

7-1-1948

## Brief Studies in the Prophets

L. Fuerbringer

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Fuerbringer, L. (1948) "Brief Studies in the Prophets," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 19, Article 45.  
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol19/iss1/45>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

## Brief Studies in the Prophets

By L. FUERBRINGER (†), Translated by G. V. SCHICK

### III

#### HOLY WEEK

Zech. 9:9; 11:12-13; 13:7; 12:10

In our first article on the Prophet Zechariah we spoke in general of his person and his book. We dwelt, furthermore, on a particularly beautiful and significant symbolical action, the crowning of the Priest-King, a clear prophecy of the Messiah. In the present article we shall briefly consider four other Messianic prophecies found in the third section of the book. These prophecies lend to the entire work a special character.

#### Zech. 9:9

In the Book of Zechariah we find prophecies dealing with the events of Palm Sunday, of Maundy Thursday, and of Good Friday. The first passage to which we shall direct our attention, 9:9, was fulfilled at the beginning of Holy Week, that is, on Palm Sunday. Literally translated, it reads: "Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion; exult, daughter Jerusalem; behold, thy King will come to thee; righteous and full of salvation is He, lowly and riding upon an ass, indeed, upon a colt, a young of a she-ass." This prophecy appears in the midst of promises dealing with contemporary history, as is frequently the case in the Prophets. In the section immediately preceding it, God promises His people aid, and this aid now comes to the people through the arrival of its King. Since this is such a great and wonderful act of salvation, Jehovah calls upon Zion and Jerusalem to rejoice: "Rejoice, and that greatly." The Hebrew term for "rejoice" literally means "to be noisy," as a result of joy. "Daughter of Zion" are the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the immediately following sentence states: "exult, daughter Jerusalem." And Jerusalem's inhabitants represent the entire people Israel. Strictly speaking, however, the Prophet has in mind the believing members of the people of the covenant, the "remnant," the true Israel, which yearns for the Messiah. The reason for the exultation is that He who has been longed for so long is now coming.

[499]



He is already before the gate. The expression "behold" seeks especially to rouse the attention. "Your" King comes, says the Prophet. Not a foreign ruler is He, but He who is destined for His Church and promised to the people of the covenant. And this King comes *for you*, that is, not only to you, but at the same time also for your benefit. That David's son, the Messiah, is meant by this King, cannot be doubtful in the light of the previous prophecies, and is rather generally admitted. And then this King is further portrayed and His coming described. The first two expressions refer to His relation to Jehovah. He is just, in the fullest sense of the word, holy, without sin, without fault and blemish. He further has salvation. The Vulgate renders the words of the original Hebrew by "*Salvator*," Luther by "*Helfer*," but linguistically neither can be defended. The exact meaning is: endowed and vested by God "with salvation," or "help," as the English Bible renders it: "having salvation." And since He is thus equipped, He brings salvation and help with Him, and thus Luther's translation in the end hits the correct sense. The two following expressions then describe the character of this King's rule: He is poor and lowly. His objective is not a rule characterized by power, but His poverty and lowliness guarantee that He will condescend to the lowly and wretched. For this reason He rides upon an ass, more specifically, a colt of an ass, i. e., a young animal not previously used for riding. And then, to emphasize this fact still more, the text adds, "a foal of an ass." This method of expression is very picturesque and lays emphasis on the fact that it is an ass upon which He rides, and not a horse. The horse is generally the animal on which kings ride, especially in war; the ass, on the other hand, is the animal used for peaceful purposes. As the Prince of Peace, who brings the peace of God, as v. 10 immediately proceeds to emphasize, this King rides upon the animal typical of peace and thereby shows His peaceful intent, His condescension, and His lowliness. He does not intend to establish an earthly, glorious empire of the Messiah, for the ass is at the same time a more lowly animal than the horse, neither as strong nor as swift as the latter.

