Date: 2.12.18

Text: Zechariah 12 & 13

Place: Swansea/Charlestown AM

Title: On that day

File Zechariah 12 13

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Slide 1

On this day in 1697 St Pauls Cathedral in London, designed by Christopher Wren, was set apart for use as a Christian Church. Slide 2 On this day in 1804 Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned Emperor of France in Paris. Slide 3 On this day in 1901 King Gillette began selling the first safety razor. Slide 4 On this day in 1941 Japanese Marshal Admiral Yamamoto attacked the US Pearl Harbour which brought America into WW2. Slide 5 On this day in 1961, Cuban leader Fidel Castro declared that he was a Marxist and that Cuba from now on was going to adopt Communism. Slide 6

And on this day in 1964 Ringo Starr’s tonsils were removed.

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What a difference a day makes! History pivots on a day.  Someone is born who changes history. A battle is fought. A law enacted. A discovery made. And everything changes. What a difference a day makes.

Now Zechariah 12 and 13 doesn’t want to talk about any old day but **that day**. On that day is a refrain, a pulse, a heartbeat that permeates the whole last part of the book of Zechariah. It will appear 7 times in chapter 12, 3 times in chapter 13 and we will see next week another 7 times in chapter 14. This is one important day. This is one day we need to mark on our calendars. This is one day we need to be ready for. What a difference that day will make.

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For it will be a day where God will do some amazing things for his people, Israel. So we need to keep those two subjects in mind, God and Israel as we read this passage. Because these two chapters are saturated with references to both God and to Israel. For God Himself is the subject of almost every single sentence in this passage. I, I, I are repeated again and again and again throughout the passage. And the object of what God is going to do on that day is Israel, Judah, the house of David. It’s God’s people, isn’t it, who are mentioned again and again in these chapters?

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So we, who according to the New Testament are God’s people, should see this is also as a message for us. We too should be looking for that day. We too should understand what God has done, is doing, will do on **that day.** So what we will find this morning is that this chapter is actually addressed to us as well. So let’s have a good look.

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1. **God conserves His people (verses 1-9)**

*“A prophecy: The word of the Lord concerning Israel. The Lord who stretches out the*

*Heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth & who forms the human spirit within a person.”*Before we read what God promises to do on that day, we had better dust off our doctrine of God because we’re going to need it, Zechariah says. Before faith can believe God’s promises to us, it needs to take hold of the character of God. And the fact that the God who made the whole of creation is about to perform a new creation in his people.

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***2****“I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah*

*will be besieged as well as Jerusalem.****3****On that day, when all the nations of the earth are*

*gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who*

*try to move it will injure themselves.”*

As that day approaches, there will be hostility between Jerusalem and the nations of the world. Between God’s people and the people of the world. This hostility, will not diminish. It will actually intensify. The nations will gather around the holy city and seek to send it into oblivion but Jerusalem will be like a cup the nations have to drink from, a cup of God’s wrath and it will be like a rock that will not be moved. A rock that will trip up their enemies.

Now God has fought for his people before. But this is not just any old battle, it looks like the very last battle, the day of the coming of the Kingdom of God that Zechariah chapter 1-6 is talking about. And could it be the day that God’s King will appear for that is what chapters 9-14 is all about? We will have to wait and see but keep a look out for that in the meantime.

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***4****On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the Lord. “I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.****5****Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the Lord Almighty is their God.’* God is the one who is in control of this battle, this final battle. He is the one who strikes, watches, blinds, and in the verses to come saves, shields and destroys.

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It is his battle & “*On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem”*. The nations think they are fighting God’s people but they are really fighting God Himself. And God has promised to conserve his people. To protect his people. To surround His people. “To get to them, you have to go through me”, it is like God is saying. “And you won’t get through me because they are my people”, says the Lord.

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Here there is a note of hope for all of God’s people. Life may not be easy. People will oppose you, persecute you, try and defeat you. The picture here I think is similar to that which faced Elisha in 2 Kings 6. There he is surrounded by chariots on all sides but he prays concerning his servant “*open his eyes so he may see*.” Then the Lord opened his servant’s eyes and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. Don’t be afraid, the prophet says *“those who are with us are more than those who are with them*.”

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Friends isn’t that an encouragement to us today? God promises to protect, to conserve his people. God is the one who will fight for his people. And on that day, on that final day, when the biggest battle of all is raging we will see that for one last time that God conserves and

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1. **God converts (verses 10-14)**

For in the midst of the battles that are going on all around us, God actually wants to do something within us as well as for us. So **9 “***On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.* ***10****“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication”*. God wants to do more than just conserve he wants to convert.

And he is in control of this conversion process as well. *“I will pour out on my people a spirit*

*of grace and supplication*”. God will send his people grace. God’s favour, God’s forgiveness, God’s new start will actually enter inside of His people. It will produce insight as they will see God in a whole new way. And it will bring about repentance and mourning. For they will finally realise how hurtful their sinful actions have been to their loving heavenly Father.

