

- In the first oracle, we saw in chapter nine that God promised a coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ...in chapter ten, we examined the blessings of redemption for the people of Israel...chapter eleven is the story of the shepherds: Israel's rejection of their True Shepherd, Jesus Christ the Messiah, the ruin of the wailing shepherds suffering God's judgment, and Israel's future acceptance of the False Shepherd...
- Tonight we continue the second oracle, the final passage in the book, as we begin chapter thirteen...chapter twelve addressed the repentance of Israel...tonight, we see the transition from repentance to forgiveness, and in chapter fourteen, the people enter the kingdom...
- Last week, we looked in depth at the Lord's victory through Israel at the Battle of Armageddon, when Christ defeats His enemies and the enemies of His people, which are really the same...the second passage in the chapter, verses 10 through 14, though, was the most important, particularly verse 10...¹⁰ **"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.** God says He will draw the eyes of His people to their Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ, and their hearts will break with grief for their national sin of the rejection of their True Shepherd...many Jews, of course, have come to Christ through the centuries, so this prophecy has been partially fulfilled many times, but on that Day – the Day of the Lord – those remaining in Israel will repent of their denial of their Messiah and weep bitterly...
- Tonight, we see the second necessary step in the national redemption of Israel...as they have looked to Jesus, the people have repented of their repudiation of their Messiah, their sin of not receiving him on the day of their visitation, as Jesus says in **Luke 19.44**...but

repentance is only one step...another remains: God's provision for the forgiveness of their sin and the cleansing of His people...let's begin at verse one...

A Fountain Opened

- Following the mournful repentance of chapter 12, we immediately turn to **13.1**...
 - ¹ **"On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.**
- Again, the phrase "on that day" is the time marker...the Day of the Lord...
- "Fountain" is the Hebrew 'ma-'qor' – a water source or spring, one that will flow continually...having drawn the people to repentance from their sin, God now provides the means for the forgiveness of that sin...Jeremiah and Joel also speak of a fountain from the Lord, flowing with living waters...in an arid land like Israel, a perennial fountain or spring was priceless...that's the picture of the importance and value of God's forgiveness of Israel's sin...without it, there is only death...with it, there is life eternal...it is a powerful symbol and image of spirit-filled life...
- Jesus used this image, too, in John 4 with the Samaritan woman at the well, and in the Temple in John 7, as He compared God's Holy Spirit to rivers of living water...
- God Himself will accomplish this forgiveness of His people, opening a fountain for cleansing...not a cistern, which can run dry, but an always-flowing fountain of life...this fountain is opened **for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem**; again, this description standing for the entire nation...
- The purpose of the fountain is **to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness**. These words are full of meaning...let's take a closer look...
 - "sin" renders Heb 'haa-taat' a common word for sin...it means to fall short of God's standard, to transgress His law, to violate His commands...it can also be translated

“sin offering” to indicate the way to be forgiven for the sin, as it is used in Psalm 51.7, where it is translated in the ESV as “purge” or to “un-sin” me...

- o “uncleanness” renders Heb ‘nee-dah’...that which makes a person impure or unclean...used of ceremonial impurity...and like ‘haa-taat,’ this word can also be used to indicate “separation,” to cleanse from the uncleanness, or purify from the impurity...

- But the scholar J.M. Boice reminds us there is a special symbolic significance to this moment we learn from **John 19.34-37**, where John writes ³⁴ **But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.** ³⁵ **He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe.** ³⁶ **For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: ...** ³⁷ **“They will look on him whom they have pierced.”** John saw the side of Jesus Christ pierced, he saw the issue of blood and water, and he recalled the prophecy of Zechariah 12.10, that one day Israel would look upon the Son of Man, their Messiah, whom they pierced, and mourn bitterly...and he must have remembered that God promised also that **a fountain** would be **opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness** ...as a righteous Jew, John would have known that only blood could atone for sin, while water was required to cleanse from impurity and uncleanness...imagine John’s wonder as he saw before him the very sacrifice of the Son of God to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 13.1, that God would provide a fountain of cleansing for sin and uncleanness, of blood and water, both from the side of the Savior...
- This pair of words, “sin” and “impurity” or “uncleanness,” are repeated from **Numbers 19.9**, a passage which provides for the ceremonial cleansing of priests...the point here is that in Numbers 19, God makes provision for the cleansing of the body from sin and uncleanness...but here in **Zechariah 13**, we see the infinitely more important provision

from the Lord for the spiritual cleansing and forgiveness of all the people, not just the priests, and that cleansing will be unlimited, both in extent and in duration...He will completely and forever cleanse His people...the fountain of God's forgiveness will permanently cleanse His people from their sin natures and the sinful actions that flow from those sin natures...He will change who His people are and what His people do...their repentance came from God's mercy in pouring out His Spirit of grace and supplications upon them, changing their hearts, enabling them to look to Christ and turn toward Him instead of continuing their rejection of Him...now their forgiveness is effected through a perpetual fountain of cleansing that God has opened and will never shut, symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts...

