

Zechariah

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Zechariah, chapter 9, and the 12th verse.

Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. Even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee.

Chapter 9, the book of Zechariah, and the 12th verse. This word was penned by Zechariah many, many years ago, inspired of God to do so.

But, down through the ages of time, this word is applicable to all poor sinners who have the mercy to be born again, wherever they are.

And if you should be such a character, many of you are, by the grace of God, made to be such characters.

[1 : 34] How often do you say thank you to God for it? When you look round the world as it is, the mighty mass of mankind, at war with its maker, and then you think that God in his infinite mercy has looked down on you, where you are, singled you out, made you to differ from the mighty mass of mankind, created in your breast a new heart, a new nature, so that you desire to live your life unto God and for God.

Oh, if you and I really understood the magnitude of that mercy, the greatness of it, what would be the outcome?

Our lives would be a living doxology, but they are not, alas, very often, a living doxology.

Sometimes, we are more like what one hymn writer says, Dear Lord, and shall we ever live at this poor dying rate?

Thy love to us, Oh, how great it is, beyond words, to describe so great, and yet how little are our hearts responsive to it.

[3 : 20] And now, in looking at this subject, it tells us of a stronghold. And that is a matter for which you should give thanks every day you live.

A refuge for sinners, the gospel makes known. It is found in the merits of Jesus alone. The weary, the tempted, the burdened by sin, were never exempted from entering therein.

You will find, if you care to look it up, it will do you good to look it up, if you are concerned about an interest in eternal realities.

The Holy Spirit uses the illustration of a refuge, a covert, a hiding place, a stronghold, most of all, throughout the sacred pages.

sometimes you find, sometimes you find, four or five of them, even in one scripture, all denoting, that he is, a refuge, for sinners.

[4 : 31] And poor sinners, have the privilege, to flee unto him, like the psalmist, when he said, I flee unto thee, to hide, me.

You remember, one hymn writer? And he gives you another, illustration. Amid the sorrows of the way, Lord Jesus, teach my soul to pray, and let me taste thy special grace, and run to Christ, my hiding place.

Oh, how that hymn was so helpful to me, when I was first, made, to begin to follow on, to know the Lord.

It was indeed, an oft-repeated prayer, with me, and it was not vain, repetition. And it still is a hymn, that I am glad to sing, and hope, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.

There is then, a refuge. God, in his great mercy, has provided it. And, he provided it, as the outcome, of his amazing love.

[5 : 50] And remember this, he was under no obligation, to do it. No necessity, was laid upon God, to provide a refuge, for sinners.

But he placed himself, under an obligation, when, before the world was built, a time was born, he purposed, to save a number, which no man can number, with an everlasting salvation, and devise the means, how it should be brought to pass.

And in devising those means, he provided, a stronghold, a refuge. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And, I turn aside a moment, I had no thought of bringing it, into the sermon, but it comes to my mind. Do remember this, this refuge, this stronghold, this hiding place, is provided, for poor sinners, to flee into.

And, what saith the scriptures, him that cometh, unto me, I will in no wise, cast out. There is a door open, to this refuge, it is open, all day, to the poor, and the needy, who not, by the way.

[7 : 30] And now, if you should live your life, as you were born, and live, in the vicinity, of this refuge, sing about it, hear sermons preached, about it, hear it read, about, in the word of God, in the public reading, and yet, you never feel, any concern, whatever, to enter therein, and enjoy, the everlasting benefits, afforded, to those, who do so, if you live, and die like that, you will be lost, and the onus of it, will be upon your own head.

Do think on these things, dear friends, they're very, very important, for I can tell you, that time is short, and eternity, is long.

You can get illustrations, to illustrate, time, time is but a bubble, floating, on eternity, is, that sea, but there is, no illustration, that will ever, give you any, real understanding, of what eternity is, forever, and ever, we do sometimes, give hints about it, but it is impossible, to illustrate it, but time, as far as you, and I are concerned, is the next moment, only this frail, in fleeting breath, preserves me, from the jaws, of death, soon as it fails, at once, I'm gone, and plunged, into a world, unknown, and that moment, can come to you, and the preacher too, at any time, anywhere, so teach us, to number our days, that we may apply, our hearts, unto wisdom, and now,

God in his great love, his great wisdom, has provided, this stronghold, and, there is no preacher, ordained of God, to preach, or all such preachers, put together, that can tell you, at what a cost, this stronghold, and this refuge, for sinners, was provided, I've already quoted, God so loved, the world, that he gave his, only begotten son, think of it, that whosoever, believeth in him, should not perish, but have, everlasting, life, and now, I want to look, at the subject, from, three or four, viewpoints, of it, and, in the context, there is, that which is, very striking, to, contemplate, for the spirit of God, by Zechariah, declares, as for thee, also, by the blood, of thy covenant,