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*“They will look on me, the one they have pierced & they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child & grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son”.*Wait a second God has just won them a mighty victory and there should be tears of joy but instead there are tears of mourning. Why? Because “*they will look on me”,* remember this is God who is speaking here, *“the one they have pierced and they will mourn for him*”.

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What? They have pierced God? They have killed God? The enemies all around them are trying to kill and destroy God’s people. But God steps in and protects his people but in the wash up, God Himself is killed but not by his enemies but by his own people? Wow! I never saw that coming. That’s got to end the relationship between God and his people doesn’t it?

But wait a second how could God be pierced? How could God Himself die? This is getting really, really confusing here. But the people of God now have within them this spirit of grace and as they realise what they have done to God Himself they now mourn uncontrollably.

*Slide 19*

***11****On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be as great as the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.****12****The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by them selves: the clan of the house of David and their wives (*the king’s house will mourn*), the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives (*the prophetic house will mourn*),****13****the clan of the house of Levi and their wives* (the priestly house will mourn*), the clan of Shimei and their wives,****14****and all the rest of the clans and their wives”.* Every other house will be inconsolable. All will mourn.

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The Spirit that God has sent, this Spirit of grace has led the people to mourning and repentance. It’s converted them. But is it too late? Have they gone a bridge too far? In piercing God himself will they find themselves completely annihilated **on that day**? What will God do in his people **on that day**?

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1. Well God conserves, God converts and thirdly **God cleanses (Verses 1-6)**

*“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of*

*Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity”*. Wait a second. God is not going to clear them out of his sight, he is going to cleanse them?!?! He is going to cleanse them from every sin and every impurity. But He will not just provide them a bowl to cleanse them or a bucket or a tap, he is going to open up a whole fountain.

A fountain. It paints a picture of an abundance of water. An overflowing. An inexhaustible supply. A never failing stream. A veritable fountain of life. And that fountain opens up **on that day**. That same day that the people of God pierced him. There is a flow of water that forgives, that cleanses them, that purifies them.

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And it not just cleanses the people but it purifies the land itself. ***2****“On that day, I will banish*

*the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more,” declares*

*the Lord Almighty. “I will remove both the prophets & the spirit of impurity from the land”.*

This fountain cleans people and gets rid of all of their idols. It will send the false prophets running in every direction. They will say I am not prophet, I am a farmer. They will get rid of their garments of hair, the prophetic clerical dress. And they will try and make light of the wounds on their body where they had previously slashed it in worship of Baal. This cleansing will affect not just the people but the place where the people are living. **On that day,** God will conserve, God will convert, God will cleanse and finally

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1. **God will Change. (verses 7-9)**

Here our passage moves back to the battle imagery that we saw earlier in chapter 12. ***7****“Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the Lord Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.****8****In the whole land,” declares the Lord, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it.”*

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On that day, at the battle that will usher in the Kingdom of God on that last day, the sword will not just devour God’s enemies, the nations that are encamping around Jerusalem but it will also strike “*my shepherd … the man who is close to me*.” The one who has come to shepherd his people, the one we saw in Zechariah 10, who shepherds God’s people on God’s behalf, the Messiah, the Branch from David’s line, this one will be struck. And I hate to state the obvious but if you are struck by a sword, in those days, you are not going to live.

So not only will God be pierced but God’s chosen King, God’s associate, the Messiah will also be struck down. Somehow the victory that will be won on that last day will come at a huge cost. Yes God’s people will win but only because God has fought for them. And because God and his associate seem to lose. Their loss is the people of God’s gain. Their death gives the people of God life. Their defeat somehow gives the people of God their victory.

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Well not all of Israel anyway but a remnant, just a third will be left, whereas two thirds will be destroyed. But God will do something in those who are left. We have already seen that they will be cleansed by water, now they will be cleansed by fire. **9 “***This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.*’”

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You see you can clean something by getting out the washing water and the detergent and giving it a good scrubbing. But you can also cleanse other things by putting them into the fire. You can cleanse a person by washing away a repentant sinner’s wrongdoing but you can also cleanse them again by allowing them to go through the fire so to speak, go through the hard discipline of suffering.

So gold or silver can be put in a caste and heated up to very high temperatures to burn off any impurities within it. And that gold or silver can then be tested, proved to see if it is the genuine article, to see if it has now become pure gold, pure silver. And so these people, the people of God who have survived, will be refined by suffering. They will be changed by suffering. The heat will be put on them so to speak and there before your very eyes we will see a transformation in them. God will send the fire to make them pure, wholly his.

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That is the aim in everything that happens in this chapter. This is the high point that

everything up until now was leading up to. God is conserving, he is converting them, he is cleansing them because he wants to change them. God does not abandon his people even though he Himself is pierced and the shepherd is struck down. He will use all these things to purify a people unto himself. Where they will be his people. And He will be their God.