Idolatry and False Prophets Judged

- But what sins and impurity are in view here? Yahweh now removes from Israel their two besetting sins, the greatest sources of shame and misery for the nation – the wicked lies of the false prophets and the idolatrous worship of false gods...
- ² **“And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness.**
- These two sins are inextricably linked...the false prophets steered the people toward the false gods and heinous false religions that surrounded the nation while persecuting and ridiculing God's true prophets, causing the people to turn away from God's word and His law...
- God's judgment is severe...**on that day**, the Day of the Lord, all the idols that had plagued the Jews for centuries would be **cut off**, forever destroyed, never to be remembered or

spoken again...the same meaning is applied to the false prophets and the impurity that infected the land and the people through their teaching...it would be removed...

- And the judgment will prompt a renewed zeal for the Lord and His holiness...just as the penalties for certain profane sinful actions in the OT were quite severe, so it will be in **that Day**...if you recall the punishments for the rebellion of Korah in **Numbers 16**, and the zeal for the Lord of Phineas the priest in **Numbers 25**, this will look familiar...to make the point, Zechariah sets up two hypothetical cases...

³ And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the Lord.' And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. ⁴ "On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, ⁵ but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.' ⁶ And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'

- Two examples are given here to strongly emphasize how unacceptable false prophecy will be in the Day of the Lord...never again will Israel return to false prophecy as they once did...
 - In the first case, in verse 3, parents will themselves judge and execute their own sons who engage in lying false prophecy...the reference is to **Deuteronomy 13.6-11**, where Jews were commanded to be the first to strike down even family members if they would tempt them to turn from Yahweh...parents will execute God's judgment in zeal and holiness on their own children...quite a deterrent to a son considering false prophecy as a career option...
 - Verses 4 through 6 describe a hypothetical conversation between an Israelite and a man who had been a false prophet...in that Day, anyone falsely prophesying will be

publicly put to shame and humiliation...no one will try to impersonate a false prophet by wearing the hairy mantle often worn by prophets, including Elijah (**II Kings 1.8**) and later by John the Baptist (**Matthew 3.4**)...instead, people will go to ridiculous lengths to avoid the chance of being accused of being a false prophet by saying instead that he has been a farmer since he was a boy...and if someone notices the characteristic scars from the cutting that false prophets engaged in as part of their idolatrous worship, as noted in **I Kings 18.28**, as the text literally says, “between your hands,” on the chest or the back...the man’s explanation is that his friends did that to him...he needs new friends...

- In summary, in that Day, God will open a fountain for cleansing of the people from idolatry and false prophecy...these sins will be driven from the land and will never return, and the people themselves will be ready to zealously defend God’s holiness and righteousness...

The Shepherd Struck

- Now, with verse 7, there is a significant shift...to this point, the focus has been Israel’s repentance and forgiveness...moving forward, the focus changes to Israel’s transformation through refining judgment...and in the second passage of the chapter, we find another messianic prophecy fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and this one is surprising...

⁷**“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,” declares the Lord of hosts.**

- As we see, the one who speaks here is the Lord of Hosts, God the Father...and He calls forth judgment, as He done many times, but here the target of His judgment is...His own Son...
- In **12.10-14**, the death of the Messiah was the act of the people of Israel...here in **13.7-9**, the death of Messiah is attributed to the act of God Himself...we gain some understanding of this seeming paradox in **Acts 2.22-23** as Peter preaches...²²**“Men of Israel, hear these**

words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Both are true...

- The divine sword will awaken against **my shepherd**, says the Father, God's own Shepherd, the True Shepherd from chapter 12...but He is also described in another way...as "the man who stands next to me" KJV says "my fellow," NASB95 says "My Associate"...Heb 'ge-ver' means a young, strong, valiant man, a warrior..."stands next to" renders Heb 'ah-meet,' the one who is near me, the one who is in union with me, who is my neighbor, my equal...so let's make sure we understand this...Yahweh God, the Father, is awakening the sword of his judgment against his close companion, his equal, his associate, the one in union with Him...that can be none other than Jesus Christ the Messiah...
- This short verse links the Suffering Servant prophecy of **Isaiah 53.4-5, 10** to the NT gospel accounts of the passion of the Christ...