Every Bible reader is familiar with the fact that the New Testament quotes this passage as literally fulfilled at the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. All four Evangelists note



this fact. Especially important is Matthew 21. There not only the colt of an ass is mentioned, but also the she-ass herself, although Jesus, of course, rode on only one of the two, namely, on the foal. However, the she-ass is to follow along in order to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy to the letter. Literally translated, the Matthew passage reads as Moffatt has translated it: "Mounted on an ass and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden." Thus our passage in Zechariah is important particularly for Messianic prophecy in general. A very special item is announced in advance, one which at the first glance does not appear so very important, but which nevertheless was fulfilled most accurately.

It is true that according to the entire context also the beautiful and rich verses 10 and 11 belong to this Messianic passage. However, we can not enter upon a discussion of these at the present time. Besides, they are not explicitly quoted in the New Testament.

#### Zech. 11:12-13

We pass on to Thursday of Holy Week. Of this day Zechariah prophesies in 11:12-13: "And I said unto them, If it seems good to you, give My price; and if not, forbear! So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them in the house of the Lord unto the potter." Though the Prophet is speaking, he throughout these verses represents Jehovah. It is true that this passage offers greater difficulties than the preceding. Though we cannot discuss them here in detail, the main facts nevertheless are clear and plain. The theme of the entire section is: "The Good Shepherd of Israel over against the evil, wicked shepherds," and the verses which we are now considering show how disgracefully His own people treats the Good Shepherd. He here asks for His reward from them, and this request ought to move His flock to make a declaration whether they recognize and appreciate the care of their Good Shepherd. That lies in the words, "If it seems good to you," or literally, "If it is good in your eyes." He is not concerned with the reward itself. To that He attaches no importance, but He is concerned about a declaration whether His sheep prize His service and de-



sire its continuation. Up to the present time the flock has failed to give this reward. According to the context, it had become surfeited with its Shepherd. What reward the flock owed its Shepherd for His work is indicated by the nature of the case. It was humble obedience, heartfelt and grateful love, or, as one may also express it, repentance and faith, true piety of heart. That is the only return that man can give to God. The flock, indeed, makes a return to the Shepherd, but what sort of one! They weighed out thirty pieces of silver, that is, thirty shekels of silver. The noted exegete Hengstenberg makes this striking comment: "*Statt Lohn, bieten sie ihm Hohn.*" "Instead of reward they offer Him scorn." Thirty pieces of silver are such a paltry sum that offering them is more insulting than utter refusal if one considers who it was that served them and what sort of service He rendered the flock. They show thereby that they hold the services of the Shepherd in low esteem, for, according to Ex. 21:32, thirty pieces of silver were the compensation for a slain slave. They were, accordingly, the price for which one could purchase a slave. The flock indicates thereby that they do not value the service of the Good Shepherd higher than the labor of any purchased slave. It was not only an inappropriate reward and a disproportionately low one, but it was a contemptuous reward. And for this reason Jehovah tells the Prophet, who represents Him: "Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized by them." By offering this reward the flock indicated its estimate of the service which Jehovah had rendered it, in fact, its estimate of Jehovah Himself, whose representative the Prophet is. And for this reason Jehovah designates this price of thirty pieces of silver as a "goodly price" in holy irony. He commands the Prophet not to retain this ridiculous sum, but to cast it unto the potter. The expression "cast" is used contemptuously, since the reward is such an outrageous one that they have not offered it to anyone else except to their God. The term denotes as much as "throw down at one," or "to throw away at one." But what is the meaning of "unto the potter"? This is a much-discussed, difficult statement. In his *Kurzgefasster Handkommentar zum A. T.*, Nowack remarks: "What is to be understood by the potter is entirely unclear." This, however, is an overstatement. The context makes it clear that the phrase has refer-



ence to a contemptuous treatment of the money involved. For that reason the meaning of the statement is not, as some would have it, "Throw it to the treasurer of the Temple," or "Place it in the treasury of the Temple." Neither does it mean, as others understand it, "Throw it into the furnace, to the goldsmith." Nor does it mean, "Throw it on the dump" or "into the dirt." Nor is the meaning, "Throw it towards the potter," as though this were a proverbial statement to designate bad treatment. All these various assumptions do not satisfy. We can only say that the prophecy itself for the time being does not give any explanation for the words, "unto the potter." It is left to the fulfillment to throw the proper light upon the proceedings. Only the fulfillment has removed the veil from these words. As so often, we must here also recognize and wonder at the miraculous dispensations of God.

