if we are His. What a solemn thought it is, and how seldom does it come home to us in this way that we are a party to His sufferings, His death and His glorious, blessed resurrection. It is a blessed religion, it will never terminate, but it will consummate in everlasting glory. "They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son". You know how real that mourning is. I read recently in our magazine of some parents who had a son born to them and their lives were devoted to this child but when he was about seven years he was taken ill and taken from them and it was a time of mourning indeed. I knew a minister very well, who is not living now, who had a son taken by death and I remember him recording how he fought against it until the Lord came over it and so favoured him in his soul that he said, 'You can have him Lord', he willingly gave him up. Has the Lord ever come to you in a time of need and made a crooked thing straight and some rough places plain? "They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son", not as one mourneth for one of his many sons, but his only son. What a mourning naturally speaking it must be when nature's ties are so put to the test by the loss of one so dear to the parents.

We may take a summary of this verse and ask ourselves what we know of it, how far we have walked in it, what experience we have had of it. It is a great question. Here is a praying, a looking and a mourning. That embodies experimental religion, incorporates the trials and things through which the Lord's people are called upon to pass. I may have mentioned it before but dear old John Warburton's youngest child was six years old and she ran down the path and said, "Give me another kiss father before you go", he never saw her alive again, she died before he returned home, but he was so helped in it he felt able to give her up. How sweet it is when we can fall into the hands of the Lord and say, "Thy will be done". Have you been there? Have you had a few minutes when your love was swallowed up in His? Your will was swallowed up in His and you could say, "Not my will but thine be done". "I will pour upon the house of

David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem". Undoubtedly until time shall be no more the Lord's dear people among these Jews will be brought to know the Messiah and to acknowledge Him as the true Messiah.

"They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." These prophecies then are for our instruction. All Scripture is; but these prophecies as they relate to the coming of the Messiah have been proved to be of the Lord by the fulfilment of their prophecy, and we can look back to the time when the dear Redeemer came and the prophecy was fulfilled.

My dear friends, I have been with you many years. I cannot be with you very much longer but I do hope that, whatever may lie in the unseen future, the Lord God of our fathers will be your God and watch over you and according to His gracious will add to your numbers such as shall be saved. I have baptised a good many in the space of forty years and a number have joined us that have previously belonged to other churches. I wonder if I shall ever baptise another. Sometimes I feel I would not have strength to, but at other times I feel that if one was moved to come forward I believe I should have strength even if I have some help. May the Lord yet give us to see the moving of the waters among us if it be His gracious will. What good times we have had as the years have gone by and He has not left us, or forsaken us, but is the same God still and will be for He says, "I am the Lord I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed". I leave these three precious points with you -

PRAYING, LOOKING, MOURNING.

Our religion will come into these if it is a real one. May the Lord grant much of His favour and blessing to rest upon you and preserve you and each of us in peace and communion and in the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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