

Zechariah 13 - The Little Apocalypse of Zechariah: The Spiritual Cleansing of the Land; Relationship to the Messiah

IV. Two Burdens (Zech 9:1–14:21)

- (2) Israel's future deliverance due to her acceptance of her Messiah (Zech 12:1–14:21)
 - (C) Spiritual cleansing (13:1-5)
 - (a) Fountain (13:1)
 - (b) Idolatry removed (13:2a)
 - (c) False prophets removed (13:2b-5)
 - (D) Comprehensive deliverance (13:6-9)
 - (a) Shepherd struck (13:6-7a)
 - (b) Sheep scattered (13:7b)
 - (c) Two-thirds perish (13:8a)
 - (d) One-third rescued & refined (13:8b-9)

Zechariah 13

- (C) Spiritual cleansing (13:1-5)
 - (a) Fountain (13:1)

1 “**On that day** a **fountain** will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for defilement.

1 “In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

1 At that time, a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for those who live in Jerusalem so they can be cleansed from sin and ceremonial impurity.”

1 In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

– “On that day” – the same day spoken of in Zech 12 (Zech 13 really is a continuation of Zech 12:10-14, with no chapter break warranted)

— It refers to the day of Israel's regeneration, the day Israel will be saved through the work of the Holy Spirit

— Zech 13 is a continuation of the Israel regeneration theme from Zech 12, just using different imagery

– “...fountain” - *maqor*, spring, fountain; source of life, joy, purification

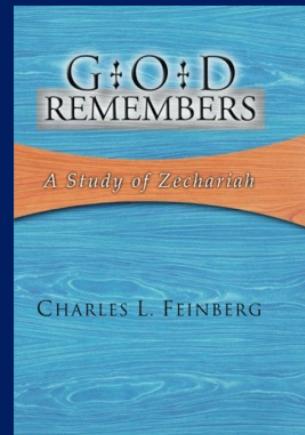
- The regeneration of Israel here is likened to a fountain; removal of sin in Scripture is often portrayed by water (Cf. Ezek 36:24-28; John 3)
- Israel is saved first, then they are regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit
- Israel now enters into Calvary's provision (Rom 11:26-27; Is 33:24; 59:20-21; 65:19; Ezek 36:25; 39:29)
- God does not call us to "clean ourselves up" before coming to Christ; that goes against the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation): first we come to Christ, then by the power of the Holy Spirit, He begins to clean us up
- This goes against Reformed Theology, which believes that we're first regenerated by God, then converted and justified
- In addition to the figurative "fountain" that will cleanse Israel's sin and defilement, many scholars also believe that the fountain will also be literal (see Ezek 47 for prophecies about the Millennial River).



Charles L. Feinberg

God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah (Wheaton: Van Kampen, 1950, p. 233.

"The connection between chapters 12 and 13 is so close that a chapter division is really uncalled for. The same people, the same subject, and the same time are in view in both chapters. The relationship between 12:10-14 and 13:1-6 is not only logical but chronological as well. Once Israel is brought to a penitent condition and is brought face to face with her crucified Messiah, then the provision of God for cleansing will be appropriate."



- (b) Idolatry removed (13:2a)
- (c) False prophets removed (13:2b-5)

2 "And it will come about on that day," declares the LORD of armies, "that I will eliminate the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the **prophets** and the **uncleanspirit** from the land.

2 "It will come about in that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove

the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.

2 "At that time," declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, "I will eliminate the names of the idols from the land, and they will not be remembered anymore. I will also force both prophet and demon to leave the land.

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

- The first sin cleansed after Israel's regeneration will be idolatry
- The primary sin of Israel, which brought on the Babylonian captivity, was idolatry. This is the primary sin which brought about the curses described in Deut 28:49-50
- An idol is defined in Scripture as anything that we look to for comfort and/or security, other than God
- "...prophets" - the second thing that God will remove from Israel after their regeneration are the false prophets
- "...unclean spirit" - the demonic spirits that empower the false prophets

3 And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who gave birth to him shall **pierce him through** when he prophesies.

3 And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies.

3 It will also come about that if any man would dare to prophesy, then his father and his mother who bore him will respond to him, 'You will not live, because you are speaking lies in the name of the LORD.' Then his father and mother who bore him will stab him for prophesying.