So this is not an easy chapter or two. Not easy at all. But whereas the people of God need cleansing and changing and they can’t do it themselves so God Himself will do it. And it seems like he will do it on **that day** when he Himself will be pierced and his chosen shepherd will be struck down.

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So now we come to the next hard question. When? When is that day? It is obviously sometime after Zechariahs time of 518BC. But has it happened already or is it sometime still to come? This is an important question if we as the people of God in today’s world are to understand more about that day and what it means for us today.

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Well let’s start where our passage started. With armies surrounding Jerusalem and God’s people needing God himself to fight for them. We saw a couple weeks ago in chapter 9 that that prophecy fulfilled by Alexander the Great where he swept down the coast but didn’t come into Jerusalem. Was that the day that Zechariah is talking about? Probably not as they were saved but also there was no piercing or the death of any shepherd or cleansing or sending of a spirit of grace. So let’s keep looking.

One of the Greek generals later took over Jerusalem and this time there was no way that could keep him out. Later on the Romans took over Jerusalem before Jesus time & in 70AD after a rebellion by many of the Jews, Jerusalem was decimated, completely destroyed. God did not protect them at this time as he prophesied in Zechariah. Which meant the Jewish nations no longer existed for almost 1900 years. Until it was formed again 1948.

So maybe that day is not in the past, it is still in the future. That Day might well be the Day when God sends Jesus into the world and the nations gather for the last great battle of Armageddon. On that day it is all over in a moment. It is a complete mismatch. The nations try and defeat the people of God but they don’t even get to first base before God completely wipes them out.

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And this battle ushers in the new heavens and the new earth where we will be cleansed from our sin, and changed to be like him. Where we will get the full measure of the spirit of grace open us. But there will be no mourning or crying in heaven. And what about the Messiah being struck down. And the one who has been pierced? How do they fit into the picture? There is much to recommend **that day** being the last day but the gospel writers when they were putting together the New Testament kept on referring to these events in Zechariah as not pointing to the second coming of Jesus but to the first coming of Jesus.

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Now let me say there are still plenty of questions to be asked about this theory as well. But

let’s see if this fits the evidence a bit better. In the gospels we don’t see armies encamping around Jerusalem. But the apostles quote Psalm 2 *“‘Why do the nations rage and the*

 *peoples plot in vain?* ***26****The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against*

*the Lord and against his anointed one.” 2****7****Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with*

*the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant*

*Jesus, whom you anointed*”.

There are the nations opposing God’s chosen king, representing God’s people. And while the nations oppose this king, what do the Jewish people do? They betray their Messiah. They hand Jesus over to the Romans, whom they send for crucifixion. And the apostle John highlights that what happened on the cross fulfils this passage from Zechariah. John 19 describes how “*soldiers pierced his side with a spear, bring a sudden flow of blood and water”*. And then John quotes Zechariah 12 “*they will look on the one they have pierced*.”

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Jesus God’s Son, God Himself is pierced & that opens up a flow, a fountain of water & blood. Water can wash away some iniquity but in the OT only blood can cleanse us of sin & so on the cross a fountain of water & blood is opened to offer us cleansing of all our sin & iniquity. Slide 32

How did William Cowper put it in the old hymn? “*There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel’s veins and sinners plunge beneath the flood, lose all their guilty stain*.”

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And when the good shepherd Jesus is betrayed, Jesus Himself in Matthew 26:31 quotes Zechariah 13:7 “*I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered*.” And scatter they did. The Shepherd, the good shepherd dies and the sheep are completely lost. And mourn for what they have done. And mourn for what their people has done.

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Do you see what is happening? That day is the day that Jesus was betrayed and died. The day he ascended and sent out his Spirit. So that day is not just one 24 hour day. It lasts from his betrayal onto the death of Jesus where he was crowned with a cross until the second coming of Jesus where he will be crowned with the victor’s crown. Slide 36 Rev 1:7 says *“Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every* *eye will see him,* ***even those who pierced him****”; and all peoples on earth “****will mourn because of him****.” So shall it be! Amen.*

*Slide 35*

So what does this mean for us, for God’s people today? We need to look to that day. That day where Jesus fulfilled much of Zechariah’s prophecies. Where God defeated his enemies, where God allowed his Son to be pierced, where the good shepherd was slain but in the midst of all that God’s Spirit of grace was unleashed for us to live by and his cleansing blood forgives us of all our sin.

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In the meantime we might suffer the fire of persecution 1 Peter 1:6-7, ***6****In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.****7****These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed”.*

*Slide 37*

We live in the last days but we look forward to **that day**. The last day of the last days. That

day when we will not just wash ourselves in that fountain but be drenched by it. Not just

have our sins cleansed but our whole natures purified. Where we will not just have the Spirit

of Grace but completely controlled by the Spirit of grace. We look forward to that day by

remembering the day of Jesus coming and so live out our lives of faith, hope and love today.