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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Zechariah 13.

(2014)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Zechariah 13.

Topics.

- On that day the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be cleansed.
- On that day there will be only one God in the land of Israel.
- On that day; Israel will ask, "What are these wounds on your back?"
- Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.
- God will say, "They are my people," they will answer, "The LORD is my God."
- The Commonwealth of Israel.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

INTRODUCTION: the following introduction is quiet long, but it does help understand the the background of Zechariah, to skip the introduction scroll down to Zechariah chapter thirteen. As Haggai encouraged the returned Jewish exiles to rebuild the Temple, Zechariah encouraged them to repent and renew their covenant with God. Such spiritual renewal would be necessary for the people to be ready to worship God once the Temple was rebuilt (about 515 B.C.). Zechariah accused them of doing the very things their ancestors had done before the exile. He was concerned about social justice for widows, orphans, and foreigners. As the people endured opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of Judea, Zechariah reassured them of God's abiding comfort and care and that He would continue his covenant with Israel.

The Messianic hope was rekindled during Zechariah's ministry by the ordination of Joshua as priest and Zerubbabel as governor. From Zechariah chapter one through to the end there is a beautiful message of comfort and encouragement for the people of Israel during the era of Zechariah and for those who are rebuilding the temporal Temple of God, but as the visions progress through the chapters the focus slowly shifts from the era of Zechariah and transcends time to a future age where God is building an eternal Temple in the Lord Jesus Christ. The visions then progress to Jesus returning in glory and climax's in the final chapter with Christ reigning from Jerusalem as King over the entire earth and ends with the promise that the Lord would establish his rule over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9).

The historical background: twenty years after untied Israel returned from their seventy years in captivity to Babylon, the Temple was still a blackened ruin and the discouraged people did not see how it could be restored. At this critical moment God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Jews to rebuild the Temple. The prophecies of the two men were delivered almost at the same time. Zechariah gives a series of eight symbolic night-visions, to encourage the Israelites to complete the Temple.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

NOTE: Zechariah prophetic message now transcends his era and travels through time and history until it climaxes at the future glory of Jerusalem and God's eternal plan of salvation to be established on earth.

On that Day the inhabitants of Jerusalem will Be Cleansed.

Zechariah 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.

On that Day: in this verse refers to the day Israel “look on him who they pierced and there is great weeping and mourning in Jerusalem” (Zech. 12:10-14).

On that Day there will be only one God in the Land of Israel.

Zechariah 13:2-3 ----- 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. ³And 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.

Throughout all Israel's land and all the surrounding nations there will be only one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, contrasted to Israel's past history of worshipping many pagan gods, idols and goddesses and there will be no need of a prophet, simply because Christ himself is with the people. Isaiah in the following verses prophecies there will be day when the Middle East has only One God.

- In that day (the day Jerusalem becomes a terror to the Egyptians) there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. ²⁴In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, ²⁵whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance." (Isaiah 19:23-24).
- A highway shall be there (in the wilderness and dry places), and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. (Isaiah 35:8).

On that Day; Israel will ask, “What are these wounds on your back?”

Zechariah 13:4-6 ----- 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 ⁵but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.' ⁶And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.'

He will not put on a hairy cloak: refers to Jacob and Rebekah deceiving Isaac to get the blessing of the firstborn before Isaac died. When Israel sees Christ who they pierced all their prophets will be ashamed and no one will claim to be a prophet because of how they have been deceived by the prophets concerning Christ. They will no longer seek power or positions of importance, but be content and to do secular work.

For a man sold me in my youth: is referring to the prophets of Israel's deceiving the people concerning Christ when he appeared the first time.

What are these wounds on your back? This question can refer to the prophets, because they are representatives of the nation of Israel, and it was Israel as a nation that gave birth to Christ, and it was Christ who suffered and died for them, so in this sense the nation of Israel carries the wounds of Christ, but it is of course also a very loud echo of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

NOTICE: Christ is asked, “What are these wounds on your back? And he says, “My friends gave them to me.” Christ looking back calls those who caused him so much suffering his friends this is the enormity of the Lord's love for his people and his forever flowing forgiveness. It is easy to see why in (Zech. 12:10-14) there is tremendous weeping and mourning in Jerusalem when they see the one who they pierced.

Strike the Shepherd, and the Sheep will Be Scattered.

Zechariah 13:7 ----- ⁷Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand upon the little ones.

Turn: carries the ideal of converting, refreshing, rescuing and delivering.

A sword: in this context is a symbol of weapon of war and death.

The Little Ones: the LORD through Zechariah is saying powerful people in authority are going to come against God's shepherd and strike (kill) him and when that happens God will turn to the little ones. The little ones can refer to the following two groups of people: -

1. The Gentiles, this is because the Jews considered themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles an unclean race, without God and with no hope, but now they are made one with Israel through the blood of Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote: -

- Remember that you *Gentiles* were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *Commonwealth of Israel* and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you *Gentiles* who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians. 2:12-13).

For further information concerning the Gentiles and the Commonwealth of Israel see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel" (at the end of this study).

2. The poor, the oppressed and those who lacked authority and power.

Awake, O sword, Against my Shepherd.

The expression, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd," is echoing the chief priest, the Pharisees and the scribes who called on the sword of Rome to strike (kill) God's Shepherd (the Lord Jesus Christ), from then on God through the apostles turned His focus to the Gentile nations and the poor (the little ones).

God will say, "They are my people," they will answer, "The LORD is my God."

Zechariah 13:8-9 -----⁸In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. ⁹And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. 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.' "

Two thirds shall be cut off and perish: refers to the self-serving, hypocritical and prideful religious leaders, the chief priests, the Pharisees, the scribes and elders who struck the LORD'S shepherd (Jesus) so they could maintain their own power and control and all others who acted against Christ and his followers.

One third shall be left alive: refers to the Jewish and Gentile people who accepted Christ prior to his death and resurrection.

Tested as gold is tested: refers to the tremendous persecution that followed for those who believed the Gospel and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, after Christ's death and resurrection the religious leaders, the chief priests, the Pharisees and scribes aggressively set about to destroy the church and persecute and imprison whoever confessed to believe in Christ.

A totally new spiritual age began: at the rejection of Christ the greater part of Israel were cut off, meaning they were rejected by God, but a remnant were saved, (i.e. Jews and Gentiles who accepted him). When the religious leaders, the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes, struck (killed) the LORD'S shepherd (Jesus) the entire Levitical priesthood, ceremonial laws, feast and holy days, were abolished and all the power and control the religious leaders had over the working class was done away with.

Now both Jews and Gentiles could have a personal relationship with God through faith in the God's perfect and eternal High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Commonwealth of Israel.

it is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

The practical application: of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in.

It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.