The Prophet carried out God's command. He cast the price to the potter in the house of the Lord. These simple clear words can mean only that the potter, when the money was thrown to him, was in the house of Jehovah or that the price was brought from there to the potter. This circumstance was significant. It shows that the Prophet does everything in the name of Jehovah, and according to Jehovah's command he does not retain the money. The Temple comes into consideration as the place where the people appear before their God. What is done there is done before the face of God. It is there that the ridiculous price is cast to the potter, the great ingratitude of the people is thereby brought before the face of God, and God is, as it were, challenged to demand an accounting from this people. And from the Temple then the money came to the potter.

But now comes the miraculous fulfillment. In Matt. 27: 9-10 the passage is applied to the betrayal of Christ by Judas Iscariot. It is there stated that the repentant Judas brought the thirty pieces of silver into the Temple, but that the high priests refused to place this blood money into the Temple treasury. Instead they purchased with it the potter's field, which thenceforth was called "the Field of Blood." And it is expressly stated: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the



children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." However, one must not overlook the fact that, as so often in the prophecies, the time interval is disregarded; that the Prophet starts out from the present and prophesies something that lies in the future; that the Prophet speaks of himself in the first person, when actually Jehovah, or still more accurately Christ, is the speaker; and that the symbolical action which the Prophet here performs denotes a fact of the New Testament. Let us keep firmly in mind that in the verses of Zechariah which we are considering the Prophet's speech directly passes over into the words of the Messiah. The Messiah appears here, as is repeatedly the case in the prophecies, as the Shepherd of the people. He has faithfully tended His flock; He has rescued it from the wicked shepherds, even before His appearance in the flesh, as the Angel of the Lord, in whom Jehovah reveals Himself and through whom He acts who Himself is Jehovah. But the people had become weary of His functioning as their Shepherd, they paid Him off with thirty pieces of silver and thereby despised and rejected their God and their Lord. From the New Testament we now know how this was fulfilled in a most noteworthy and miraculous manner. It is true that the quotation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew is a so-called free quotation, with some differences and difficulties, which, however, can be solved in an entirely satisfactory manner. Especially our passage in Zechariah is very instructive for the proper understanding of prophecy and fulfillment. "*Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet.*" "The New Testament is concealed in the Old, the Old Testament is revealed in the New." We can see here how an obscure statement in the Old Testament, namely, the expression "potter," receives light from the New Testament and how an event which was in itself unimportant represented the fulfillment of God's counsel and foreknowledge. We realize from Matthew's report that the high priests in their entire procedure acted in this instance in the name of the people. Just as the payment of the price to the Shepherd in the Book of Zechariah was an evidence of the blackest ingratitude for His faithful service and a proof of their hardening themselves against His acts of love, so also the same horrible ingratitude reveals itself in the decision of the Sanhedrin to put Jesus,



their Messiah and Savior, to death and to bring Him into their power by means of thirty paltry pieces of silver. This money was actually the price which the Jewish people paid Jesus for His works of salvation. The small, wretched sum which they gave was a proof of their contempt for Jesus. Everyone who compares this prophecy and its fulfillment must acknowledge that the same God who spoke through the Prophets guided the events in such a manner that His prophecy had to be fulfilled, that Judas had to cast the blood money into the Temple before the face of God in order to call down God's vengeance upon the people, and that the high priests through the purchase of the potter's field, the Field of Blood, had to commemorate forever their sacrilege against their Messiah and Savior.

