

When God Opens The Fountain

“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, *I am* no prophet, *I am* an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.”
(Zechariah 13:1-6)

Zechariah is describing the believer’s experience of grace, when Christ is revealed in us by God the Holy Spirit. In these six verses of his prophecy Zechariah shows us what happens when God opens the cleansing Fountain to his elect. In verse 1 he declares that the Fountain is opened to all upon whom God pours the Spirit of grace and supplications. Then, in verses 2-6 the prophet tells us what happens, what comes to pass in us when the Fountain is opened to our souls in effectual grace.

“In That Day”

“*In that day there shall be a fountain opened.*” — When I open a letter, the first thing I look for is the person who sent it. The second thing is the date it was written. If I do not first observe who wrote the letter and then note its date, I know I might easily misread the letter. If you will look back to Zechariah 12:1, you will see that we are reading something sent to us by the Lord God himself. We are reading “*the burden of the word of the LORD for Israel.*” In the 10th verse of chapter 12 we see the date that identifies what he is telling us about.

“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...In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”(Zechariah 12:10 and 13:1)

As soon as a sinner has Christ revealed to him and in him by the Spirit of grace, he looks upon the Savior he has pierced and is made to mourn for his sin; and as soon as the sinner looks to Christ and mourns, he is comforted. As soon sinners mourn for him, they obtain mercy from him. As soon as they are made to know their filth, the Fountain is opened to them for cleansing. As soon

as David confessed in his heart, before he could confess with his mouth, God forgave the iniquity of his sin, the sting of it and the stain of it, the guilt of it and the filth of it (Psalm 32:5; compare Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:6-7, 9). — *“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”* As John Trapp put it, “God will cross the black lines of your sins with the red lines of his Son’s blood.”

As soon as we look to Christ, whom we have pierced, that very day, God the Holy Spirit has opened to us the Fountain we need for our sin and for our uncleanness. Are you broken under a sense of sin and guilt? If you are, Christ Jesus is the *“fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness!”* It is for sinners that he bled and died. It is for you who are conscious of your great guiltiness that the fullness and the freeness of his grace are manifested. If, by faith, you look to him, your looking to him is a proof that he is looking to you, and he will take away your sin. Where there is mourning for sin, there is pardon for sin. Eyes full of tears are eyes fit for looking to Christ who takes away all guilt and sin.

Our looking to Christ in faith and mourning for him in repentance contributes nothing to our justification in the court of heaven, and does nothing to blot out our sins before God. That was accomplished when Christ died as our Substitute. Yet, until we are enabled by God the Holy Spirit to look to the Savior, our consciences carry the load of guilt, sensing the wrath of God upon us. When we look to Christ, he speaks peace to our souls, removes guilt from us, blots out our sins, and justifies us, as John Gill put it, “in the court of conscience.” Zechariah is here describing the experience of redemption, justification, forgiveness, and cleansing in our souls. He describes the accomplishment of these things at Calvary in verse 7; but Zechariah 12:10-13:6 describes the believing sinner’s experience of grace. All the Levitical purifications under the law pointed to this Fountain of Christ’s meritorious blood, this ever-flowing and overflowing Fountain.

“There shall be a Fountain Opened”

“A fountain opened” is a fountain available and accessible. We frequently see a drinking fountain in public places. There it stands, right in the middle of a park. It is placed there so that anyone who is thirsty may come and drink. Do you ever watch people when you are in such a place? Children are running and playing, hot, sweaty and dirty. They run to the fountain, take great gulps of water, and sometimes wash their faces in it. But I’ve never heard one pause and ask, “May I drink some water?” If they are thirsty, they just drink. I’ve never heard one ask, “Was that fountain put there for me?” If they are thirsty, they just drink. I’ve never heard one ask, “Am I fit to have a drink?” If they are thirsty, they just drink. Dirty face, mud, sweat and all, they just drink.

In the same place you see others walk by. They pause, look at the fountain, wipe away the sweat from their brows, and you can tell by the look on their faces that they want a cool drink of water so bad that they can hardly stand it. But they look at all the dirty, sweaty children, with runny noses who have been drinking from the fountain, and walk right on by. Why? Because they consider themselves too good to drink from such a fountain, a fountain that they imagine those dirty children must have polluted by drinking from it.

Oh, what multitudes there are who refuse to drink from and bathe in Christ, the Fountain of Life, because they imagine themselves too good to drink from and bathe in that Fountain that

common, dirty sinners use! None refuse to come to the Fountain because they are too foul. They only refuse to come who vainly imagine that they are too good, too good for the Fountain, too good for Christ to cleanse, too good to be saved by the merits of the crucified, sin-atonement Substitute for sinners! So they walk by the Fountain with their noses in the air, while poor, dirty sinners drink and bathe too! Christ is a Fountain opened, free to all who come. If you do not come, it is your own fault, and on your own head the blame lies. The fountain is opened, and opened on purpose, that the vilest of the vile may come, and wash, and be clean.

