

The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

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. KJV

The Trinitarian Claim

Trinitarians claim Yahweh is here declaring that people will look upon "me" whom they have pierced. Since it was Jesus who suffered and Jesus who was pierced, they claim this verse proves Jesus is speaking here in this passage and since the passage indicates Yahweh is speaking it proves Jesus is Yahweh.

The Claim vs. The Facts

The facts show us that the passage is referring to people looking upon Yahweh concerning the piercing of His Messiah.

The Problems with the Claim

1. The Trinitarian Translation is Incoherent

We need to consider just what the Trinitarian translation actually says. It says "they shall look upon **ME** whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for **HIM**." It doesn't even make sense. The people are looking upon the pierced person, **ME**, but mourning for someone else altogether, **HIM**. It also seems incredulous to suppose Yahweh shifts

from referring to Himself in the first person, "me", to referring to Himself in the third person, "him", in the very same breath. It also says that they will mourn as one mourns for a "firstborn son." Does the Bible not say that Jesus is God's firstborn son?

2. Hebrews 1:1-2

Zechariah was a prophet of God. The Bible tells us that it was the Father who spoke through the prophets. The Scriptures not only tell us it was the Father who spoke through the prophets, it actually tells us it wasn't the son.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in a son.

If the Son had spoken to God's people, it would be senseless to make such a statement. No one would say such a thing if he thought the Son spoke to the Israelites of old.

3. The Understanding of the Early Christians

Then also does the prophet in vain declare, "They shall **look on Him whom they have pierced**, and mourn over themselves as over one beloved. (Ignatius, *Letter to the Trallians* (Long Recension), X).

The Long Recension is traditionally regarded as the corrupt version over and against the Short Recension. This statement is missing in the Short Recension. However, even if we suppose a corrupt hand added this text into the Long Recension, there would seem to be little or no motivation to cite this passage in a corrupted manner since the intent is to prove Christ indeed was a real and true human against Docetists who claim he was not. In other words, there seems to be absolutely no motivation for anyone to cite a corrupted version of Zechariah 12:10.

And what the people of the Jews shall say and do, when they see Him coming in glory, has been thus predicted by **Zechariah the prophet**: I will command the four winds to

gather the scattered children; I will command the north wind to bring them, and the south wind, that it keep not back. And then in Jerusalem there shall be great lamentation, not the lamentation of mouths or of lips, but the lamentation of the heart; and they shall rend not their garments, but their hearts. Tribe by tribe they shall mourn, and then **they shall look on Him whom they have pierced**; and they shall say, Why, O Lord, have You made us to err from Your way? The glory which our fathers blessed, has for us been turned into shame. (Justin Martyr, First Apology, 52).

Justin's words also suggest he knew of the "look upon him" version.

"For they shall look on Him whom they pierced." (Tertullian, Against Praxeas, 25).

4. Inconsistent Trinitarian Translations

Let us also review some major translations translated by Trinitarian Greek scholars:

they shall look on him whom they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him (NAB)

they will look at the one whom they stabbed to death (TEV: Today's English Version)

they will look at the one whom they have pierced (The Jerusalem Bible)

they shall look on him whom they stabbed (Moffatt)

they shall look at him whom they have stabbed (American Translation, Goodspeed)

when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him (RSV)

when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for

him (NRSV)

Notice how the above translations say something completely different than the version used in the Trinitarian claim. In order to make their claims, Trinitarian apologists must cherry-pick the translation suits their agenda. Now if Trinitarian Greek scholars themselves have seen fit to translate the passage in this manner, it is rather obvious there is a serious problem in using this passage as evidence in support of Trinitarian doctrine. Just as John understood the passage, neither of the above two Trinitarian translations indicate Yahweh is the one being pierced.

5. Jewish Translations

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and **they shall look unto Me because they have thrust him through; 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 first-born. Jewish Publication Society.

