

Zechariah 13 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission

[Zechariah Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

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ZECHARIAH ("Yahweh Remembers") Click for EXCELLENT TIMELINE of Zechariah - Go to Page 43 Other Timelines on Zechariah					
Zec 1:1-6	Zec 1:7-6:8	Zec 6:9-6:15	Zec 7:1-8:23	Zec 9:1-11:17	Zec 12:1-14:21
Return to Me Zec 1:3	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Branch	Four Messages	Two Oracles or Burdens	
Zechariah 1-6			Zechariah 7-8	Zechariah 9-14	
Apocalyptic			Ethical Prophecy 1) Rebuke 2) Reminder 3) Restoration 4) Return	Predictive Prophecy 1) Burden Against the Nations 2) Burden For Israel	
Call to Repentance	Eight Visions (Picture)	Crowning of Joshua	Question of the Fasts (Calendar)	First Burden: Rejection of Messiah	Second Burden: Reign of Messiah
The Way of Salvation	Messianic Kingdom Visions	The Bringer of Salvation	Commands Concerning Present Things	Oracles (Burdens) Concerning Future Things	
	Behold the man...the Branch		Love, Truth and Peace	The Day of the Lord	
PICTURES			PROBLEMS	PREDICTIONS	
ISRAEL'S FORTUNE			ISRAEL'S FASTING	ISRAEL'S FUTURE	
"My house will be built in Jerusalem" Zec 1:16			"Let your hands be strong" Zec 8:9	"HOLY TO THE LORD" Zec 14:20	

PLACE: JERUSALEM	
Written During the Building of the Temple 520-518BC	Written after the Temple Was Completed circa 480-470BC

Zechariah 13:1 "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity

- **In that day:** Zec 12:3,8,11
- **a fountain will be opened** Job 9:30,31 Ps 51:2,7 Isa 1:16-18 Eze 36:25 Joh 1:29 19:34,35 1Co 6:11 Eph 5:25-27 Tit 3:5-7 Heb 9:13,14 1Jn 1:7 5:6 1Pe 1:19 Rev 1:5,6 7:13,14
- **for the house of David:** Zec 12:7,10
- **for sin and for impurity,** Lev 15:2-33 Nu 19:9-22 Eze 36:17,29

GOD PROVIDES A FOUNTAIN FOR CLEANSING

In that day - First note from the chart summaries of Zechariah above that we are in the predictive prophecy section and chapters 12-14 form a unit which summarize the future history of the nation of Israel in the last days, referred to repeatedly by the phrase **in that day**. In fact many scholars connect Zechariah 13:1 as directly related to the events in Zechariah 12 (remembering that the chapter breaks were not infallibly inspired but were arranged by fallible men.) This phrase is a key word (phrase) in Zechariah 12-14 occurring 3x in 3v in Zechariah 13 and 17x in 16v in Zechariah 12-14. This phrase is part of the time period referred to as the Day of the Lord, and in Zechariah 12-14 specifically refers to that time of the Day of the Lord which is known as the Great Tribulation (Begins - Mt 24:15-note, named - Mt 24:21-note), the Time of Jacob's Distress (Jeremiah 30:7-note) or "a time of distress" (Da 12:1-note). This period of the Day of the Lord corresponds to the last 3.5 years of Daniel's Seventieth Week during which time the **Campaign of Armageddon** will be waged and be brought to an abrupt termination when the King o kings returns (Rev 19:11-16-note) and defeats all of His and Israel's enemies (Rev 19:17-21-note). Daniel depicts this final destruction of the Gentile nations by Messiah as a **Stone** (Messiah) that returns to crush Nebuchadnezzar's statue which symbolizes all of the anti-God, anti-Christ nations of the world. After crushing the Gentile kingdoms Messiah establishes His Millennial Kingdom (Da 2:34-35-note, Da 2:44-45-note).

Eugene Merrill - The lamentation of repentance that results when Judah sees the one whom they have pierced by their apostate disobedience will in turn result in their forgiveness, an act described in the present unit as a purification or cleansing. As is always the case with genuine conversion there are both negative and positive aspects. The positive consists of the restoration to fellowship that takes place when sin has been forgiven (Zech 13:1). The negative involves the removal of those habits and attitudes that occasioned the interruption of fellowship between God and His people in the first place (Zech 13:2-6). (An Exegetical Commentary - Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).