But you will never come and drink; you will never wash and be clean, until God the Holy Spirit opens the Fountain to you. That is what this passage of Holy Scripture reveals. Read the next line.

“To the House of David”

In the day of his grace the Lord God opens the Fountain to a very specific people, even *“to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”* The Fountain must be opened to you; and only God the Holy Spirit can open the Fountain to you. If you will look back to Zechariah 12:10 again, you will see that those to whom the Fountain is opened are the very same people upon whom God pours *“the Spirit of grace and of supplications.”* When we read that the Spirit of grace is poured upon and that the Fountain is opened *“to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,”* we must conclude one of two things: — Either those words tell us that every physical descendant of King David and every literal inhabitant of Jerusalem shall be saved, or those terms are allegorical, referring to God’s elect, all those for whom the Fountain was opened in eternity and at Calvary. Obviously, Zechariah is speaking about the salvation of God’s elect, *“the Israel of God,”* who must and shall be saved (Galatians 6:16; Romans 11:26). This rich Fountain is opened to sinners by the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit in effectual calling through the preaching of the gospel (Romans 10:17).

The Lord Jesus Christ took the sins of his people upon himself and suffered in their stead, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life; and if you believe in him, you are washed from your iniquity through the blood-shedding of the Son of God, you are one of his people. — Your believing is the evidence of that fact (Hebrews 11:1-2). If he paid your debts, they are paid. If he bore the penalty of your sin, it cannot be borne by you. Justice will not allow it. You are accepted in the Beloved, set free from guilt, and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

“This Fountain, though rich,
From charge is quite clear,
The poorer the wretch,
The welcomer here;
Come needy, and guilty,
Come loathsome and bare;
You can’t come too filthy,
Come just as you are.

This Fountain in vain

Has never been tried;
It takes out all stain
Whenever applied:
The water flows sweetly
With virtue Divine,
To cleanse souls completely,
Though leprous as mine.”

It is written, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,*” for there is “*a Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,*” — “*opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*” All who come and wash in this Fountain shall be cleansed from all sin and uncleanness. —

“Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom’d Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

Once opened, the Fountain is never shut and never runs dry! Christ Jesus is an inexhaustible Fountain, a fresh running Spring for our souls! Martin Luther once said, “Christ is still as fresh and sovereign to me as if this very hour he had shed his blood.” He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and shall be the Lamb slain forever. He is the “*Fountain opened,*” opened in eternity, opened at Calvary, opened in grace, and opened forever!

The Result

In verses 2-5 the prophet of God declares that when the Fountain is opened to a sinner, when God the Holy Spirit performs his mighty operations of grace in a sinner, granting him life and faith in Christ, something happens. This cleansing from guilt and sin is followed by a great change. The Fountain is opened for the putting away of sin and uncleanness; and the God of all grace who opens the Fountain to us takes away the idols out of the land, and even cuts off the very names and memory of them.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.”

Using the figurative language of Inspiration, in these verses Zechariah describes the blessed consequences of sinners being cleansed in the Fountain of Christ’s blood. — Idolatry, false religion, false prophets, unclean spirits and their influence are removed from us, and we are removed from them. Grace experienced in the soul creates such an attachment to and love for

Christ, his interest, his gospel, his glory, his Church, and his people, that the enemies of the gospel become our enemies and are disowned by us (Deuteronomy 13:6-10; Psalm 139:21-22).

Thank God, we are no longer under the law! We do not advocate the stoning of rebel sons, or the execution of false prophets. Yet, we must and do side with God against his enemies, even if his enemies are our nearest kinsmen. Those who oppose our God, oppose the gospel of his grace, and oppose his Son shall perish under the sword of his justice; and we acknowledge that they should.