And I will pour out upon the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem with a spirit of grace and supplications. And **they shall look to me because of those who have been thrust through** [with swords], and they shall mourn over it as one mourns over an only son and shall be in bitterness, therefore, as one is embittered over a firstborn son. Judaica Press NACH Series; translation by R' A. J. Rosenberg.

But I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Yerushalayim the spirit of grace and of supplication: and **they shall look towards me, regarding those whom the nations have thrust through**. And they shall mourn for him (that is slain) as one mourns for an only son, and shall be in bitterness over him, as one that is in bitterness for a firstborn. The Jerusalem Bible, Koren Publishing.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and **they shall look unto Me, because they have thrust him through; 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 first-born. Soncino Books of the Bible; edited by R' Dr. A. Cohen.

I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplications. **They will look toward Me because of those whom they have stabbed, they will mourn over him** as one mourns over an only [child], and be embittered over him like the embitterment over a [deceased] firstborn. ArtScroll Stone Edition Tanach; ArtScroll/Mesorah.

These Jewish translations reflect a different understanding of the Hebrew words *et asher* than found in Trinitarian translations. Instead of translating the words as "look upon me whom" as Trinitarians do, they translate these Hebrew words as "because of those who(m)" or "regarding those whom" or "concerning whom" or something similar which conveys the same idea. Some also claim these words could simply mean "concerning which." The key difference here is that Yahweh is both (1) looked upon and (2) pierced in Trinitarian translations, "look upon me **whom** they have pierced." However, God is only "looked upon" in these Jewish translations and He is looked upon "concerning whom" they have pierced - someone else.

As well, there are Christians scholars who concur with this translation approach.

6. The Zechariah 12:10 Version which the Apostle John Knew

And again another Scripture says, "They shall look to **him** whom they pierced." (John 19:37).

The reading of Zechariah 12:10 which John knows is not "they shall look upon ME" but "they shall

look upon HIM." (or more literally, "to whom they pierced.").

Indeed, the reading "him" (or "whom") instead of "me" also appears in some Hebrew manuscripts (F.F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, pages 199, 200, Lutterworth Press, 1979, third edition). If one takes the position that the Holy Spirit inspired each and every word which John wrote, then one also must insist that the Holy Spirit is confirming to us which reading of Zechariah 12:10 is the correct reading. Otherwise, one must then conclude the Holy Spirit inspired John to quote a mistaken reading of Zechariah 12:10.

Analysis of the Facts

1. God's Christ & Christ's Church

If for the sake of argument, we suppose that the Trinitarian translation is correct (even though it doesn't make any sense), Trinitarians still have a problem on their hands. In the Gospel of John, Jesus explains that to see him, know him, and believe in him, is to see, know, and believe in the Father (Jn 12:44-45; 14:5-10). And he explains this is true because he speaks the words of the Father and does the works of the Father who is abiding in him. Because the Father sent him in His name, to honor Jesus was to honor the Father who sent him to act on His behalf. And to receive Jesus was to receive the Father who sent him on His behalf. Therefore, to reject him or persecute him or dishonor him was to dishonor the Father who sent him. In the same way, to conspire against Jesus was to conspire against God the Father who sent Jesus to act in His name. This is why Jesus said things like, "He who hates me hates my Father also" (Jn 15:23). This does not mean Jesus IS the Father but it does mean that whatever things they did to Jesus, they also did to the Father.

And again, when Jesus met Paul on the road to Damascus, he said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute ME?" Paul was persecuting Christians not Jesus. So how could Jesus say this to Paul? For the very same reason we just saw what Jesus said what he did about his Father in the Gospel of John. Christians are the body of Christ. To persecute the body of Christ is to persecute Jesus. Whatever things Paul did to the body of Christ, he also did to Jesus. "Truly I say to you, whatever

you did to one of these brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to **ME**." (Matthew 25:40).

2. The Context

Yahweh also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. In that day Yahweh will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of Yahweh before them. And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 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 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....*

In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity... And one will say to him, 'What are **these wounds** between your arms?' Then he will say, '**Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.**' Awake, O sword, against **MY Shepherd**, and against the man who stand next to me," declares **YHWH of Hosts**.

