

Zechariah Chapter Thirteen

Introduction:

In this chapter are prophecies concerning the purification of the penitent Jews before spoken of; the removal of idols, and false prophets, out of the earth; the death of Christ; the destruction of the greater part of men, and the salvation of a few of them. The cleansing of such that mourn for sin, in a fountain opened for that purpose, is spoken of, #Zec 13:1 the utter abolition of idols, and false prophets, and unclean spirits, is affirmed, #Zec 13:2 the parents of false prophets will forbid them to prophesy; they themselves will be ashamed of their visions; they will throw off the rough garment, which was a token of their being prophets, and by which they deceived: they will confess they are no prophets, and what they are, and own the wounds they have received from their friends on that account, #Zec 13:3-6 and whereas the Messiah, as pierced and crucified, is spoken of in the preceding chapter #Zec 12:10, whose blood is the cleansing fountain mentioned in this, an account is given of his death; who is described by his office, the Shepherd of the Lord; and by his natures, human and divine, the Man his fellow; his death is signified by smiting with the sword, which was done by the order of the Lord; the consequences of which were the scattering of the sheep, and the turning of the hand of the Lord upon them in a way of mercy, #Zec 13:7 and then it is declared that two parts in three of the land should be cut off, and a third part saved, but yet so as by fire, whom the Lord would own as his people, and they should acknowledge him to be their God, #Zec 13:8,9.

13:1 ¶ 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.

The time frame appears to be the first coming of Christ in the flesh. We will see elements of His dual nature as God and man as we continue in this chapter. The fountain spoken of here is the shed blood of Christ introduced in chapter twelve. Remember that Christ came first not to the whole world but to the house of David (the Jews).

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, says 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.

Once more we see the time jump from the first coming of Christ to the end of the ages when the Jews will turn to the Messiah. We know that the idols were not completely banished or the unclean spirits completely driven from the land in the day of Christ's incarnation. We could say that the Jews had no more prophets from that time of Christ, but then the apostles were sent to everyone, Jew and Gentile. This is one of the problems when we attempt to reconcile Old Testament prophecy with history. At places we see things that definitely fit, yet there appear to be elements that are quite fulfilled yet. Part of this is because of God's time not being ours and restricted to a calendar like we are. It often took several steps and

hundreds of years for a prophecy to be completely fulfilled. Then throughout the Old Testament the prophets never differentiate between the incarnation and the end of things. I believe this was in part due to their misguided concept of what it meant concerning Christ (the Messiah) becoming the king forever and the continuation of the throne of David. They were looking for a very earthly reign with Israel restored in time at the head of all nations. Their Messiah was going to be a warrior king defeating all their enemies on earth. Most of the Old Testament doesn't look to the heavenly reward, but of God's kingdom being established on earth.

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, You shall not live; for you speak lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

This came to be somewhat in the birth of the church and the closing of the Bible as a complete canon. If God is not revealing His will (Scripture) there is no need for a prophet. It also points to the church age when the nation of Israel is not an earthly nation of God's people as such. The nation as God's chosen people becomes a spiritual realm as such and includes all mankind. Paul notes this as the engrafting of the Gentiles into the nation of Israel. We know we are not of Jewish ancestry and therefore it is spiritual not literal. However the church would label any today claiming to be a prophet as being a false prophet. This however will also be more true in the new Jerusalem where there is no unclean thing and no prophets whatsoever.

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:

This is harder to put a time frame on. However we still have many who think they are in direct communication with God and bear God's message to mankind today. Most Pentecostal denominations allow prophets. We need to distinguish a prophet here from the word of God coming to individuals as in prophesying. A prophet was chosen by God to speak His word to mankind, particularly the Jews. Their words most often became part of the written record of God's revelation of Himself and His will which we know as the Bible. Most modern day prophets attempt to give their words more weight than other men, but stop short of making it equal to the Bible.

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

Added to verse four we seem to have people who know they were being false and had taken the clothing of a prophet for their own benefit. Now that god has revealed himself (end times) they are trying to distance themselves from this. They are no longer trying to make a living off being a prophet but are working with their own hands. They deny ever having been the former thing (a prophet) and say they have always been of the working class. This has not happened, so it apparently is the end times. When Christ physically takes charge on earth, they will be known for what they are. Thus the previous mention of parents killing a child who claims to be a prophet.

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.

We shift the focus here from the false prophets to the one true prophet, God's Messiah. The reference here is to the way Christ died and by the hands of His own people, the Jews. WE need to note here that it was Rome or Gentiles that actually killed Christ, but it was from among his own people and by them He was betrayed and given to Rome for the express purpose of killing Him.

7 ¶ Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man [that is] my fellow, says the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

This is God speaking and calling for the death of His Son Jesus Christ. From the death of Christ the sheep of Israel and the church are scattered throughout the whole world. Yet, the end of this verse appears not to be God's further wrath, but of mercy as He personally cares for the "little" ones in this scattered flock. God's shepherd is Christ, and the sword is death. To identify Him as his Shepherd, then add my fellow appears to point to the deity of Christ too. I would render this my equal for the sake of clarity.

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

All the land could be considered all the land around Israel, but I prefer it to mean all the lands or the world. At the death of Christ however it was essentially Jerusalem that was in view. It is after the death of Christ that the apostles are scattered and the Gentile world begins turning to Christ in numbers with churches being planted throughout the known world. God will save His, even when it appears the majority is being lost. Here a third of the world is being saved.

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.

Peter tells us to not be surprised by the fiery trials to come. Adversity will draw God's people to Him at the same time it drives others away from Him and causes them to curse His name. Life on earth is not fair. Life is hard, however the experience will show to the faithful that God is true and there is hope. In Christ alone there is hope for tomorrow. All else is pure vanity and of no value whatsoever.