

REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2013 MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 118:1, 3

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 84:2, 5

Confession of faith: Nicene

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 99:4, 5

Law

Psalm: 99:4, 5

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 118:10

Scripture reading: Zechariah 6 and Revelation 6**Scripture text:** Zechariah 6: 8, 12

**And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."
(Zechariah 6:8)**

**Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord;
(Zechariah 6:12)**

Let us review the night visions to find the line of God's revelation therein. We shall then see how they relate to each other.

- The first night vision: The church is dead. All is at rest and in peace.
- The second night vision: The Lord guarantees the safety of the church.
- The third night vision: People in their weakness are unable to fence in the church.
- The fourth night vision: God forgives the church her sins.
- The fifth night vision: God does not build His church with violence, but through the responsibility of its members.
- The sixth night vision: God judges and purifies the church.
- The seventh night vision: God imprisons sin at a place outside His church.
- The eighth night vision: The Lord sanctifies His church and makes it perfect.

We examine the following:

1. **Where is this night vision situated and what is present there?**
 2. **The comfort and mercy of this night vision.**
 3. **The Lord Jesus Christ is predicted.**
1. **Where is this night vision situated and what is present there?**

This night vision preaches of the perfecting of the church. This happens through the ministry of all three Persons of the Triune God.

- In this night vision the Father reveals His plan to Zechariah.
- The Holy Spirit shall execute God's judgment and show his grace.
- And the Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ) will be the Priest-King who shall build the temple of God.

The first night vision took us to the entry to heaven whereas the last night vision takes us to the exit from heaven.

It is written in verse 5 that these horses and battle-chariots just came from the Lord where they presented themselves to Him.

- The horses are eager – verse 7:
Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth.
- They want to start their long journey.
- They are powerful – fully empowered to do God's work.

It is striking how the night visions show that nature also co-operates to execute God's counsel.

- The women carrying away the woman in the basket had the wind in their wings.
- Likewise these horses are powerful and straining to start their work.

In this night vision there are also horses of different colors involved in the task of each group of horses.

- Firstly, red horses, then black, white and dappled.
 - The red horses speak of war and the spilling of blood.
 - When they go out terrible grief will strike the earth where they go.
- The black horses symbolize death.
 - They also symbolize all the grief caused by war.
 - And also the death resultant from the wrath of God
- The white horses speak of victory and peace.
 - The chariot they pull is the Lord's chariot of victory!
- The dappled horses speak of disease and pests that will strike the earth in the last days. Epidemics and terminal illnesses.

These are all the instruments the Spirit of the Lord will employ in purifying and perfecting the church and cleaning the world.

These horses show a remarkable resemblance to the horses in Revelation 6.

- There the Apostle John sees a white horse.
 - The One riding it is Conqueror.
- He then sees a red horse that takes away the peace from the earth.
 - Its rider creates war and bloodletting.
- Then he sees a black horse.
 - Its rider measures out poor wages for the people.
- Lastly the pale horse.

- Its rider was named Death.

The horses are the same as in Zechariah's night vision. In both cases the horses run out over the earth together:

- The occurrences they represent do not occur singly. They occur simultaneously.
- They tell of the judgment that the Spirit of the Lord is to execute on earth.
- We must know that the Holy Spirit will purify the church with much grief.

Without all this grief the church of the Lord will not be purified and sanctified.

- We must prepare ourselves because we may experience these griefs.
- We must then see the Lord's grace in it too because that is the process with which God will remove all impurity from His church and we be sanctified.

Zechariah 6:6 says that the black horses went to the North Country.

- That is the place whereto the woman in the basket was taken in the previous night vision.
- It is Babylon, the land where Satan caused a large part of God's people to become part of the heathen people.

The previous night vision tells that sin found a house in Babylonia (Shinar) – the North Country.

- Can the Lord tolerate such a place?
- No! That is why the Spirit of the Lord goes there.
- The black horses take Him there – to execute judgment.
- The Holy Spirit persecutes sin – even into its temple.

2. The comfort and grace of this night vision

The mountains of bronze tell of the curse that will strike the impure people when the Holy Spirit reaches them.

- We are reminded of the bronze snake in the desert, which had to bear the curse when an Israelite was bitten by a snake so that he could live.
- That was a prediction of the curse that Christ would bear one day.

The comfort to be taken from the aforesaid is that the church may know that all the threats to her will be taken away.

The judgment is – where do we stand? Are we not perhaps part of the threat against the church?

- If so, we must know that we shall be found by the Lord and destroyed.
- Because God is going to sanctify His church.

The four chariots that are going out to the four corners of the earth to sow death and destruction are under God's command.

- No place and no person can escape Him.
- The Lord shall purify the whole earth.

- Nothing and nobody can withstand Him.
- No wickedness will escape.