"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.... They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, '**YHWH is my God.**' "

I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, "***I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.*** (Matthew 26:31; see Matthew 2:6; 9:6; Hebrews 13:20).

Whose Shepherd? The speaker's Shepherd. The speaker is Yahweh. The Shepherd is God's Shepherd. Jesus is the Shepherd who was struck and his disciples scattered. Does it make any sense at all to claim that Jesus is referring to himself as "My Shepherd"? No, it is quite ridiculous. Therefore, it is absolutely conclusive that Jesus cannot be speaking here.

Yahweh's Shepherd necessarily means 'God the Father's Shepherd' since Jesus is the Father's Shepherd. And we further read that the stricken Shepherd is most certainly Jesus because Matthew tells us so. And furthermore, the people refer to the speaker as "Yahweh my God" in reference to God whose Shepherd is someone else: Jesus.

There were no chapter and verse divisions in the original Hebrew text written by Zechariah. The speaker in chapter 12 is still the speaker in chapter 13. And it is therefore impossible for the speaker to be Jesus referring to himself as "My Shepherd."

Our verse in question is referring to the House of David. God's Christ, the King of Israel, is God's **Shepherd**. David and Saul were God's Christ and the expected Christ in the first century was a son of David who would sit on David's throne. They were God's Shepherd over the sheep of Israel. See 2 Samuel 5:2; 7:7; 1 Chronicles 11:2; 17:6; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24; Micah 5:2,4; 7:14; . Also see Isaiah 44:28. The Shepherd in question is not God but God's Shepherd.

3. The Hebrew words *et asher*

If the Jewish translators are correct, the passage simply does not say YAHWEH was pierced. The meaning of the passage is that they will look to YAHWEH concerning that fact that they have pierced and will mourn for him, that is, YAHWEH's firstborn son: "they shall look upon Me, **concerning whom**, they have pierced and will mourn for him."

Jewish translators believe that Trinitarians have been mistranslating the Hebrew words *et asher*. These words are not often used together in the Hebrew Bible. Together they mean "concerning which" or "concerning whom" in Hebrew and Jewish translators insist these words do not mean simply "whom" in this verse as Trinitarians are claiming (compare Ezek 36:27). So the passage should read, "they shall look upon **Me concerning**

whom/which they have pierced and will mourn for him."

They shall look upon Me, concerning which/whom, they have pierced and will mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

4. Christian Scholars

"This has been done with Zech. 12:10, which foretells a day of great mourning in Jerusalem and the surrounding territory when, as the Masoretic Hebrew text puts it, "they shall look unto me whom they have pierced" (so R.V.). The passage is quoted once and echoed once in the New Testament, and in both places the pronoun is not "me" but "him". This is not so significant in the place where the passage is merely echoed (Rev. I : 7, " and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him"), for that is not an exact quotation. Here the predicted looking to the one who was pierced is interpreted of the Second Advent of Christ. But in John 19:37 the piercing is interpreted of the piercing of Christ's side with a soldier's lance after His death on the cross, and here Zech. 12:10 is expressly quoted: "And again another scripture says, 'They shall look **on him** whom they have pierced'." It is a reasonable inference that this is the form in which the Evangelist knew the passage, and indeed **the reading "him" instead of "me" appears in a few Hebrew manuscripts**. The R.S.V. thus has New Testament authority for its rendering of Zech.12:10 , "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall moun for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him,as one

weeps over a first-born" Why then is the R.S.V. criticized for conforming to the New Testament here? Because, if the reading "me" be retained, the reference would be to the speaker, who is God, and in view of the application of the passage in the New Testament, there are some who see here an anticipation of the Christian doctrine of our Lord's divine nature. The reading "me" is certainly quite early, for it appears in the Septuagint (which otherwise misses the point of the passage); but the New Testament seems to attach no significance to Zech. 12:10 as providing evidence for the deity of Christ,....And, whoever the pierced one is, the fact that he is referred to elsewhere in the verse in the third person ("they shall mourn for him....and weep bitterly over him") suggests that he is Yahweh's representative (probably the anointed king), in whose piercing Yahweh Himself is pierced."- History of the Bible in English, pp.199,200, Lutterworth Press, 1979 third edition.