I have sent forth, thy prisoners, out of the pit, wherein is no water, here, you were taken, as it were, God help you, to be taken, to, the eternal, councils, before time, was born, as I hinted, the blood, of thy covenant, this, reminds us, of the covenant, of grace, you remember, the dear, psalmist, rejoiced, in being, shut up, therein, he hath made, with me, an everlasting, covenant, ordered, in all things, and sure, and this is, all my, salvation, and all my, desire, although we make it not, to grow, there is this, covenant of grace, which is a guarantee, that all sinners, born again, of all ages, and throughout, all ages, will indeed, reach heaven, the covenant, was ordained, and,

[12:16] Jesus Christ, guaranteed, in that covenant, in the fullness, of time, he would be seen, among men, as verily man, verily God, and that, he would ratify, the covenant, of grace, and sign it, as it were, with his own, with his own, heart's blood, and guarantee, the fulfilling, of it, to all that, vast host, who were locked up, in it, the blood, of thy covenant, you get, hints of this, in reading, the word of God, helpful, illustrations, when you think, of, the children, of Israel, as they were, shut up, so long, in Egyptian, bondage, and then, the time came, when God, in his mercy, wrought on their, behalf, and, they came, forth, out of Egyptian, bondage, but, in coming, forth, there was, that which they, had to attend to, at God's, command, there was, the lamb, to be slain, and, the blood, to be sprinkled, on the doorposts, and lintels, of the doors, so, that when, the destroying angel, went over, to deal destruction, to Egyptian households, the Israelites, dwelling, in the shelter, the blood afforded them, the destroying angel, passed over, when I see the blood,

I will pass, over you, and that is just, a faint illustration, of this declaration, the blood, of, thy, covenant, and then, in the context, it tells of a pit, as for thee also, by the blood, of thy covenant, I have sent forth, thy prisoners, out of the pit, wherein is no water, what is this pit, there is only one, deeper pit, than this pit, in the context, here, the pit in the context, is the Adam fall, the pit that is deeper, is hell itself, how deep, is the Adam fall, no tongue, can really tell, nor mind, conceive, but, as regards, the blood of the covenant, it helps you, to be able, to sing, one hymn, he saw me ruined, in the fall, and loved me, notwithstanding, all, he saved me, from my lost estate, thy loving kindness, oh, how great, by the blood, of thy covenant,

I have sent forth, thy prisoners, prisoners, and that is, all who were given, to Jesus Christ, in the covenant, of grace, and of whom, you will remember, he says, as thou, hast given him, all power, to give eternal life, to as many, as thou hast given him, as many, as thou hast given him, thy prisoners, and Jesus Christ, when he came down, into the world, to do love's redeeming work, he redeemed, all these prisoners, that were, born, in the Adam fall, and were by nature, the children of wrath, even as others, so that, when a sinner, is born again, he begins, to learn then, that he is, a prisoner, in the Adam fall, he feels, that he is in a pit, and he knows, no help of man, can be of any aid, to get out, it must be, a divine hand, to grant, deliverance, and, in this pit, the word of God says, wherein is, no water, all that is in it, is what,

David found in it, ere he was delivered, out of it, and, you are familiar, with one scripture, this will tell you, what it means, and how prisoners, of hope feel, I waited patiently, for the Lord, and he inclined, unto me, and heard my cry, he brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet, upon a rock, and established, my goings, and he hath put, a new song, in my mouth, even praise, unto, our God, many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust, in, the Lord, but I must, go on, to open up, what the text, brings before us, as for thee, also, by the blood, of thy covenant,

I have sent, forth thy prisoners, here is the father, addressing, his dear son, I have sent, forth, thy prisoners, out of the pit, wherein, is no, water, and now, that is what, you will find, when you are, a sinner, born again, the Adam fall, is indeed a pit, and you can find, nothing whatever, from any earthly source, that will satisfy, your soul's, desires, there is a river, the streams, whereof, make glad, the city of God, but, it is not found, flowing from any, earthly source, whatever, that, living water, which satisfies, poor sinners, souls, is that, which a man, cannot receive, except it, be given him, from heaven, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, the illustration, is, beautiful, and I was going, to say, it is simple, but it is not, so simple, as it reads, if you are helped, to turn, to this stronghold, and enter in,

