

Zechariah's Second Prophetic Burden Continues

Zechariah 13

Zechariah 13 - *"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. ² "It shall be in that day," says the Lord of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. ³ It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the Lord.' And his father and mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies.*

⁴ "And it shall be in that day that every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies; they will not wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. ⁵ But he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.' ⁶ And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

⁷ "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion," says the Lord of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. ⁸ And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it:

⁹ I will bring the one-third through the fire, 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, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

Background Notes

Although Zechariah is only a small Bible book, this minor prophet is quoted about forty times in the New Testament! In fact, Zechariah predicted more about the Messiah than any of the other prophets, with the exception of Isaiah.

There are several more truths about the coming Messiah in Zechariah 13, in our three doctrinal points.

Doctrinal Points

1. In that day, a fountain will be opened for Israel.

Verse 1: *"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."*

Do you remember that the phrase “in that day” refers to the future “End Times,” after the Rapture of the Church? It includes the coming Tribulation period, as well as the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord here on this earth.

Notice what verse 1 does **not** say. It does **not** say that in that future day, a fountain for sin and uncleanness shall come into being, or shall be created, or shall be made. No - it says a fountain shall be **opened**. In other words, the fountain is already there, but in that day it will be opened for Israel, and all the benefits will become available.

What is this fountain for sin and uncleanness? The fountain is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, when He died for the sins of the world. That work has already been accomplished! It is **finished!** The fountain already exists! The water from that cleansing fountain is available now - for anyone - including both Jews and Gentiles.

But Israel is blinded to this fountain at the present time. 2 Corinthians 3 says that “*a veil lies over their hearts.*” But in a coming day that veil will be taken away. The fountain will be opened, the veil will be lifted, and Israel will receive the Messiah that they once rejected and pierced. Like Hagar in Genesis 21, Israel’s eyes will be opened and they will see - and come to - the fountain that has been provided by the pierced Messiah. They will come to the fountain that was there all the time. In that day, a fountain will be opened for Israel.

2. In that day, idolatry will be cut off from Israel.

Verse 2: *“It shall be in that day,” says the Lord of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.”*

Back in Zechariah 10 we learned that as we move toward the End Times, idolatry will return to the nation of Israel. Revelation 9:21 says that in the End Times, people will “not repent of their sorceries.” This would certainly include the people of Israel.

In Matthew 12:43-45, the Lord Jesus said, *“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”* The context makes it clear that the Lord has the nation of Israel in view when He spoke these words.

So, idolatry will return to Israel in the future. But the good news in Zechariah 13 is that all this idolatry will be cut off and removed from the land.

At first, verses 3-5 seem to be a very difficult passage of Scripture. However, in light of other portions of Scripture that deal with the Tribulation period of the End Times, the meaning becomes clearer. “In that day” - because of the idolatry of

the last days - there will be a number of false prophets in the land of Israel. As the believing remnant begins to increase and multiply during these future days, it will become increasingly difficult for these false prophets to function, so they will lie and deceive, and pretend they are not false prophets. However, they will be eliminated, slowly but surely. As more and more of the nation turns to the Lord, idolatry will be cut off in Israel.

Verse 6 has been interpreted in different ways by different commentators. *“And one will say to him, ‘What are these wounds between your arms?’ Then he will answer, ‘Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.’”* In the context, is this a prophetic reference to the wounds of the Messiah, or is it part of the lying of the false prophets? Will the false prophets lie about the cuts on their bodies that were actually received in idolatrous rituals or static frenzies? It seems that the context of this verse is the false statements made by the false prophets.

However, since verse 7 speaks about the Messiah, you could build the case that verse 6 is to be linked with verse 7, and thus it does apply to the Messiah. Many Christians have interpreted verse 6 in this way. In any case - in that day, idolatry will be cut off from Israel.

3. In that day, salvation will come to one third of Israel.

Verse 7 is certainly a reference to the crucifixion of Christ: *“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion,” says the Lord of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.*

As a result of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah, the Lord was crucified and the flock was scattered. The Lord quoted this prophecy in Matthew 26, in reference to the disciples forsaking Him and fleeing at the time of His crucifixion. And, of course, the nation of Israel was scattered by the Roman Empire in AD 70.

The last phrase of verse 7, *“Then I will turn My hand against the little ones,”* probably refers to the fact that the Lord allowed persecution of the early Jewish Christians (see the book of Acts). This has also been translated as a more positive statement, “I will turn My hand **toward** the little ones.”

Notice that God Himself is the one who strikes the Shepherd. The same thought is found in Isaiah 53:10: *“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush Him.”* Here is the heart of the gospel: *“God so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son.”* And that is the means by which national cleansing will be available for Israel.

Verses 8 -9 move on to the time of the End: *“And it shall come to pass in all the land,” says the Lord, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: ⁹ I will bring the one-third through the fire, 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, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”*

What a great day that will be! In the meantime, at the present time (between verses 7 and 8), for the most part Israel is still scattered around the world, and most of the Jewish people do not believe in the true Shepherd. But as a result of the future refining fires of the Tribulation period (v9), one third of the Jewish people will turn to the Lord!

These Jewish believers will be the “remnant“ of Israel that will come through the Tribulation. This is the “*all Israel*” of Romans 11:26. “*Or I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved.*” (Romans 25-26).

Two thirds of Israel will continue to reject the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, but one third of the Jewish people will turn in faith and receive the Lord. In that day, salvation will come to one third of Israel.

Practical Application

Have you been to the cleansing fountain?

Verse 1: “*In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*” We’ve seen that this fountain of cleansing will be opened for Israel in the future - but it’s available for **anyone** now! This is the fountain of cleansing from sin that was established by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. Have you been to that fountain?

We sometimes sing the hymn: “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.” Have you been to that cleansing fountain? You must come for salvation - personally - to that cleansing fountain.

You don’t come to that fountain by being born into a Christian family, or by marrying a Christian spouse, or by going to church every Sunday, or by giving money to charity or the church, or by hanging out with Christians all the time. Coming to that fountain means coming as an individual to the Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledging that you’re a sinner who needs to be cleansed from your sin and trusting in His finished work for salvation from sin. The **only** way you can be cleansed is through Jesus, who shed His blood and died on Calvary’s cross - **for you!**

You can be completely cleansed from your sin if you come to that “fountain” - **but you must come!** How tragic to die unwashed, when the cleansing fountain is readily available.

Have you been to the cleansing fountain?