When God saves a sinner, he takes the sinner out of Babylon and takes Babylon out of the sinner. The Savior's command to us throughout the Scriptures is, "*Come out of her, my people*" (Revelation 18:4). Throughout the Word of God Babylon represents false religion. It does not matter what name the religion wears. Every religion that declares salvation by the will, works, and worth of the sinner, in whole or in part, is the religion of Babylon. It is antichrist. It engulfs the whole world in darkness. God's command to his people concerning Babylon is not, "Reform her", "Rebuild her," or "Restore her." God's command is crystal clear and forcibly repeated throughout the Scriptures (Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4). No less than six times he says, "*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, (her religious doctrines, ceremonies, and blasphemies), and that ye receive not of her plagues.*" We are to totally abandon all false religion, touching not the unclean thing, and align ourselves with Christ, his gospel, and his people. Those who refuse to come out of Babylon shall receive the plagues of Babylon, because they are Babylon.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."(2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

Mercy for False Prophets

Does all this mean that there is no mercy for those poor, deluded souls engulfed in and deceived by the idolatry of Arminian, freewill, works religion? Of course not! Many who read these lines were converted out of idolatry. Most of our brothers and sisters in Africa, India, Mexico, and New Guinea were idol worshipping pagans when God called them by his grace. Read verses 4 and 5, and you will see that there is mercy even for false prophets. Zechariah here speaks of false prophets, who are among God's elect, who are of "*the house of David*" and among "*the inhabitants of Jerusalem,*" who must be saved. When the Fountain is opened to them, when they are called of God, when they experience the sweet, saving grace of God in Christ, they are ashamed and cease to be deceivers of men. — "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive*" (v.4).

"*The prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision.*" — That which they once told out as the gospel to others, they now know to be false. They are so clearly convinced that they blush and bleed to think how they have been deceived and how they have deceived others. They weep because of the souls they have murdered with a false gospel. Knowing, that though they have

straddled over hell's mouth, God preserved them, they blush with shame, and disgrace themselves in the presence of God and his people. They cry with Ezra, saying, "*O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens*" (Ezra 9:6). This was fulfilled in those scribes and Pharisees that afterwards became believers, and said, with Paul, "*Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*" (Philippians 3:2-3).

Not only do those converted deceivers blush with shame, they acknowledge that they have not been prophets, shepherds who feed the sheep with knowledge and understanding, but husbandmen who fleece the sheep and feed themselves upon the sheep they have slaughtered. — "*But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth*"(v. 5). The "*husbandman*" prophet is one who, like a farmer raising cattle, raises them for personal gain and feeds himself upon those he slaughters by deceit. They learn their trade from "*man*," not from God, and learn it well in Bible college and seminary. They served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies. Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ saves such Jerusalem sinners as these, too!

The Pierced One

"*And one shall say to him,*" not to the false prophet, but to the pierced one, upon whom we look, the Lord Jesus Christ. — "*One shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands?*" (v. 6). Looking on Christ, whom we have pierced, we might well ask, "*What are these wounds in thine hands?*" Let us hear his reply. — "*Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*" "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not,*" but nailed him to the cursed tree. Those of his own nation and people, people who pretended to be the servants of God, crucified him. — But the Savior's words come much closer home than that.

Looking on Christ by faith, by the Spirit of grace and supplication, I see something that is overwhelming. I am made to see that I pierced the Lamb of God. I am one of those sinners of whom the Lord Jesus spoke when he said, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (John 15:13). He is the Friend of my soul and chose me as his friend. Yet, I pierced him! Who sent my Savior to the tree? What held him there? It was not the nails, nor human weakness, nor the soldiers.

"Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear!"

He did no sin, had no sin, and knew no sin. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but he was altogether unacquainted with sin. Yet, he was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him. And when he was made sin for me, Divine Justice cried, "Nail him to the tree. Sin must be punished!" So when the question is asked, "Who crucified Christ?" I reply, "It was me! The holy Lord God pierced him for my sins" (Isaiah 53:4-10).

I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
I mark the angry men;
Their shouts of "Crucify!" appall,
With blasphemies between.

And of that shouting multitude
I feel that I am one;
And in that din of voices rude,
I recognize my own.

I see the scourges tear his back,
I see the piercing crown,
And of that crowd who smite and mock
I feel that I am one.

Around yon cross, the throng I see,
Mocking the Sufferer's groan,
Yet, my own voice, it seems to me,
There mocked my Lord alone.

'Twas I that shed the sacred blood,
I nailed him to the tree,
I crucified the Christ of God,
I joined the revelry!

Yet, not the less that blood avails
To cleanse away my sin,
And not the less that cross prevails
To give me peace within.

Hear the Savior's cry in Lamentations 1:12: — "*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*" All this he endured, not for any crime he had done, but according to the counsel and will, purpose and decree of God; whereby he was appointed the Shepherd of his flock; the Mediator between God and men; the Savior of his people. Yes, the Lord of Glory died the painful, shameful, ignominious death of the cross for me, to obtain salvation and eternal life for me! I know he did it all for me, because I look upon him whom I have pierced in faith. I bathe my soul in the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. I trust him; and he declares in his Word, "*He that believeth on me hath everlasting life*" (John 6:47).

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

A second look He gave, which said,
'I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live.'

Oh, can it be that on the tree
The Savior died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
To think He died for me!"