⁴ **Surely he has borne our griefs**

and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,

smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ **But he was pierced for our transgressions;**

he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his wounds we are healed.

¹⁰ **Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;**

he has put him to grief;

when his soul makes an offering for guilt,

**he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.**

- It seems unthinkable, but it's the biblical truth: the Father brought about the death of the Son to save God's people...

The Flock Scattered

- See the next phrase: **"Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;** The verb "strike" renders Heb 'knee-caw' and means to strike a lethal, killing blow...here it specifically refers to the crucifixion...and when the Shepherd is struck and killed, His flock will scatter...Jesus quoted this prophecy about Himself in **Matthew 26.30-32...**³⁰ **And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.** 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.'** ³² **But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."** This is said just before Peter's overconfident assertion that he will never turn away from Christ...as we know, Peter failed to keep his word, and almost all the apostles were absent from the foot of the cross, John being the notable exception...His apostles were scattered, but were regathered in Galilee, as He foretold...
- Even the growing church, birthed in Jerusalem, was scattered after the death and resurrection of Jesus, with most believers having left Judea before 70 AD...the same Roman persecution that scattered the apostles helped to launch the church "to the ends of the earth" as we read in the book of Acts and the rest of the NT...even so, the church will one day be regathered alongside Jewish believers, as Jesus says in **John 10.16,** ¹⁶ **And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.**

- But the primary meaning was for His people, the Jews...their scattering would come in the war between the Jews of Judea and Rome, from 66 AD to 73 AD...when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, it began a dispersion of the Jews around the world into the Gentile nations, a dispersion that is still true today, though May 14th, 1948, marked an important waypoint toward regathering the Jews as Israel once again has become a nation-state in her land...this regathering awaits complete fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom...
- Ultimately, God's flock will all be gathered together, under our one Great Shepherd...

The Flock Refined

- But before the Day comes, God will both punish and transform Israel through judgment...
I will turn my hand against the little ones.
⁸ **In the whole land, declares the Lord,**
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,
and one third shall be left alive.
⁹ **And I will put this third into the fire,**
and refine them as one refines silver,
and test them as gold is tested.
- This divine national judgment, occurring at the end of the tribulation period at the time of Armageddon, will result in the death of two-thirds of the Jews of Israel...the term "cut off" means a sudden, violent death, and "turning his hand against" usually, but not always, means punishment meted out against God's enemies, but that isn't the case here...the "little ones," the ones who are left alive after this devastation, will be disciplined, but not destroyed...the Hebrew term translated "little ones" occurs only here in the OT, and means "those who make themselves small" or "humble ones"...they are the "poor of the flock,"

the remnant of the people who survive the tribulation...they will not be destroyed, but will be refined as gold and silver are refined, through intense trial...we don't know the exact number or percentage...here it's one third, **Isaiah 6.13** says only a tenth would remain in the land' as God's "holy seed"...we don't know how many there will be, but we know they will be repentant and forgiven and redeemed, and will enter the Kingdom of their God...

The Flock Saved

- This summary of the suffering and transformation of Israel throughout history, particularly the tribulation period, ends with this beautiful benediction that needs no explanation...

They will call upon my name,

and I will answer them.

I will say, 'They are my people';

and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

Application

- This is such a rich passage...we learn much about the ways and purposes of God in the atoning death of Jesus Christ ...but as we close I think it would be helpful for us to focus on the main point of this chapter, the extent and depth and beauty of God's forgiveness...as He opened a fountain of cleansing for Israel, with the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to forgive sin and the living water of the Spirit to remedy uncleanness, so has He done for us...let's meditate for a few minutes on the glory of God's forgiving love...how does the Lord describe for us His forgiveness? Let's look at just a few of the ways God illustrates His steadfast love...
 - as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103.12)

- o You will tread our iniquities underfoot; You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7.19)
- o Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (Psalm 32.1)
- o “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43.25)
- o ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2.13-14)
- o ...you have cast all my sins behind your back. (Isaiah 38.17)
- o I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44.22)
- Get these notes on our website, messiahbible.org, and look up these verses...I urge you to spend some time thinking about God’s forgiveness and the truth of His word...let His love and grace and mercy fill up the empty places in your soul...let the living water of His Spirit refresh your dry and thirsty heart...feel the anxiety and fear in your spirit as it is washed away by the goodness of the Lord...and hear the words of your heavenly Father, “you are forgiven, My child”...