5. The Testimony of Jesus Christ

Zechariah 12:10 refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

I will pour out on the house of David
and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
the Spirit of grace and of
supplication....

Jesus tells us plainly that the outpouring of the Spirit is the **promise of THE FATHER** (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5,8; see 2:33; Joel 2:27-29). Hence, it is **Yahweh the Father who is speaking** here. Jesus Christ himself informs us that it is the Father who is speaking at Zechariah 12:10, **not the Son**. Once this fact is fully realized, the Trinitarian interpretation/translation is quite impossible. The speaker at Zechariah 12:10 is Jesus of Nazareth's God: the Father.

Conclusion

There are not only manuscript issues here; there are also translation issues. The fact that there are so many possibilities for this verse renders the Trinitarian evidence null and void. Possibilities and personal desires are not established facts.

The translation which Trinitarians prefer for their apologetic routine is most certainly wrong. It results in an incoherent statement which does not even make sense. It makes no sense to look upon Yahweh whom they pierced and mourn for someone else. And when John quotes this verse he does not quote "me" but quotes "him" and we do have Hebrew manuscripts which read just this way as also early Christians quotations show. Furthermore, both Hebrew and Christians scholars observe that even the MT version of this verse is used (which reads "me"), it should actually say, "look upon me concerning whom they have pierced and will mourn for him," which is coherent and actually makes sense.

There is no reliable evidence here whatsoever to indicate Jesus is being identified as Yahweh. Indeed, the contextual facts demand otherwise. Jesus is not identified as Yahweh but as Yahweh's Shepherd, "MY Shepherd." Even further, Zechariah 12:10 concerns God's promise to pour out the Spirit and Jesus tells us plainly that this promise is the promise of the Father. This fact alone proves the Father is speaking at Zechariah 12:10 and the Trinitarian claim is false. Not only so, the Bible tells us it was the Father who spoke through the prophets and God did not speak to His people in a son until "these last days." The speaker in this verse is Jesus of Nazareth's God: the Father.

Notes:

Translations

"They will look at the one they stabbed to death."- The Bible in Living English, Byington

"They will look at him they have pierced."- Living Bible, Taylor

"They will look at the one whom they stabbed to death."- Today's English Version

"They will look at the one whom they have pierced".- The Jerusalem Bible

"They shall look on whom they have thrust through."- New American Bible.

"They shall look on him whom they stabbed."- Moffatt

"They shall look at him whom they have stabbed."- American Translation, Goodspeed

"They shall look upon Him who they have pierced."- Modern language Bible

"When they look on whom they have pierced."- Revised Standard/New Revised Standard Version

"Their eyes will be turned to the one who was wounded."- Bible in Basic English

"When they see the one they pierced with a spear."- Contemporary English Bible

"They shall look upon HIM¹ Whom they pierced."- The Complete Bible in Modern English, F. Fenton.

"Some manuscripts read "On me- Whom they have pierced." Both letters in the Hebrew alphabet are very much alike... So that it is difficult to decide which is absolutely the correct one, as the slightest stroke of a pen transforms one into the other. In a theological sense both might be right- Ferrar Fenton"

Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar:

"138. The relative Pronoun...(2) Not depending on a governing substantive, but itself expressing a substantival idea. Clauses introduced in this way may be called independent relative clauses. This use of ["asher"] is generally rendered in English by he who, he whom, &c... In Z[echariah]12:10 also, instead of the

unintelligible ["elai eth asher", "to me whom"], we should probably read ["el asher", "to him whom], and refer this passage to this class [of 'independent relative clauses']. pp. 444, 445, 446.

