

(Zech. 13:1) - In *Zechariah 12 - 14*, Zechariah prophesied of a future day of salvation for God's chosen people among the Jews (the remnant of grace). This would be the days initiated by the coming of the Messiah to do His great work of redemption for His people and which would result in His bringing them to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry - *"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn"* (*Zech. 12:10*). This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth, and it is the fruit of the righteousness that Christ produced in His obedience unto death on the cross where He died as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people. This is the righteousness that God has imputed to His people and from which He gives them spiritual life and brings them to glory. As soon as a sinner has Christ revealed to him and in him by the Spirit of grace, he looks upon the Savior he has pierced and is made to mourn for his sin; and as soon as the sinner looks to Christ and mourns, he is comforted.

Here in *Zechariah 13*, the prophet speaks of the day when the ground of salvation for God's people would be realized and established in history in *"the fountain opened,"* which is Christ shedding His blood *"for sin and uncleanness"* of His people, *"the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."* And he speaks of the day when Christ's sheep experience the reality of redemption, justification, forgiveness, and cleansing in their souls. This could not mean the physical inhabitants of physical Jerusalem based on the sacrifices of animals - *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"* (*Heb. 10:4*). It refers to the spiritual inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, which includes God's remnant from the Jews but also God's remnant among Gentiles (*Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 6:14-16*). This fountain has been opened for all who believe on Christ. To them, He is the fountain of life and living waters (*Psa. 36:9; Prov. 14:27; Jer. 17:13; John 4:10-14; Rev. 21:6*).

(Zech. 13:2) - About seventy years before this prophecy, the Lord brought an indictment against the people - *"For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water"* (*Jer. 2:13*). That evil state had continued on unto Zechariah's day. Idolatry and false prophecy were the two main ways the people of Israel were led astray from God. God would not only provide a fountain to cleanse (righteousness imputed), but He would also cleanse His true church of idolatry and false prophecy by bringing His people to repentance from dead works and former idolatry (*2 Pet. 3:9*). Using figurative language, in these verses Zechariah describes the blessed consequences of sinners being cleansed in the Fountain of Christ's blood. Spiritual Jerusalem, the city and kingdom of God, will be cleansed of all idolatry, false prophecy, and unclean spirits. Although the true people of God are still sinners saved by grace, and although, while in this flesh, they still have to fight evil within themselves, by His sovereign grace and power, the Lord God has brought them to faith in Christ, to believe the true Gospel wherein Christ is revealed in the glory of His Person and the power of His finished work. God has brought them to repentance of idolatry and dead works, and the tenor of their lives is to live and move by the Spirit of God Who brings them continually to look to Christ for all salvation, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, eternal life, and glory.

(Zech. 13:3) - Under the Old Covenant law, false prophets and false priests were sentenced to death (*Deut. 18:20*), and even their natural family members were to be the first in carrying

out this sentence (*Deut. 13:6-10*). Thank God, we are not under the law! We do not advocate the stoning of rebel sons, or the execution of false prophets. Yet, we must and do side with God against His enemies, even if His enemies are our nearest kinsmen (*Matt. 10:34-38; Luke 14:26-27*). Grace experienced in the soul creates such an attachment to and love for Christ, His interest, His Gospel, His glory, His Church, that the enemies of the Gospel become our enemies and are disowned by us (*Psalms 119:104,128; 139:21-22*). Those who oppose our God, oppose the Gospel of His grace, and oppose His Son shall perish under the sword of His justice; and we acknowledge that they should.

(Zech. 13:4-5) - These verses speak of the conversion of some false prophets. God will bring them to repent of their greed, lies, and deception. They will cease to wear the “*rough garment*” of animal skin trying to show themselves to appear like the true prophet Elijah. False prophets, like the Pharisees (*Matt. 23:28*), are concerned more with outward appearance, but God’s true prophets know that the only garment that means anything to God’s people is the imputed righteousness of Christ. So, some who had been false messengers would be ashamed of their message. They will put away the clothing of the prophets (a robe of coarse hair) and earn an honest living, such as tending cattle. This was fulfilled in those scribes and Pharisees that afterwards became believers, and said, with Paul, “*Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*” (*Php. 3:2-3*). Consider Paul’s conversion as an example (*Php. 3:7-9*).

(Zech. 13:6) - A more accurate translation is “What are these wounds between thy hands,” referring to the chest, or the heart. It is one who asked the converted false prophet, “What has happened to you?” “*Wounds*” could then mean the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in slaying sinners by the law in order to bring them to Christ for spiritual and eternal healing (*Psa. 127:1-2; Prov. 27:6*).

(Zech. 13:7-9) - This speaks of the Person and work of Christ, God’s Shepherd, who is also the LORD’s “*fellow*” (equal) as He is the Son of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. This is the same truth as stated in *Isaiah 53:10* that It was God the Father Who gave the command to strike the Shepherd. Putting His Son under His wrath, based on our sins imputed to Him, is God’s way of being both just and Justifier. Christ was no victim of circumstance or at the mercy of religious, political, or military power. It was the planned, ordained work of the LORD God, prophesied by Isaiah hundreds of years before it happened. This was God’s victory, not Satan’s or man’s triumph, and it is the victory of all of His sheep.

Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. Christ quoted this phrase as recorded in *Matthew 26:31* as referring to Himself and in reference to the scattering of His disciples during His arrest and suffering. There is also a sense in which the disciples were a type of God’s elect in Israel as a whole in being scattered throughout the world and this being God’s way of bringing His elect among the Gentiles into the kingdom. *Verses 8-9* shows how that a remnant will be saved out of Israel, and God will bring this remnant through the fire (temptations, trials, persecutions), and they will be made known by their being brought by God to call on His name (*Rom. 10:13-17*). God will reveal Himself to His people in and by the Lord Jesus Christ as He is identified and distinguished in the Gospel (*Rom. 1:1-4,16-17*). The LORD God “*will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God*” - This is covenant language in which God in grace has united Himself to His people through the Lord Jesus Christ, based upon the merit of His righteousness worked out by His obedience unto death - the Fountain opened.