[20 : 18] I will tell you, one scripture, parallel to it, you will learn, turn thou me, and I shall be turned, because you will not, be able to turn, on your own initiative, and in your own strength, turn us, O Lord, God of hosts, cause thy face, to shine, and we, shall be saved, yet it is, beautifully simple, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, and now, maybe, it will be well, to look at the character, prisoners, of hope, and now, what is a prisoner, first of all, a prisoner, is a living man, the dead, know not anything, about being the character, a prisoner of hope, the thing is impossible, it is the living, that will lay these things, to heart, but the all important thing, is a prisoner, is an arrested man, he is known, to be guilty, of some crime, it may be, and the officer, of the law, searches him out, and when he finds out, where he is, he says,

I arrest you, in the name of the law, and, in the name of the law, there is a majesty, and you have to heed it, and when a sinner, is born again, he is arrested, by the law, in the name of the law, and he realizes, he is a sinner, undone, undone, in the Adam fall, lost, and, he is answerable, to the law, which, declares, pay me that, which thou owest, righteousness, to full perfection, must be brought, lacking no, fearless, of rejection, or what he cannot produce, a stitch of that righteousness, one good thought, one good word, one good deed, he cannot produce it, he is undone, in the Adam fall, and as he is born, there is no will, to good whatever, but now,

God is dealing, with this man, in arresting him, he is a sinner, born again, but he does not, know much, about being born again, as yet, what he does, realize, is that he is a prisoner, and even yet, he is not a prisoner, of hope, for he hears the laws, loud thunders, do this, do that, do not do this, do not do that, and, he is in earnest, he is urgent, in his soul's desires, to have matters, made right, between his soul, and God, but he finds, with all his attempts, to be better, and do better, he can do nothing, as the Lord, demands it, to be done, and therefore, he is very conscious, that he is a prisoner, and, he feels like a man, in the, condemned, cell, and he has to, put his mouth, in the dust, and humble himself, before God, and confess, if my soul, is sent to hell, thy righteous law, approves it, well, oh, he does, realize, he is a prisoner, he is fast, tied, and bound, in the chain, of his sins, sins, and, the more, in heaven's own light, he looks back, over his life, he sees, more and more, deeper down, what a sinner, he really is, and, he begins, to feel at length, no sinner, needed mercy, more than, ever sought thy face, but,

God has got, mercy in store, for this character, he is, going to be made, ere long, a prisoner, of hope, and so, the earliest, evidence, of being a prisoner, is when, a poor sinner, is born again, and brought in, guilty, before God, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he shall convince, the world, of sin, but then, you are made, a prisoner, often, in your soul's, experience, by other things, that encroach, upon your life, and, react upon you, in your soul's, experience, indwelling, sin, as it rages, which shall know, every man, the plague, of his own heart, when you have to say,

I would do good, but evil is present, with me, you feel, at the end of a day, when you are desired, to do right, and be right, and live unto God, and yet, looking back, over the day, you see, wherein you were failed, in this, and that, in all that you would be, and do, you realize, that you are, a prisoner, you are held, past, by what you are, by nature, and you cannot, break those bonds, it needs, a divine aid, to do that, for you, but, there is, helping God, hope in God, if we confess, our sins, he is faithful, and just, to forgive us, our sins, and to cleanse us, from all, unrighteousness, and then, you may, be a prisoner, some of you, even, under Union Chapel roof, this Sabbath afternoon, because you are, in heaviness, through, manifold, temptations, thus, you become, a prisoner, but as yet, you do not, feel to be, a prisoner, of hope, because, there is, so much, in you, that, is in league, with those, temptations, that,

[27 : 44] Satan, thrusts, at you, you do, desire, that grace, shall, super abound, over, the sins, that do, so much, more abound, in you, but as yet, you have not, got, that favor, bestowed, and you remain, a prisoner, you are shut up, and you cannot, come forth, and then, I am sure, that the world, as regards, the spirit, spirit of it, I am not, fitting any, caps on, but as you, go about, in it, laboring, to earn, the bread, which perisheth, perisheth, it may be, you, you find, at the end, of the day, you are brought, very low, and you are, imprisoned, by a worldly, spirit, which is, taking possession, of you, and yet, in your right mind, you would, have a spiritual mind, and live unto God, and live, for God, but, the spirit, of the world, encroaches upon you, and what you are, by nature, is in league, with the world, and thus, you prove, how often, you have proved it, and so have I, to be carnally minded, is death, you are a prisoner, not only so,