But what is the situation with respect to the quotation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew? So far we have referred only to Zechariah and have pointed out the fulfillment of the words in the history of Jesus' Passion. St. Matthew, however, does not trace the quotation back to Zechariah, but to Jeremiah. As a result, sundry charges have been raised against the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. Particularly the more modern interpreters without further ado here assume an error. They simply regard the name "Jeremiah" as erroneous and make hardly any effort to solve the difficulty. Even the otherwise excellent Keil in his commentary uses the term "lapse of memory." Also in the Lutheran Church in America, in connection with discussions regarding the inerrancy of Scripture, this passage has been adduced as a proof that the Scriptures are not inerrant in nonessentials. It is our conviction, even though we cannot solve the difficulty, that Calov, the best Lutheran exegete of the seventeenth century, made a correct statement when he said in regard to this matter: "*Nullus error vel in leviculis, nullus memoriae lapsus, nedum mendacium, ullum locum habere potest in universa Scriptura sacra.*" "No error, even in trivial matters; no lapse of memory, not to speak of an untruth, can have any place in the entire Scriptures." The capable dogmatician and exegete of the nineteenth century F. A. Philippi, in spite of the fact that he first stated that he would not like to make such a declaration *a priori*, nevertheless later on admitted that this statement by Calov was correct and had to be maintained.



I have reasons to assume that it was especially the witness of Dr. Walther and of the Missouri Synod which moved him to take this stand. Scripture makes the claim, "Thy Word is true from the beginning," Ps. 119:160, or, more accurately according to the original Hebrew, "The sum of Thy Word is truth" (*American Revised Version*). Literally, the original has, "The head of Thy Word is truth." To understand the expression, we must keep in mind that the Hebrews, in carrying out an addition, placed the sum not at the foot of the column, as we do, but above it, at its head. Even when there is a difficulty in the Scriptures which we cannot solve, we hold *a priori* that no error is possible in them, not even in so-called nonessentials and insignificant matters.

However, our modern exegetes should have studied the passage in Matthew more accurately before they raised their charge against the Scriptures. Every reader of the Bible, and everyone who up to this point has followed our brief presentation, recognizes that one important item in the account of the fulfillment of the prophecy is not at all mentioned in the Book of Zechariah. Zechariah mentions only two items, the sale for thirty pieces of silver and the expression "to the potter in the Temple." The extremely important third idea of the "field" is entirely lacking. Yet in the narrative of the fulfillment according to the Gospel of St. Matthew this very term occupies the chief position, since we read that with the thirty pieces of silver a potter's field was purchased and that this potter's field was still in use as a burial ground for pilgrims at the time when the Gospel according to St. Matthew was written, i.e., thirty or forty years after the event. This cannot and dare not be simply ignored. Even correcting Jeremiah in the Gospel according to St. Matthew and replacing the name by Zechariah does not remove the difficulty. Nor is it solved by the argument that the abbreviations Ζου (Ζου) and Ιου (Ιου) were confused. Where is the mention of the field? Sober-minded interpreters of the Scriptures, and in particular Dr. Stoeckhardt, have called attention to the fact that we are here evidently dealing with the combination of two passages from the Old Testament and that this composite prophecy is then assigned to one single writer, namely, to Jeremiah. If we now turn to the Prophet Jeremiah, we find that Jeremiah as a sign of the return of the Jewish people from Babylon



had to perform a symbolical action, namely, the purchase of a field, chapter 32. In this symbolical action the Holy Spirit, who in the Old Testament has in mind also the New Testament era, referred to the fact that in the remote future there would also be purchased a special field which would have significance for the history of Christ. Accordingly, Matthew ought really to have mentioned two Prophets, Zechariah and Jeremiah. Only then do we get a complete and clear picture of the Old Testament prophecy. It is not the case, however, that both Prophets are mentioned; nor do we find, as on other occasions, the plural: there was fulfilled what is said by "the Prophets," but the two passages are assigned to only one writer.

