

Zech 12:1 God Is the Creator

We will be in cp. 12 this week and next. And though we will focus on one verse, I want to read the entire chapter and make some comments about prophesy. These words (also sps. 13-14) find their ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom of the Messiah. We have seen this truth throughout the Book of Zechariah. Right from the beginning with the first vision in cp. 1 we see a man “riding on a red horse!” And this is no ordinary man! He is the Lord of God’s armies. He sends them where he desires. He stands beside the “deep,” indicating he is the sovereign ruler of all things. In these visions God says, “***I will be the glory in your midst***” (2:5). As the Israel returns from Babylonian captivity, they find comfort in these words. But, over and over again in the NT, we see that Jesus is the “glory” of God. As John says, “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth**” (John 1:14). In cp. 3 as Zechariah speaks to Joshua the high priest, he says, “Remove your filthy garments . . . Put on pure clothing with pure turban on your head.” This was a picture! Joshua himself was a sinner and he needed to be cleansed. And then God says, “I will send my servant the branch.” We know this to be the seed, the Messiah from the royal line of David. In cp. 4, speaking of the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, he says “**Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit . . .**”

These words look forward to a time when God will send the Holy Spirit to build his kingdom, as Jesus says, “to build his church” (Matt. 16:18). In cp. 5 we saw a woman in basket as she is carried away to a foreign land, to a place of evil. This pictures the truth that God will take away the sins of his people. And this will not be through the priesthood of man, but through the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who is ALTOGETHER different, from the order of Melchizedek (See the Book of Hebrews). I could go on and on. But, look with me to Zech. 6:12 to sum up the ultimate fulfillment of this Book. “**Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne.**” Again, let me remind us of Heb. 1:1-3: “**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .**”

So, when we come to cps. 12-14, we should not expect anything different. Though difficult, these words find their fulfillment in the Messiah and his kingdom. So, when did his kingdom begin? Interesting question! The Lord Jesus has always been the sovereign ruler (as we just read, the “*heir*” and the “*creator*,” the “*exact imprint*” of God’s nature and the “*radiance of the glory of God*” etc.). But, in the NT, particularly with his ministry, he preached “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**” (Matt. 3:2). I believe OT kingdom prophecies find their fulfillment in the birth, the life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection, the ascension, Jesus’ ongoing rule and

building of his church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Today, we live in this time. And this time will continue until He comes back again, when He will raise the living and the dead and will render final judgment. Then, he will recreate a new heavens and a new earth. He will wipe away all tears and crush all his enemies including sin, and the devil. All of this (and more) describes the KINGDOM OF THE SON. And then, the Son will hand the kingdom over to the Father. And so shall it be forever! With this in mind, the words from cps. 12-14 find their ultimate fulfillment in different places of the Kingdom of the Son.

And, let me say, *“It is hard to see these words as fulfilled in a physical, future, national Israel with a temple and a city and a land when the NT writers continually say that prophecies like these are fulfilled in the kingdom of the Messiah,”* in the “days” of the Messiah, in the “times” of the Messiah. These prophecies of the kingdom (and others in the OT) were veiled until the appointed time with the coming of the Son and his kingdom and the time of his reign. This is why, I believe some of the prophecies we will see in these chapters are yet to be fulfilled. But, at the same time we can say that *“they are ALL fulfilled in the Son.”* We must remember that the OT prophets were using language of events and circumstances in their times that would have made sense to them. And, often, these prophecies found partial fulfillment in their days. But, they always look forward to ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom of the Son. And, these things are ongoing now, as Jesus is building his church. And who makes up the church? Both Jew and Gentile! People from ALL the nations of the world make up this kingdom (See Eph. 2:11-22).

With this in mind, I will surely miss some of the specifics of these prophecies. All these things will take place in God’s time with the kingdom of the Son. However, since we live in the times of the kingdom of the Son, we can apply these truths to us. Jesus is building his church! And the gates of hell will not prevail! For the rest of our time this morning, I have one truth from v. 1 with some applications.

1. God is our creator. Look at v. 1: **“The oracle of the word of the Lord concerning Israel: Thus declares the Lord, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him.”** Here, God is reminding those exiles and those coming back to Jerusalem that He is the One who created the world. He is the one who created them. So, no matter what comes in the future, God is still on his throne. He is still in control. Nothing catches him by surprise. Nothing! All of his decisions are right! There are no mistakes! There are no plan Bs! In this context, Zechariah speaks of great judgment upon Jerusalem. This is interesting because if we think of the context of Zechariah, what is happening? Exile from Babylon is over. They are going back to their land, to their city, to rebuild the temple and worship God through the priesthood again. And now, he speaks of another judgment! We will get to this. But, for now, God is saying to his people, *“I am the creator of all things.”* And, of all the things that will transpire in history moving forward, I AM the LORD GOD your CREATOR.

