

**God Remembered
Zechariah 13
Chapter 20
“The Smitten Shepherd”**

“On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the residents of Jerusalem, to wash away sin and impurity. On that day” — this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies — “I will remove the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered. I will banish the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. If a man still prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You cannot remain alive because you have spoken a lie in the name of the Lord.’ When he prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will pierce him through. On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive. He will say, ‘I am not a prophet; I work the land, for a man purchased me as a servant since my youth.’ If someone asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your chest?’ — then he will answer, ‘I received the wounds in the house of my friends.’

Sword, awake against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate — this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.

In the whole land — this is the Lord’s declaration — two-thirds will be cut off and die, but a third will be left in it.

I will put this third through the fire; I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”
Zechariah 13

The **thirteenth chapter of Zechariah** is really a continuation of the twelfth chapter, so much so that a chapter break here is unnecessary and possibly even unfortunate. The prophet continues his prophecy of the end times when Christ presents Himself to the nation of Israel, and they turn to Him as their Messiah King. We can only imagine what a glorious time that will be, when the chosen people of God have their eyes and hearts opened to the truth of the gospel! Israel will have its ultimate Day of Atonement when they accept The Lamb of God as the ultimate offering, slain for the sins of the world. They will be broken as they behold Him face to face and see the imprints of the nails in His hands, knowing that it was their ancestors who rejected and crucified Him.

Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at Me whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for Him as one weeps for a firstborn. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.
Zechariah 12:10-11

Chapter thirteen begins with an offering of cleansing as a direct result of seeing The Risen Christ face to face:

On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the residents of Jerusalem, to wash away sin and impurity. **Zechariah 13:1**

It is important to understand that Israel's salvation will occur much the way that it does for lost sinners today. First comes the recognition of Christ, which is closely followed by the repentance from sin. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus explains in detail the steps to becoming a child of God.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Matthew 5:3-6

What The LORD was teaching here is a simple truth, and yet many have failed to comprehend it. In order to be saved, one must first realize that they are sinful (poor in spirit), and then be broken over their sinfulness (mourning), and bow before The LORD and cry out for mercy (humble), and finally, to long for the righteousness of God, and they will be filled.

When Christ returns to Jerusalem, His covenant people will do all these things. As they see Him for who He truly is, they will be broken for their sin and mourn for the one they crucified. They will humble themselves and seek His righteousness and forgiveness. And then the floodgates of cleansing will be open to them. Or in Zechariah's own words, "a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the residents of Jerusalem, to wash away sin and impurity." True salvation can only come by believing in Jesus; turning to Him and away from sin. Repentance brings forgiveness.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1 John 1:9**

This wondrous revival of cleansing will take place in Israel when the chosen people meet their Savior face to face.

On that day, every remaining vestige of idolatry will be removed from the face of the earth (**vs. 2a**), as well as every false prophet (**vs. 2b-4**). Obviously when the anti-christ will reign, idolatry and false prophets will be rampant, for the puppet of Satan will set up an image of himself in the temple and will demand its worship. And many false prophets will be preaching in the name of the beast, including his very own false prophet who will deceive with lying wonders (**Revelation 13**). All these wicked things will come to an end, when Christ returns in victory.

False prophets will not be safe at the end of the tribulation, for even their own families will turn against them during the great battle of Armageddon. Mothers and fathers will turn against their own children and put them to death for preaching on behalf of the beast (**vs. 3**). Such will be the turning to Christ as the nation of Israel chooses which side to be on. Many Jews will perish, but those who trust in Christ will be saved. False prophets will be afraid to show their face in Israel (**vs. 4**), which brings us to a controversial section of the passage.

Some Bible scholars have determined that verse 5 is a reference to Christ, since it refers to the wounds on the person's body. The original language speaks of "the wounds between your hands" and some have thought this is a reference to Christ's pierced hands, and they try and tie it back to vs. 10 of the previous chapter, "...and they will look at Me whom they pierced." But this position is untenable.

First of all, it is rather abrupt if Zechariah went from the false prophets denying their profession and then jumping to The Messiah as the subject. Second, the rendering of the Hebrew "wounds between your hands" is better understood as a wound to the chest. This is an apparent reference to the false prophets who were stabbed by those who sought to kill them. While I can understand why some would believe this is about Christ, because He was pierced in the house of His friends (Jerusalem), He was

never a farmer, nor was he ever purchased as a slave (**vs. 5**). Therefore, it is more than likely a reference to the false prophets lying attempts to hide their true identity in fear for their lives. Needless to say, when Christ returns, the world will be cleansed from false religion, and its so-called preachers.

Immediately following the plight of the false prophets, God does in fact make reference to His Son, the Good Shepherd, who was rejected and struck down by His own flock (**vs. 7**). There has been and will be a reckoning for those who treated His Son with contempt.

Sword, awake against My Shepherd, against the man who is My associate — this is the declaration of The LORD of Armies. Strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn My hand against the little ones. In the whole land — this is The LORD'S declaration — two-thirds will be cut off and die, but a third will be left in it.
Zechariah 13:7-8

This passage is unquestionably referring to the crucifixion of the Good Shepherd. Here God calls Him “His associate”. The word in the Hebrew speaks of one who is on equal footing. This is a clear reference to Christ as a part of the Godhead. He is equal to the Father in every way, and He came into His own flock (Israel), and they struck Him. As a result of this grievous sin, the Jewish people were exiled by the Romans in 70AD and were scattered throughout the world.

As a result of the chosen people's rejection of The Son, The LORD then declared that He would “turn His hand against the little ones” (**CSB**). A better possible rendering of the original language would read “turn my hand towards the little ones.” This phrase in Hebrew can carry both a positive and a negative effect. In this particular case I believe it is positive. For I think it refers to The LORD reaching out His hand to the Gentiles to offer them salvation in the aftermath of Israel's rejection of their Messiah. We are the “little ones”, the lesser flock as it were, and God offered His redemption to those considered to be unworthy. *For God so loved... the world!*

Not only was Israel scattered for the striking of God's Anointed Shepherd, but they will also be partially condemned for their actions. Although God will indeed rescue a remnant of them at the end of the Tribulation, many (two thirds) of them will perish with the armies of the anti-christ, when The LORD returns. Only a remnant of Israel will be saved and experience the “fountain of cleansing” that Christ will offer. It is so sad, that this nation, the very descendants of Abraham, will pay such a heavy price for the rejection of their rightful King.

God has promised that He will refine the remnant of Israel by putting them through the fire (**vs. 9**). This is a reference to the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble (**Jeremiah 30:7**). Those who will be saved will have to reject the mark of the beast and will be persecuted mightily during this time. They will endure unspeakable hardships for their refusal to worship the anti-christ. In the end, they will turn to Christ for salvation. But they will pay the price for doing so. And then, the fountains of righteousness will open for them, and the grace of God will be poured out upon them.

They will call on My Name, and I will answer them. I will say, “They are My people,” and they will say, “The LORD is our God.”
Zechariah 13:9b

Because Our God... Remembers!