Here are the uses of **In that day** in Zechariah 12-14:

Zech. 12:3; Zech. 12:4; Zech. 12:6; Zech. 12:8; Zech. 12:9; Zech. 12:11; Zech. 13:1; Zech. 13:2; Zech. 13:4;
Zech. 14:4; Zech. 14:6; Zech. 14:8; Zech. 14:9; Zech. 14:13; Zech. 14:20; Zech. 14:21

Zechariah means "God remembers" and here the prophet records in essence that God remembers His covenant with Abraham, the fountain depicting the extension of the Abrahamic Covenant in the New Covenant in Messiah's blood....

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke (OLD COVENANT OF LAW), although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the **covenant** which I will make with the house of Israel after those days (THIS HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED TO ISRAEL YET BUT WILL BE WHEN THE DELIVERER COMES - SEE Ro 11:26-27-note)," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (THIS IS A REFLECTION OF THE FOUNTAIN THAT WAS OPENED "IN EMMANUEL'S VEINS"). 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for **I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember**

no more." (Jer 31:31-34-commentary) (See [Covenant: Relationship of the Abrahamic, Old and New Covenants](#))

Spurgeon remarks "How much God can crowd into a single **day!**" (Ed: Of course this "Day" of the Lord is not just a single day but an extended period, but it is still a true statement that our omnipotent God can fill single day like no other. Are you allowing Him to fill your day to the brim with His Word and His Spirit?).

Ebenezer Henderson writes that 'This verse is intimately connected with the subject of the concluding verses of the preceding chapter. It is designed to relieve the anxious and troubled minds of the penitents there described.' ([Zechariah 13](#) about which Charles Feinberg writes "One of the finest commentaries on the Minor Prophets, making splendid use of the cognate Semitic languages.")

Warren Wiersbe - Isaiah had admonished the nation, "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes" (Isa. 1:16NKJV), but they refused to listen. Jeremiah had pleaded with his people, "O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved" (Jer. 4:14NKJV), but they wouldn't obey. But now, in response to Israel's repentance and faith, the Lord will wash them clean! (Be Heroic)

A fountain will be opened - This verse is the basis for William Cowper's beloved hymn **There Is A Fountain Filled with Blood** (see [lyrics below](#)). Clearly this **fountain** that is **opened** is a figurative **fountain**, for the effect of this fountain is to cleanse from **sin and impurity**. No amount of external washing cleanses **sin and impurity** in our heart contrary to the false teaching that insists water baptism is necessary for cleansing and forgiveness ([see note](#))! The Spirit of God had been poured out in Zechariah 12:10-note, opening their eyes to look upon their Messiah with faith and repentance and here we see that for opened eyes the Lord would provide an opened fountain, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." (Ro 11:36-[note](#))

Zechariah 13:1 is in effect a reversal of Israel's rejection of Jehovah's recorded so poignantly by the prophet Jeremiah...

"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, **The fountain of living waters** (cf Zech 14:8-note), To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.

Matthew Henry - *In that day*, when the Spirit of grace is poured out to set them a mourning for their sins, they shall not mourn as those who have no hope, but they shall have their sins pardoned, and the comfort of their pardon in their bosoms. Their consciences shall be purified and pacified by the *blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin*, 1 John 1:7-[note](#). For Christ is exalted to give both repentance and remission of sins and where he gives the one no doubt he gives the other. This *fountain opened* is the pierced side of Jesus Christ, spoken of just before (Zechariah 12:10-note), for thence came there out *blood and water*, and both for cleansing (cf John 19:34). And those who *look upon Christ pierced*, and mourn for their sins that pierced him, and are therefore in bitterness for him, may look again upon Christ pierced and rejoice in him, because it pleased the Lord thus to smite this rock, that it might be to us a *fountain of living waters*. (cf Ex 17:6 "*Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall **strike the rock***, [cf Deut. 32:15] *and water will come out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*" cf 1 Cor 10:4 "*all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ!*")

Talbot W Chambers - A fountain is shut up as long as it remains under ground, or is sealed from access (Song 4:12); it is opened when it breaks forth and flows freely. (Lange's Commentary)

POSB - Note that the death and resurrection of Christ had already opened the door to salvation, but Israel had refused to enter in. In the Day of the LORD, though, the fountain of God's Spirit will open and gush forth like a raging river, and Israel will at last accept her true Savior.