However, one may say, "How is this possible?" If we had only this one single example, we would have to be satisfied to say that the Holy Spirit proceeds with His Word as He pleases, and He inspires the holy writers according to His wisdom and His pleasure. He is not bound by the laws of our human manner of quoting. However, this is not the only instance. We cannot now go into the matter in great detail, but we refer merely to one very clear example, namely, Mark 1:2-3. There a quotation is introduced by the words, "As it is written in the Prophets" (plural), just as we read in Matt. 2:23 about Jesus' dwelling in the city of Nazareth: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets (plural): He shall be called a Nazarene." However, in the Gospel according to St. Mark, "in the Prophets" is, as a glance into a good modern edition of the Greek New Testament shows, not the correct reading, but a correction introduced by a later copyist in the interest of harmonizing the text. The correct reading is, "As is written in the Prophet Isaiah." And then there does not immediately follow the utterance of Isaiah which we find in v. 3, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight," but there first comes a quotation from the Prophet Malachi: "Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face which shall prepare Thy way before Thee." Although there are two prophetic utterances involved, and although the utterance of Malachi stands first, we nevertheless read, "As it is written in the Prophet Isaiah." We have here, as has been correctly stated, a combined prophecy which is assigned to



one single writer, and Dr. Stoeckhardt, so far as I know, was the first to coin the correct expression for the phenomenon: the complex character of the prophecies. It is true that one difficulty remains with this explanation. The Jewish Christian reader, whom Matthew keeps in mind in his Gospel, certainly knew that Jeremiah says nothing about the thirty pieces of silver and yet the Evangelist mentions this Prophet. However, in such situations there remain also elsewhere difficulties in the Scriptures which we cannot explain or solve. Naturally, this entire difficulty was noticed not only in modern times, but has been taken note of by Christian interpreters of old. Luther in his characteristic manner declares: "Here the holy writers bother themselves, and Jerome raises the question why the evangelist Matthew had introduced this testimony as though it were from Jeremiah, although it is nowhere found in Jeremiah, but in this prophet Zechariah. I have this to answer in brief: The evangelists are in the habit of quoting the testimonies of the prophets not word for word, but only to reproduce their sense, something which also Matthew does in the instance of the passage which is found above in the ninth chapter, v. 9, where the prophet spoke thus: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, etc.' Matthew quotes this in the following manner: 'Tell ye the daughter Sion: Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, etc.,' Matt. 21: 5, which words are entirely different, yet there is no alteration of the meaning. Furthermore, Matthew (27: 9) also added the words, 'of the children of Israel' (something which is not found in the prophet) for the purpose of explaining the selling and buying, and of recalling that it was done by the children of Israel. Furthermore, in regard to his quotation as though it were from Jeremiah, I have nothing else that I can answer than the well-known statement, that the prophet perhaps had two names, or that he quoted in a very general way, irrespective of the name of the prophet, after the manner which is also found in the other evangelists. Augustine deals with this matter in detail, to whom you may refer. I should not readily believe that the books of the prophets were confused by a change of the titles. Furthermore, there were with Matthew, without a doubt, holy and learned men, full of the Holy Spirit, who reminded him that this Scripture passage which he had quoted was found in



Zechariah and not in Jeremiah. In response to their reminder he could have readily improved this slight error if he had so desired, or if he had been of the opinion that it was a matter of great importance. However, there is no reason why we should fearsomely trouble ourselves with these and similar concerns, since in these matters does not lie the chief part and substance of our faith. Those men are extremely foolish who trouble themselves with such unnecessary matters, something upon which the prophets of our time are intent, and solely at that, when they read the Scriptures for the purpose of discovering passages which may furnish cause and material for controversies and wrangling. Meanwhile, they disregard the chief parts of religion, although above all other things they ought to do this one thing, teach Christ, who rules. This all the apostles do of one accord, who everywhere teach the mystery of the suffering and resurrection of Christ, as though they had forgotten all the other miracles and deeds of Christ," etc. (Walch, Vol. XIV:2123—2125.)