At the end of the day, this truth gives meaning to life. **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”** (Gen. 1:1). This truth gives order to what we see and what we don’t see.

God is working history to his end. This is perspective! This is the lens through which we must navigate life. This is the fundamental difference between Christians and non-Christians as to worldview. In Heb. 11:1-3 we read: **“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”** Do you remember the time the Apostle Paul entered Athens and began to preach? In Acts 17:23-26 He proclaims, **“For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place . . .”**

So, what can we learn from this truth? There are so many truths. I will mention 3 application as we finish our time this morning.

God is the creator. He is in a class all by himself. And you are not in this class. Neither am I. He is the Lord! He governs and orders all things. This means everything we have comes from Him. James 1:17 says, **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”** There is nothing that a good dose of God and this truth that will not give great strength and comfort and praise to your soul!

Since God is the creator, He has the power to work all things according to the counsel of his will, both good and bad, both judgment and salvation. I think of Job. Outside the Lord Jesus Christ, no one suffered more than Job. He lost his possessions, his children, and then his own health. And then, in their efforts help Job, his friends turn on him and tell him it is his own fault, his own sin, that is the cause of God’s “anger” upon him. Now, we know this isn’t true. For Job was a “righteous” man. God loved him. And, ultimately God protected him. And throughout the book of Job, it is this truth, the truth that God is creator and sustainer and the One who works all things according to the counsel of his will that gives strength to his faith.

Look with me to Job 26:2-14: **“How you have helped him who has no power! How you have saved the arm that has no strength! How you have counseled him who has no wisdom, and plentifully declared sound knowledge! With whose help have you uttered words, and whose breath has come out from you? The dead tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering. He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not split open under them. He covers the face of the full moon and spreads over it his cloud. He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light**

and darkness. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astounded at his rebuke. By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent. Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job 26:2-14) The power of God in creation and his ability to control and order all things sustained Job through his trials. Nothing has changed today as we live day by day, as we see the good and the bad, as we experience the effects of sin in this world! This means we can rest in his sovereign will. No matter what comes our way as God works things out in this world, we can find comfort, peace, and rest for our souls. (Rom. 8:28)

Mankind is special to God. In our verse, Zechariah says that God both created the world and God ***"formed the spirit of man within him."*** This means that in all of creation, mankind is the most precious part to God. Unlike what many of the world's religions teach, we are not like the rest of creation. Yes, we are creatures in that we have been given life. But, the Bible teaches that we were created in the image of God. Gen. 1:27 says: **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."** As God's special creation, our purpose is to display the greatness and the glory of God in this world. Our purpose, according to Gen. 1:28 is to **"be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."** God did not give this task to the animals! He gave this task to "mankind" whom He created as both male and female.

But, Adam failed in this task. He sinned, both He and his wife. And what happened? The Bible says that **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (Rom. 3:23). And since the fall, Adam and his kin (us) cannot carry out this task. But, God in his mercy, does not abandon his plan for a man to rule over creation. What does he do? Well, he gives Adam and Eve a promise that one day, he will send another man, One born from a woman, One who will do what Adam (and us) failed to do. This is the Lord Jesus Christ, born over two thousand years ago through the virgin Mary. In his mercy and grace, God did not abandon his plan for the pinnacle of his creation (man) to *"rule over"* and to have *"dominion."* You see, God's plan to both judge and to save the world must come through a man.

I must confess, I did not see the full purpose of 12:1. In cps. 12-14 we see great judgment coming upon Jerusalem and the nations of this world. But, we also see the salvation of the world. And right in the middle of these truths, Zechariah speaks about God's creation of man, through whom He will carry out his great plan of both judgment and salvation. Who is this man? Who have we been getting glimpses of throughout the entire book (as we saw in our introduction)? He is the Lord Jesus, the *"Son of man,"* the *"true man,"* the sinless man, the One who brings judgment and the One who brings salvation. And let me ask, *"Where do we see both judgment and salvation displayed?"* The Cross! God sent his Son. He lived a sinless life (unlike the first Adam his children). He died. He laid down his life as a sacrifice . . . Adam deserved to die. We deserve to die. Rom. 6:23 says, **"For the wages of sin is death."** This is judgment! But, what

does the rest of the verse say, **“But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

This is salvation! And if we think back to creation and what this means, Creation Means Life. So, let me ask, *“What did Jesus do after three days?”* He rose again. He conquered death! This is the Gospel! This is what the Book of Zechariah is all about! It is about the TRUE man, the God-man!

What a glorious plan! A plan to exalt the pinnacle of his creation: man. And IN HIM we (Christians) share in this great plan as his special creation. Let me finish by reading Phil. 2:8-11: **“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**