Some writers see the symbol of the fountain as much like an [artesian well](#) that continually gushes forth providing spiritual cleansing, in this context for the third of Israel who will look on Messiah, mourn, repent and be saved by grace through faith (Zech 12:10-14-note).

Fountain (04726) (**maqor** from **qur** = to bore, dig) means a fountain. The first use in Lev 12:7 refers to the "flow" of menses which made a woman ritually unclean in the OT (cf Lev 20:18 of a man who becomes unclean). Maqor is a literal [fountain](#) in Hos 13:15. Most of the uses of **maqor** are figurative where fountain means a source of something as in the following uses. The phrase "**fountain of life**" is frequent (Ps 36:9 = God Himself is the source of life), "fountain of life" (Ps 68:26 = **the Lord is pictured as the fountain or life of Israel**, a fountain they rejected = Jer 2:13), "your fountain" is a comparison with a man's wife and speaks of the sexual pleasure that must be fulfilled at home (Pr 5:18), "fountain of life" (Pr 10:11 = What the righteous say is beneficial to life or life-giving. Their words are life-giving but the words of the wicked are violent.), "a fountain of life" (Pr 13:14 = the teaching of the wise is life-giving), "the fear of the LORD is a fountain of life" (life giving) (Pr 14:27), "understanding is a fountain of life" (Pr 16:22 = like a

fountain this wisdom will be a constant provision for living in this world), "fountain of wisdom" (Pr 18:4 = wisdom is a continuous source of refreshing and beneficial ideas), God calls Himself the "fountain of life" which His people had forsaken (Jer 2:13), Jeremiah refers to his eyes as "a fountain of tears," (Jer 9:1). **Boice** adds that "The idea of God being a fountain to His people is found frequently in the Old Testament, but Zechariah's treatment is possibly the richest of all."

George Klein writes that **maqor** "describes a source of water that flows unaided by human hands, more like an artesian well (Hos 13:15) than a fountain. From the beginnings of creation, rivers flowed from Eden, watering the garden. Flowing waters often symbolize the manifold blessings that the Lord showered on all of his creation. The first occasion when God opened a fountain to cleanse sin is in Gen 7:11, although this passage differs linguistically as well as in the judgmental overtones of the passage. Various passages in the Torah mandate washing with water to accompany repentance and sacrifice for cleansing from impurity. Numbers 31:23 states, "And anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through the water" (cf. Nu 8:7; 19:9–21). Later, Ezek 47:1–12 develops the theme of life-giving waters, describing a river flowing from the eschatological temple. Ezekiel's river gives life to all, including the fruit trees whose "fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing" (Ezek 47:12b). Ezekiel's river envisions a time when God will restore the creation to its former pristine state, including the removal of the sin and concomitant impurity that stains every person." (New American Commentary - excellent resource on Zechariah)

Maqor - 18x in 17v - flow(3), fountain(14), well(1).

Lev. 12:7; Lev. 20:18; Ps. 36:9; Ps. 68:26; Prov. 5:18; Prov. 10:11; Prov. 13:14; Prov. 14:27; Prov. 16:22; Prov. 18:4; Prov. 25:26; Jer. 2:13; Jer. 9:1; Jer. 17:13; Jer. 51:36; Hos. 13:15; Zech. 13:1

House of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem - Notice another link with the previous [pericope](#) - **the house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem**, for they are the two entities singled out in Zech 12:10-note, the very ones upon whom Jehovah will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication. This refers specifically to those descendants from King David's line, which suggests that the Jews may know to which tribe they belong, but in any event God knows which Jews belong to the house of David. **Inhabitants of Jerusalem** includes the rest of the Jews, so that this combination speaks of the complete cleansing (royalty and laity) available from this supernatural fountain which as William Cowper puts it is "a fountain fill'd with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

Eugene Merrill on **house of David...inhabitants of Jerusalem** - He writes that these two groups "are only representative of the whole redeemed people as Zechariah 12:12–14-note puts beyond doubt. What is important to note here is that the cleansing fountain of 13:1 is presupposed by the divine initiative of grace in Zechariah 12:10-note. It is only when the people of YHWH face up to Him as the one whom they have wounded and then repent sincerely of their wickedness that the fountain of cleansing is opened up to them. This is not in any way contrary to the Christian gospel message (Ro 10:9–10-note; cf. Titus 3:5-note). ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