#### Zech. 13:7

Another of Zechariah's prophecies which was fulfilled during Holy Week we find in 13:7: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man who is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones." In these words there is likewise prophesied an occurrence on Thursday of Holy Week, whose final fulfillment did not take place till after the resurrection of the Lord. Jehovah of Hosts is speaking, the mighty, majestic God, and, to begin with, He summons the sword as a living, personal power. It should rise from the rest which it has maintained hitherto and prove itself a sword, i. e., strike. This command to the sword is a poetic expression intended to express the thought that the striking takes place according to God's will. The sword is to start out against My Shepherd. Since Jehovah is the speaker, it is the Shepherd of Jehovah who is meant, the Shepherd who belongs to Jehovah. Yet it is improper to conclude from this summons that He is sinful and displeasing to Jehovah and that Jehovah is angry at Him. There may be other reasons which may have induced Jehovah to strike, as in the case of His Servant, Is. 53:10: "Yet it pleased the



Lord to bruise Him." In what respect the Shepherd is here called Jehovah's Shepherd is indicated by the parallel addition: "against the Man that is My Fellow." The term "man," *geber* in Hebrew, does not, as elsewhere, refer to the special position of the *man* particularly, but conveys the idea of human being. And besides, there is the addition, "man of My association." This expression, which occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament, is equivalent to "fellow," as we have it in the compound "fellow servant," or to "neighbor," synonymous with "brother." This Shepherd, therefore, cannot be a wicked shepherd who is displeasing to God and destroys the herd, perhaps the foolish shepherd mentioned 11:15-17. Neither can it be a merely human shepherd, as though the expression referred only to the calling and position common to both: a shepherd of the people; a hired or purchased servant no one would call his fellow. The Hebrew word *amithi* designates such as are united by a common physical or spiritual descent; it designates a union which is not established at will, but into which one is born. And when this term is applied to God, it designates One who is joined with God by unity of essence, who therefore is not merely a human being, but partakes of the divine nature. The Shepherd, the Fellow of Jehovah, is therefore no one else than the Messiah, who is further identified with Jehovah in the parallel passage 12:10, to which we shall immediately direct our attention. He is the Good Shepherd of Ezekiel and of the Gospel according to St. John, who is one with the Father, Ezek. 34:11-16:23; John 10: 12-16, 27-30. This interpretation receives a mighty support in the New Testament, for Matthew and Mark in their account of the passage apply this statement to Jesus of Nazareth. The sword is now ordered to strike this Shepherd. It comes into consideration only as an instrument of slaying without indicating with more detail the manner of the death. It is the usual instrument in the hand of the judge and of the warrior and repeatedly stands for any destroying or killing weapon. The smiting of the Shepherd is mentioned here merely to portray the consequence which results therefrom for the herd, namely, that the sheep will scatter. They are exposed to the misery and destruction to which a herd deprived of its shepherd is subject. The many passages of Scripture in which a human being's deed, even though it is wrong



and even wicked in itself, results in good, serve to clear up the meaning of the entire statement. Such a deed is therefore not only permitted by God, but is taken into His counsel and His foreknowledge. Jehovah Himself brings about the slaying of the Messiah. "Smite" represents the execution of a divine command in order that God through the death of the Shepherd might bring about the salvation of Israel and the salvation of the entire world. It is true that here the slaying of the Shepherd first appears as a misfortune, a misfortune indeed for the herd which it caused for itself: it scatters. But Jehovah does not intend to withdraw His hand entirely from the herd which is scattering, but will turn His hand upon the little ones. Literally, the expression is: to bring back upon one the hand which one had taken away from someone, i. e., to again make someone the object of one's activity. This may have a double meaning. Either it has reference to an act of punishment or to an act of salvation. According to the entire context, the expression is here to be understood not of inflicting punishment, but of an act of grace, of salvation. The "little ones" signifies small people in a figurative sense of the word: the wretched. They are therefore not identical with the entire herd, but form merely a part of it. God will prepare a different destiny for them than for the scattered whole.