God may lay, affliction upon you, you may have had, good health, for quite a while, and, you are following on, to know the Lord, and then, God lays, affliction upon you, like Job puts it, holden, in the cords, of affliction, and you, realize, you are a prisoner, you can no longer, do what you have done, and the flesh dislikes it, you do like to do, what you have, in your heart, to do, but when God, brings you to, a pause in life's journey, lays affliction, upon you, then you, find, you are indeed, a prisoner, and you have to, weigh matters up, between your soul, and God, and it is good, when you help, to do that, and, how good it is, when, you can appeal, to God, with whom you have to do, that, what he has permitted, to come upon you, whatever the nature, of the affliction, may be, if it shall be, for your soul's good, you can welcome it, let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and let thy judgments, help me, there is just another thought, our circumstances, can imprison us, life, as you live it nowadays, especially to some of us, is very complicated, and we live to prove, every day, new straits attend, and you find, that, your circumstances, in their varied complications, they imprison you, and you are shut in, and you cannot get out, on your own initiative, or by, what human wisdom, may suggest, you are brought, to your wit's end, all your wisdom, is swallowed up, all these, varied, characteristics, of being a prisoner, are known and felt, by people, taught, of God, but, there is just one other thought,

Bunyan speaks, in the pilgrim's progress, of being in Doubting Castle, and now there is that, viewpoint of being a prisoner, when ifs and buts, and hows, are hurled, to sink us in the gloom, of all that's dismal, in this world, or in the world to come, imprisoned, with fears, abounding, fightings without, fears, within, fears then, as to whether, you have got any religion, that would do, either to live by, or at the last, to die by, fears, as to whether, after all, that you have hoped, in God, you are growing up, amongst the wheat, and will prove, at last, to be a tear, earth, oh, these are very, searching things, and they are known, and felt, by people, taught, of God, and Satan, is ever, at hand, to help, on all matters, to discourage, poor sinners, who want, to have matters, right, between their souls, and God, he tells us, we are weak, our hope, is in vain, the good, that we seek, we ne'er, shall obtain, and you do not feel, you have got, strength enough, or hope, in God enough, to tell him, he is a liar, and get the advantage, of doing so, and, to walk out, that scripture, neither give place, to the devil, but alas, you credit, his lies, sometimes, and then, you are more, shut up, in prison, than, before, and now, let us look, at another viewpoint, of this subject, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, whatever it is, makes you, to be a prisoner, remember, one thing,

I said, at the outset, a prisoner, is a living man, and, he is, an arrested man, but, he is brought, from being, under the law, sooner, or later, and, he becomes, a prisoner, of hope, as, he is brought, before, Calvary's cross, and, realizes, there is, the stronghold, that God, has, provided, for, it is, the Savior, in his, infinite merits, and, as you read, of this, stronghold, in Isaiah, and, a man, shall be, as an, hiding place, from the wind, and, a covert, from the tempest, as rivers, of water, in a dry place, as the shadow, of a great rock, in a, weary, land, when, at length, the poor prisoner, is brought, from being, before,

Sinai's mount, and, under the law, condemned, brought, at length, to Calvary's cross, and there, with living faith, can see, Jesus, as he died, in the stead, of such, poor sinners, as he feels, to be, hope, springs up, it may be, only, a faint hope, at first, but it is real, it is, from the son, of righteousness, which gives, which gives, a little light, yes, who can tell, but what God, will be, gracious, unto, me, you see, this set forth, beautifully, in, in one of the Psalms, which, I will, just, read to you, a little, here is, godly David, out of the depths, have I cried, unto thee,

[36 : 20] O Lord, the depths, of the Adam, fall, Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears, be attentive, to the voice, of my supplications, if thou, Lord, shouldest mark, iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand, but there is forgiveness, with thee, that thou mayest, be, feared, here you see, he is turning, to the stronghold, and in doing so, I wait, for the Lord, my soul, doth wait, and in his word, do I hope, my soul, waiteth, for the Lord, more than they, that watch, for the morning, I say, more than they, that watch, for, the morning, he has become, a prisoner, of hope, and he goes on, to encourage, other poor prisoners, let Israel, hope in the Lord, for with the Lord, there is mercy, and with him, is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem,

Israel, from all, his, iniquities, there is every, encouragement, for you, poor sinner, to turn, as grace is given, to this blessed, stronghold, in our text, Jesus Christ, as he died, on Calvary's cross, behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away, the sin, of the world, and remember, whatever, godless preachers, may have to say, and godless critics, who would, cut the word of God, to pieces, all together, as to its divine, authority, Calvary's cross, is a blessed, reality, and it is, a stronghold, and it stands, like a beacon, in the world's, dark night, and, that word is still, being, fulfilled,