Charles Feinberg - There exists the closest possible connection between Zechariah 13 and the previous one. Zechariah continues the theme of Israel's conversion to the Lord. **In the day** of Israel's glad salvation and restoration to the Lord, a fountain will be opened to all the people for sin and uncleanness. The figure of the **fountain** is eminently in place here, for it is ever flowing, not like the laver of the tabernacle and Temple that needed to be filled repeatedly. The cleansing fountain was opened long ago at Calvary potentially, now actually for them. Cowper's well-known hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood," had this verse for its basis. Israel now enters into the provision of God at Calvary. (See passages that follow this note) Ro 11:26-27; also Is 33:24; 59:20-21; 65:19; and Eze 36:25; 39:29.) The provision of God will avail for both sin and uncleanness. Zechariah has in mind moral not ceremonial uncleanness. Justification is here and sanctification as well. Judicial guilt and moral impurity will be removed at the same time. All ranks and classes in the nation will have this blessed provision. The terms for sin and uncleanness have been used with special reference to idolatry (though the second term has a specific reference to the periodic illness of women), thus forming a transition to the truth stated in the next verse of Zech 13. (Cp. 1 Ki 12:30; Eze 7:19-20.) The cleansing is followed by the abolition of idolatry. Idols, false prophets, and the unclean spirit will all be done away with. To cut off the names of the idols out of the land, so that their names will no more be remembered, is to destroy their authority, power, and influence upon Israel. God's people will cease to acknowledge them. The worship of God will be fully purified and cleansed. God had forbidden long since even the mention of the names of idols. (Cp. Ex 23:13; Dt 13:3; and Ps 16:4.) (The Minor Prophets)

John MacArthur adds that "the storm that broke upon Israel for the crime of Calvary and has raged with unmitigated fury for long, tragic centuries, will suddenly end and salvation will turn sin into righteousness in the gladness and glory of the kingdom of Messiah Jesus." (MacArthur Study Bible)

Multiple passages in both the Old and New Testament parallel this prediction of a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins for the nation of Israel...

Romans 11:26-29- and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE [DELIVERER](#) (MESSIAH, KING OF KINGS, THE STONE) WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (See Jeremiah 31:31-34-commentary on the New Covenant) 28 From the standpoint of the Gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

For more in discussion of this important passage see the following resources:

- [Romans 11:26-29 In Depth Comments](#)
- [Romans 11:25-36 The Salvation of Israel](#) - Tony Garland
- [Romans 11 Does God Have a Future for Israel? by Gil Rugh](#) - 46 page booklet
- [The Jewish Problem - small book by Jewish believer David Baron \(written in 1891-interesting!\)](#)

Isaiah 12:2-3 Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation." 3 Therefore you will joyously draw water **From the springs of salvation.**

Constable - Water is a rich symbol of salvation, especially to a people who lived in a land as dry as Palestine. God had provided salvation in the form of water for the Israelites during their wilderness march (Exod. 15:27; 17:1-7). Now the future Israelites anticipate securing His salvation and sharing it with others, specifically the Gentiles (cf. Ps. 116:13). This verse became a common saying among the Jews and led to a water-drawing ceremony (cf. John 4:15; 7:37-38). Water represents everything necessary for supporting life. (Expository Notes)

ESV Study Bible - Endless supplies of salvation, richly enjoyed (cf. Ps 36:8; 63:1; 65:9; 107:35; 143:6; Isa. 8:6; 32:2; 35:6-7; 44:3; 55:1; Jer. 2:13; John 4:13-14; 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:17)

MacArthur - Isaiah's readers doubtless thought of how God satisfied the physical thirst of their ancestors in the Wilderness of Sin (Ex 17:1-7). The same provision will apply for their descendants when the Messiah comes to deliver the nation (41:17, 18; cf. 30:25; 35:6, 7; 43:19; Ps 107:35). The NT amplifies this provision to include the supply of spiritual water for the thirsty soul (Jn 4:10, 14; 7:37; Rev 7:16, 17; 21:6; 22:17). (Study Bible)

Isaiah 33:24 And no resident will say, "I am sick"; The people who dwell there ([JERUSALEM IN MESSIAH'S MILLENNIAL KINGDOM](#)-cf Isa 33:20) will be forgiven (Lxx =aphiemi) their iniquity.