It is terrible to hear this. But if we listen properly we shall hear the mercy.

- The Spirit will cause pain and hunger and disease when cleansing the church.
- It will frighten anyone that all this will occur not only in the world but also in the church. Among us.

But, the Lord directs this grief at the ungodly, the unbelievers, not at the true believers.

The faithful who might be in Babylonia will be put together with the church by the Spirit in the same process with which the Holy Spirit will eliminate the unbelievers.

- That is how the unbelievers will be taken out from among us.
- The only way to enter perfection is to be part of this purifying process.
- The comfort is this – the end result will be perfect glory and you and I will share in it.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ is predicted

There is more comfort to be found in this matter than what has been revealed so far because it is not only the Holy Spirit who will be ministering.

- It is predicted that God will also work through His Son.
 - A man will come whose name will be the "Branch"
 - He will simultaneously be King and Priest.

The person spoken of here is not Zerubbabel. At best he could only be king.

- The reference is to someone much greater than Zerubbabel.
- It deals also with much more than the temple of stone being rebuilt in Jerusalem. It deals with the Temple of God.

It is not the aim of this night vision to say that Zerubbabel should cease rebuilding the temple and that only the temple of God in the hereafter is meant.

- In his rebuilding of the temple Zerubbabel foreshadowed Christ.
- Hence the restoration of the people in this passage is a foreshadowing of the restoration in the last days.
- We read of the Saviour in Zechariah 3:8:
'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.
 (Zechariah 3:8)

Jeremiah preached the same prophecy:

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
 (Jeremiah 23:5)

The true Builder of the temple will be a Priest-King.

- That is why Joshua the high priest is crowned – so that he can be a king while being a priest.
- The Branch will be a Priest who can offer a perfect sacrifice, but he will also have power over heaven and hell.
- Hence the crown must testify to this extraordinary kingship.

We read in verse 13:

"It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne and there will be harmony between the two."

"The two" clearly refers to the king and the priest.

It is self-evident that there will be peace because the Person referred to is simultaneously Priest and King. In this single Being the two offices are united.

- The first temple is being built in the days of Joshua. It is the temple as rebuilt after the exile.
- The second temple is the one in which we share. It is a spiritual temple. As Peter writes: **"You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."**
(1 Peter 2:5)

And Hebrews 3:6:

"But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold onto our courage and the hope of which we boast."

The same is written of the church in Ephesus. Listen how the Holy Spirit puts it:

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

(Ephesians 2:13-22)

Note particularly the last words:

"... with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you

too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."

(Ephesians 2:20b-22)

In this passage something more is expressed than in Zechariah's night vision, namely our responsibility in this matter.

- In Zechariah's night vision we read that the Spirit of God searches out the people who sin against God.
- The Lord does not act unreasonably and cruelly. The Holy Spirit strikes only those who purposely persist in their irresponsibility.
- Hence Peter writes: **let yourself be built!**
- And in the Epistle to the Hebrews: hold on!
- The result is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians: In the Lord Jesus we are built to become a holy temple in the Lord. We are built together to become a dwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 6 is a sermon preaching a wealth of grace. By His Spirit the Lord will purify His church to become His sanctuary. The Book of Revelation describes the sanctuary as follows:

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

(Revelation 21:2-4)

It is written that all was made new. There will be no sign of wear on mankind or on creation. That is what the eventual temple of which is written here will look like.

We recently celebrated Holy Communion.

- In a sense Holy Communion is also a remembrance of the prophecy that this Priest-King was born.
- He lived and died. His blood flowed for the forgiveness of all our sins.
- We all sat at the table because we were driven by God the Holy Spirit to celebrate the salvation that the Lord Jesus obtained for us.
- But the Holy Spirit also sifts us.
 - He also rebukes us.
 - He also punishes us when we persist in sinning. All so that we may repent.

This is the heart of the matter.

- A true believer is chastised so that he may repent.
 - He accepts the pains of his struggle in life.

- Through the power of Jesus Christ he is able to rise above his condition. He repents and perseveres in the good.
- But the false believer is different.
 - He rebels against the Lord and lags behind.
 - It is of them that we read in our text that they eventually are crushed as being damned.

The people who refuse to agree with God will eventually be put away by Him in a place where they can have no influence on the holiness of the true believers.

The Priest-King of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ.

- He is our King too!
- We must worship Him from the depth of our heart!

This knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God and King and with it our confession that the Lord Jesus Christ is our God and Saviour, determines where we shall be when God purifies his church with his judgment.

Therefore the Lord assured us last week at His table once again of our place in His mercy!

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 138:1

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

Amen

Dr MJ Du Plessis
 Helping Reverend
 10 February 2013
 Scripture: Modern King James Version