The fulfilment of this word is clearly shown in the New Testament, Matt. 26: 31-32; Mark 14: 27-28, with the introductory words "For it is written." The quotation, however, is a free one. The imperative "smite" is changed into the future, "I will smite," and it refers to the fact that the disciples were offended when Jesus was taken captive, the time when all fled. That was the beginning of the scattering of the flock at the death of Christ and continued even later on in the case of Thomas and of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. However, also the second part of the prophecy was fulfilled. "The Lord turned His hand back over the little ones," He helpfully took care of the fearful and scattered, assembled them again, and resumed His office of Shepherd. He did not remain in death, but He rose again, repeatedly appeared to them, and went before them into Galilee, as Matthew and Mark expressly state: "But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee," and so gathered them and made them recipients of His grace.



## Zech. 12:10

Finally, one more event of Holy Week, in particular of Good Friday, is prophesied by 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 first-born." These words state that Jehovah will do yet more for His people than has been stated so far, for this passage follows Zechariah's prophecy about the betrayal and the sale for thirty pieces of silver, but precedes the passage which was last discussed and which deals with the smiting of the Shepherd and the scattering of the herd. By pouring out the Spirit of His grace upon His people the Lord will bring it to a knowledge of its guilt which it has brought upon itself by casting aside the Messiah, so that it will sincerely repent of this sin and come to a point where it will look in faith upon its Savior. In the same manner as God, according to the entire context, will deliver His people from its physical oppression, so He will also deliver it from its inner distress, from the trouble of sin and its guilt. To this end two things are necessary. Man must first recognize the guilt of his sin and repent, and then it must be forgiven. Neither of these can he bring about by his own strength. God must do both, and He will. For that reason Jehovah here promises that He will pour out His Spirit over the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, i. e., the members of the people of the Old Covenant. This prophecy particularly points back to such ancient prophetic passages as Joel 3:1 (2:28 in the King James Version): "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh," and Is. 44:3: "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thine offspring." Thereby Zechariah already directs our attention to the fact that we are here dealing with a prophecy concerning the Messianic era. We shall see later on that the fulfillment of our passage also in another respect coincides with the fulfillment of the passage in Joel. To explain the communication of the Spirit, the Prophet employs the verb "pour out," because the communication takes place from the outside, and that which is communicated is, as it were, a fluid which is intended to spread out over him to whom it is



given in rich measure, to penetrate into him, and permeate him completely. Joel and Isaiah speak of the Spirit of Jehovah, the Spirit of Christ in general: "I will pour out My Spirit." In Zechariah we have: "The Spirit of grace and of supplications." The Spirit of grace is the Spirit who brings with Him the divine grace which human beings need for the forgiveness of their great guilt. Ultimately the Spirit of grace is the grace of God itself. And this experience of divine grace brings about a seeking for grace on the part of the human being: recognition of his great sin and the request for forgiveness. A further effect of this new Spirit which has been poured out is this, that they, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of David, conscience-stricken, will "look upon Me." This verb is used both of physical and spiritual looking that centers with confidence upon the object viewed; compare, for instance, what is said Num. 21:8-9 in connection with the brazen serpent. It includes a humble, repentant looking, a petition for mercy on account of the wicked deed which is at once named. But it is very striking that the Prophet says: "They will look upon Me, whom they have pierced." The speaker is Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, and of Him it is said that the Jews have pierced Him. How can a piercing of Jehovah be predicated, since God is invisible and a spirit and therefore cannot be pierced? Without entering upon the various interpretations, we shall at once give the correct solution of the difficulty. What is here said is said of the slaying of the Angel and the Revealer of the Lord, who is identical in essence with Jehovah, who bears the lofty name of God and in Christ Jesus became man. The Prophet Zechariah, in his nocturnal visions, chapters 1-6, repeatedly prophesied of the coming of the Messiah as a coming of Jehovah to His people through His Angel. Thus He could designate the slaying of the Angel as the slaying of Jehovah. They have killed the Lord Himself in the person of His Representative, who intended to show them the greatest love, and actually showed it to them. They crucified the Lord of Glory. This fact they themselves will someday realize. And, therefore, after they have recognized their blindness and have come to a knowledge of their sin, they break out in a bitter lament over Him whom they have pierced. We note that there is a change of persons. "They will look upon Me" is in the first person,