I, if I be lifted up, will draw, all men, unto me, in what was done, on Calvary's cross, the stronghold, was provided, guaranteed, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, and, this stronghold, is not only, Jesus Christ, as the incarnate word, in all that he is, as the sinner's friend, but, this stronghold, also, is, the written word, and, Jesus Christ, declared, in the volume, of the book, it is written, of, me, what do you sing, sometimes, I wish you would, lay to heart, more, what you do sing, and reduce it, to practice, and you would, get more joy, in the things of God, than you were often, the subject of, alas, and you do sing this, how firm a foundation, ye saints, of the Lord, is laid for your faith, in his excellent word, what more can he say, than to you he hath said, you, who unto Jesus, for, refuge, have, fled,

God, yes, the word of God, is indeed, a blessed stronghold, and, in these days, when the world, is in such chaos, and confusion, and you wonder, what the future, holds in store, you have only, to open the holy Bible, and it will tell you, what saith the scriptures, and it will make plain, they that in the Lord, confide, and shelter, in his wounded side, shall see all dangers, overpassed, stand every storm, and live at last, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, you see, in the word of God, there are precious promises, there are blessed invitations, and there are, God glorifying, God glorifying, precepts, and what you need, divine aid to do, is, to plead these things, promises, precepts, invitations, turn them into supplications, before God, remember the word, unto thy servant, upon which, thou hast caused me, to hope, to hope, oh, that is how you turn, to the stronghold, when you turn, aright, you turn, with, the word of God, as your authority, to turn, and you can, remind the Lord, as it were, of what saith the scriptures, and how it is suitable, to you, as a prisoner, in whatever way, you are, made a prisoner, you are welcome, to tell him, all the truth about it, and he will make you, to be, a prisoner of hope, and you will find, a welcome, awaiting you, in the stronghold, that he has, provided, then you will say,

God, is our refuge, and strength, a very present help, in trouble, therefore, will not, we, fear, and then, when you think of, the name of the Lord, as Jehovah Jireh, the Lord, will provide, all what a blessed stronghold, is Jehovah Jireh, and, the providence of God, arises, from it, and what saith the scriptures, they that wait, upon the Lord, shall not, want, any good thing, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may, boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear, what can man, do unto me, in this blessed stronghold, you are safe, from all the assaults, of hell itself, and whatever, the world at large, may purpose, to do, turn, you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, and when you turn, you will know, what you are turning for, there will be, many matters, affecting you, along life's way, and you are welcome, at any time, wherever you may be, in everything, by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests, be made known, unto God, you turn, to the stronghold, for shelter, and blessed shelter, it is, and, you will feel, like, the man in Solomon's song, when he said, as the apple tree, among the trees, of the wood, so is my beloved, among the sons,

[44 : 21] I sat down, under his shadow, with great delight, and his fruit, was sweet, to my taste, you turn, and you are welcome, to turn, for the shelter, this stronghold, affords, and for the supplies, laid up therein, according to this word, and do think on, that word, according to, what it declares, my God, shall supply, all your needs, out of his riches, in glory, by Christ Jesus, what a great word, that is, to encourage, poor sinners, to trust, in the Lord, and do good, so shalt thou, dwell in the land, and verily, thou shalt, be fed, and then, you will turn, to this blessed stronghold, because,

Jesus Christ, has said, who is the stronghold, in all that he is, as the sinner's friend, I will not leave you, comfortless, and you will turn, to him, for that comfort, which he alone, can bestow, as the God, of all comfort, and, you will also, turn to him, many times, along life's way, for that counsel, he is so ready, to give, if any, man, lack wisdom, let him ask, of God, who giveth, to all men, liberally, and upraideth not, and it shall be, given him, much might be said, about it, but I must come, to the amen, you will also find, that word fulfilled, when you turn, to this stronghold, when sometimes, you are battered about, by earth and hell, alike, and hardly know, what you are, and where you are, come on to me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you, rest, there you know, what this means, peace on earth, and mercy mild,

God and sinners, reconciled, but it all hinges, on this, turn you, to the stronghold, ye prisoners, of hope, think of that word, I said, turn thou me, and I shall be, turned, and remember, this stronghold, is not far off, but it is, accessible, and Jesus, is the door, yet the sides, are two, inside, outside, which side, are you, amen, and you, amen, and you, you, you, the guard, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you, you,