Paul K. Redditt believes that the translation "the one whom they have pierced" is most likely:

"....The NRSV reads: when they look upon the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him,... Where the NRSV translates "one", however, the MT points the preposition and pronominal suffix elai as a first person singular ["to me"]. While some scholars and both the NEB and NIV translate the suffix in the first person, BHS[Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, Elliger/Rudolph 1967/77] suggests either dropping the final vowel or repointing the word as the rarer form of the preposition ele. Adopting this suggestion would result in agreement with the NRSV." (The New Century Bible Commentary, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Errdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, pp.132, 133, brackets mine).

A. E. Kirkpatrick:

It is Jehovah who has been thrust through in the Person of His representative." -The Doctrine of the Prophets, p.472.

The Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, The Revelation of St. John the Divine by the Rev. William Henry Simcox correctly states: "[KAI OITINES AUTON EXEKNTHSAN]. Zech. xii. 10; in his Gospel, xix. 37, St John translates that passage correctly, and here refers to the same translation..."-Notes, p.45.

The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W.Robertson Nicoll:

"Another scripture also here found its fulfilment, Zech. xii. 10. The original is: "They shall look upon me whom they pierced." The Sept[uagint] renders: EPIBLEPSONTAI PROS ME hANQ WN KATWRXHSANTO:

"they shall look towards me because they insulted me." John gives a more accurate translation: OPONTAI EIS ON EZEKENTHSAN: "They shall look on Him whom...they pierced". The same rendering is adopted in the Greek versions of Aquila, Theodotian and Symmachus, and is also found in Ignatius, Ep.Trall., 10; Justin, I. Apol., i.77; and cf. Rev. i.7, and Barnabas, Ep., 7. In the lance thrust John sees a suggestive connection with the martyr-hero of Zechariah's prophecy."- Vol.1, p.860

Raymond Brown:

"John's citation of Zech xii 10 does not follow verbatim either the MT or the most common LXX reading. The MT is: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." In the context the "me" is Yahweh; the implication is strange and the text may well be corrupt, perhaps for accounting for early translator's attempts to improve. Since all the following sentences refer to "him," both scribes (forty-five of the Hebrew mss. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi) and commentators have read "him" for "me." Codex Vaticanus and most other LXX witnesses read: "They shall look upon me because they have danced insultingly [=mocked]," reflecting a verbal form from the Hebrew root dqr, "to pierce," misread as a form from rqd, "to skip about." Yet there is a Greek reading in the 5th- or 6th-century Vienna Codex(L) that is much closer to a literal rendering of the MT. Almost certainly the Vienna reading stems from an early (proto-Theodotianic) recension, conforming the LXX to what was then (1st century A.D.) becoming the standard Hebrew text. We can be reasonably certain that John's citation stems from such an early Greek recension, perhaps in the short form, "They shall look upon whom they have pierced." (Actually there is no "him" in John's text, but it is required by sense: compare the

citation of Zechariah in Rev 1 7:
 "Every eye will see him, everyone
 who pierced him." See S. Jellicoe,
 The Septuagint and Modern
 Study(Oxford, 1968),p. 87."- The
 Gospel According to John(xiii-xxi),
 Introduction, Translation and Notes,
 The Anchor Bible Vol 29A, Geoffrey
 Chapman, London 1971.

F.F.Bruce:

"This has been done with Zech.
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The New Interpreter's Bible:

"Both translation and interpretation of these verses are difficult. It is possible to read, "they will look to me whom they have pierced," meaning that David's house and Jerusalem had pierced Yahweh. But piercing[Heb.daqar]elsewhere in the O.T. always means physical violence and usually death (e.g., Num. 25:8; 1 Sam 31:4); it does so expressly in 13:3. The mourning described in vv. 10b-12 is mourning "for him," the one pierced or stabbed. It seems preferable to take the MT's object marker before the relative pronoun as indicating an accusative of respect, allowing one to translate "concerning the one whom they pierced" (cf. LXX.)."-Volume 7, p.828.

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