3 And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

- Appears to be a reinstitution of the Mosaic Law where the penalty for false prophets is death (Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22)
- Interesting that mom and dad are the first ones to throw stones (Deut 13:6-10)
- "...pierce him through" - Jesus was pierced while on the cross (Is 53:5; John 19:34); this passage is stating that the false prophets will be pierced just as the Messiah was pierced
- The same level of violence that the Romans exhibited toward Jesus will be the same level of violence that will be exhibited against the false prophets after Israel's regeneration

4 Also it will come about on that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a **hairyrobe** in order to deceive;

4 Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive;

4 Furthermore, it will come about at that time that every prophet will become ashamed of his vision as he prophesies. They will wear no rough garments intended to deceive others."

4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

- Because the prophesies of these false prophets did not come from God, but instead from their own wicked imaginations, they will be ashamed of their prophecies and the fact that they considered themselves prophets
- "...hairy robe" - Elijah, a legitimate prophet of God, wore a hairy robe (2 Kings 1:8)
- John the Baptist, the greatest prophet of the OT era (Matt 11:11), also wore a hairy robe (Matt 3:4)

5 but he will say, 'I am not a prophet; I am a cultivator of the ground, because a man sold me as a *slave* in my youth.'

5 but he will say, 'I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.'

5 "He will say, 'I am no mere prophet. A servant of mankind am I, because a man dedicated to this have I been from my youth.'

5 But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

- When the tide turns against these false prophets, they will make up wild stories to convince people that they were never prophets



Thomas L. Constable

Constable's online notes on Zechariah, p. 124.



"This dangerous situation for the false prophets will lead them to hide their identity as prophets. They will not identify themselves in traditional ways (cf. 2 Kings 1:8), but will deny that they are prophets, in order to avoid punishment. They will go so far as claiming to have been sold into slavery as field hands when they were only boys, so they could not possibly be prophets."

(D) Comprehensive deliverance (13:6-9)

Zechariah now gives us a comprehensive, top to bottom description of the deliverance of Israel. What got Israel into hot water with God is described in v6-7, and what will get Israel out of hot water with God is described in v8-9. By the end of the chapter, Israel will be in a restored relationship with God, but it will not be easy. God has to go to extensive lengths to awaken His elect nation to the reality that Jesus is their long-awaited Messiah.

(a) Shepherd struck (13:6-7a)

6 And someone will say to him, '**What are these wounds between your arms?**' Then he will say, '**Those with which I was wounded at the house of my friends.**'

6 And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

6 "Someone will say to him, 'What are these injuries to your hands?' "He will reply, '...what I received at my friend's house.'

6 And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

- "...What are these wounds between your arms?" - a prophecy of the wounds Jesus would endure from the Jews on His chest and back

- "...Those with which I was wounded at the house of my friends" - Jesus' response: My friends did this to Me (Matt 26:50; John 1:11)

(b) Sheep scattered (13:7b)

7 "Awake, sword, against **My Shepherd**, And against the Man, **My Associate**," Declares the LORD of armies. "**Strike the Shepherd** and the **sheep will be scattered**; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be **scattered**; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

7 "Arise, sword, against my shepherd, against the mighty one who is related to me," declares the LORD of the Heavenly Armies. "Strike the shepherd, the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the insignificant ones.

7 Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that 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.

- "...My Shepherd" - God the Father claims close association with the Shepherd who was struck; a clear reference to the Trinity (Cf. John 10:30)

- "...My Associate" - *'amiyth*, found only here and Lev 6:2; 18:20; 19:11,15,17; 24:19; 25:14-15,17

— Refers to persons united in law, rights, and privileges; from a verb "to bind together"; the Hebrew term for "people" (those united in common origin and interest) has the same root.

— It is impossible to state in stronger terms the unimpeachable deity of the Messiah of Israel (John 10:30; 14:10-11; Phil 2:6)

- The reason why Satan targeted Jesus...if you take out the Shepherd (Jesus), you can take out the sheep (Israel)

— Jesus quoted this verse is Matt 26:31 when predicting Peter's denial, confirming the prophecy that if you strike the Shepherd, you can scatter the sheep (Israel). That is exactly what happened.