and "they will mourn for Him" is in the third person. But such a transition is very common especially among the Prophets, and here this transition is very significant. It points to the fact that the same One whom the highest God, in view of the unity of essence, has identified with Himself, nevertheless in person is different from Him, as we found in the former passage, 13:7: "The Man who is My Fellow." They lament over Him as over an only son, or over the first-born. This indicates the extent of their grief. They lament over him as over one most dear, for the lament over the only and first son is the profoundest and bitterest dirge. Compare the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, Ex. 12:12, 29-30.

This prophecy in its various parts was fulfilled in a wonderful manner. The piercing of the Messiah was fulfilled in the account of the piercing with the spear, as John 19:33-47 expressly emphasizes. It is true that with the piercing by the spear not the entire prophecy was fulfilled. The piercing took place throughout the entire pangs of our Lord's death, of which the piercing with the spear was the climax. The minds behind this action were the Jews themselves. Pilate and his soldiers were only the instruments of the Jews. The looking and lamenting was fulfilled even earlier, immediately at the beginning of the crucifixion, Luke 23:37-41, and especially after the death of Jesus, Luke 23:48, when the people, after they had heard the last words of Jesus and had seen His death, smote their breasts and returned, repenting of their actions. The masses, which only a short time before had shouted, "Crucify Him," are now struck by the proof of the superhuman majesty of Jesus and reconsider their action and lament the departed and their own wickedness. And especially was this prophecy fulfilled after the Pentecost sermon of St. Peter, Acts 2:36-41, which so affected the heart of 3,000 Jews that they repented, had themselves baptized, and received the Holy Spirit. Compare also the other sermons of the Apostles recorded in Acts 3:15; 4:4; 5:15, and especially 21:20, where St. Paul expressly states that many thousands of Jews, myriads, that is, ten thousands, had come to faith. That the house of David, too, was represented is indicated in Acts 1:14, where Jesus' mother Mary and His brothers are mentioned. And the fulfillment continues in the history of the Church, in the conversion of Jews and of heathen. How-



ever, there is not to be expected a conversion of entire Israel as a nation, as the Chiliasts conclude from this passage. In Rom. 11:26: "All Israel shall be saved," the Apostle means: *totus coetus electorum ex Israele* (the whole company of the elect of Israel). Whoever persists in his unbelief will have to look upon the Pierced One on the occasion of His return and will then wail, Rev. 1:7: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." Matt. 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." In these last two passages Holy Writ sheds light on Zechariah. Besides saving repentance and divine sorrow there is also a Judas repentance, or despair; besides a willing and believing looking at the Pierced One there is also an involuntary looking which even unbelief cannot escape. The extent of the sorrow and its universality is then further described in vv. 11-14, so far as both the profoundness and bitterness of the sorrow, v. 11, and its extent over the entire land, vv. 12-14, are concerned. However, we can not discuss this at the present time.

So much for Zechariah, the Prophet of Holy Week. Together with Micah, the "little Isaiah," Zechariah is king among the minor prophets, the "Prophet of hope," one of the "most comforting Prophets," and well worth detailed study.