— After they left the Upper Room, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray but the disciples fell asleep

- "...scattered" - *tphusena*, not third feminine *singular* (stressing the unity of the sheep) but third feminine plural, emphasizing the fact that in the subsequent *diaspora* that unity shall be destroyed and dispersed far and wide

— This isn't talking about the Babylonian captivity, since Zechariah is writing this after the 70-year captivity ended; this is referring to the scattering of the Jews by the Romans and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD

— Deut 4:27; 28:63-65 clearly speak of the curses that would come upon Israel for covenant disobedience, specifically referenced here as the *diaspora* that began with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD

Matt 26:31: Then Jesus *said to them, **"You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I WILL STRIKE THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK WILL BE SCATTERED."**

Israel's Judgments

- Division of the Kingdom (931 BC, 1 Kings 12)
- Assyrian judgment (722 BC, 2 Kings 17)
- Babylonian captivity (586 BC, 2 Kings 25)
- **Rome Diaspora (70 AD, Luke 19:41-44)**

Just as in Zech 11:15-17, there is a large gap of time (dispensational gap) from the rejection of Christ (v7) to the Great Tribulation (v8)

- (c) Two-thirds perish (13:8a)
- (d) One-third rescued & refined (13:8b-9)

8 "And it will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, **"That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.**

8 "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it.

8 It will come about in all of the land," declares the LORD, "that two thirds of the people living there will die, but a third will survive who live there.

8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

- This verse is an amazing (and frightening) prophecy of what it will take for God to convert and restore Israel as a believing nation

— God will literally move heaven and earth to bring Israel to saving faith

— "...two parts in it will be cut off and perish" - the human toll to get Israel to saving faith will be steep and costly: two-thirds of the Jews alive during the Tribulation, specifically at the midpoint of the Tribulation, will be killed

— Many other passages speak of Israel during the Tribulation (Jer 30:7; Ezek 20:37-38), but this is the only passage in Scripture that defines the human cost to arrive at Israel's salvation

— "...the third will be left in it" - this refers to the same remnant who will ask "What are these wounds in Thine hands?" (v6). They will have come through the horrors of the Tribulation in which two-thirds of their people have perished.

— One-third of Jews alive at the midpoint of the Tribulation will recognize their Messiah, be converted and regenerated, and cry out to the Lord to be their salvation

— This will be the call that brings about the Second Coming...they will nationally cite Ps 118:26 (Cf. Matt 23:39; Joel 2:28-32; Rom 10:13) to inaugurate the Second Coming

- This will result in the conversion of the nation, the regeneration of the nation, the regathering of the nation, and the fulfillment of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Rom 11:25-26)
- Only the Remnant will survive, the "escaped" of Is 4:2; 10:20; 37:31-32; Joel 2:32; Obadiah 17. The remaining one-third become believers, so at that point "all Israel" and the "remnant of Israel" will be one and the same, as Micah 2:12-13 explains.
- Paul tells us in Rom 11:26 that "all Israel" will be saved; "all Israel" does not include every living Jew from all time, nor does it include every living Jew at the midpoint of the Tribulation, because this passage tells us that two-thirds of Jews alive at that time will be killed, one-third will be "saved" (delivered).
- The NT makes clear that ethnicity does not save anyone...there is a believing remnant within Israel that God will save (Cf. Matt 3:9; Rom 2:28-29; 9:6; Gal 6:16; Rev 2:9; 3:9)



Today, Israel's slogan concerning the Holocaust is "never again." Unfortunately, Hitler killed 6M Jews, about one-third of their population. According to these verses, the Antichrist will kill two-thirds of the Jews alive at the midpoint of the Tribulation, only one-third of Jews will be saved.

9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, 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 my God.'"

9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, 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 my God.'"

9 And I will bring that surviving third through, testing them as if through fire, purifying them like silver, assaying them like gold. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

- "...They" [2x] - this now begins to speak of the conversion and regeneration of the one-third believing "remnant"

Although we're left stunned at the human destruction of the Jewish people described in this chapter, the end of the chapter ends on the highest of highs...at the end of this chapter, every Jew on planet earth in faith, calling on Jesus their Messiah to rescue them, which He will at the Second Coming. These Jews will populate the kingdom in their mortal bodies, and it's through this very group that the Lord will fulfill every single promise that God has ever made to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Only a literal application of these prophecies to the restoration and conversion of the Jewish nation at the Second Advent of Christ can satisfy the scope of these prophetic disclosures. Other interpretations ignore the true scope of Zechariah's prophecies as a whole, violate the immediate context, resort to pointless mysticalizing, and end up in a morass of uncertainty and confusion. [Unger]