Isaiah 59:20-21 "A Redeemer ([THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER OR GOEL](#), THE MESSIAH, THE SUFFERING SERVANT) will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob (FOR THE BELIEVING [REMNANT](#), ONE-THIRD OF THE NATION - Zech 13:8-9-note)," declares the LORD. 21 "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD (See [New Covenant in the Old Testament](#)): "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever." (AN EVERLASTING COVENANT - THE SPIRIT ABIDING ON HIS [REMNANT](#) FOREVER.)

Isaiah 65:19 "I will (GOD IS SPEAKING) also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; and there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying ([IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM](#)).

Ezekiel 36:25-32-note "Then (WHEN? SEE Ezek 36:24) **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols (PARALLELS Zech 13:1).** 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (See [New Covenant in the Old Testament](#)). 28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 29 "Moreover, **I will save you from all your uncleanness (PARALLELS Zech 13:1);** and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations (DESCRIBED IN Zechariah 12:10-note). 32 "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

Ezekiel 39:29-note "I will not hide My face from them any longer, for **I will have poured out My Spirit on the**

house of Israel," declares the Lord GOD.

Criswell - Zechariah speaks symbolically of a never-ending "source of water" for spiritual cleansing and thus for eternal life (cf. John 4:14; 7:38; Rev. 21:6). That the rejection of the Messiah could result in the gracious provision for salvation is a mystery, but its universal application to the church should not blind us to its original context as a promise to Israel (Ro 11:11, 12, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 26). (Believer's Study Bible)

F Duane Lindsey - At the Second Advent of Christ, the fountain will be opened *experientially* for the Jewish nation. (BKC)

Pusey - "The fountain shall be not simply opened, but shall remain open."

Spurgeon adds that "According to the verse before us this provision is inexhaustible. There is a fountain opened; not a cistern nor a reservoir, but a fountain. A fountain continues still to bubble up, and is as full after fifty years as at the first; and even so the provision and the mercy of God for the forgiveness and the justification of our souls continually flows and overflows....The means by which sin and sinfulness can be put away are at this moment accessible to the sons of men. The atonement is not a fountain hid and concealed, and closed and barred and bolted, it is a fountain open."

A continually open **fountain** reminds us of John's teaching that "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, **and the blood of Jesus His Son** ([present tense](#) = continually) **cleanses us from all sin.**" (1 Jn 1:7-[note](#)) Have you gone to fountain?

James Hamilton wisely wrote "You that have faith in the **Fountain**, frequent it. Beware of two errors which are very natural and very disastrous. Beware of thinking any sin too great for it; beware of thinking any sin too small. There is not a sin so little but it may be the germ of everlasting perdition; there is not a sin so enormous but a drop of atoning, blood will wash it away as utterly as if it were drowned in the depths of the sea."

NET Note - This reference to the fountain opened up...to cleanse them from sin and impurity is anticipatory of the cleansing from sin that lies at the heart of the NT gospel message (Ro 10:9–10; Titus 3:5).

Spurgeon on a fountain will be opened - What is this **fountain** that is said to be **opened**, and when and how was it **opened**? It is a **fountain opened** to the house of David and its inhabitants for sin and uncleanness. The blessing here spoken of deals with the greatest evils mankind is subject to—sin and uncleanness. We have all fallen; we have all proved our fall by our sinful practice; sin has separated us from God and brought on us his divine wrath. **Uncleanness**, which is a tendency to continue in sin, prevents our returning to our heavenly Father and entering into renewed fellowship with him. This great evil in its double form is, according to the text, distinctly recognized by God. It is not winked at; it is not treated as a trifle that may remain. Yet we may be beloved by God and be happy; preparation is made for evil's removal. The text does not say that the filthiness is concealed, that the transgression is excused, but that there is a **fountain opened** for the effective removal of sin and uncleanness. In the gospel God never trifles with human sin; we proclaim full, free, immediate forgiveness to the chief of sinners, but it is not in a way that makes us think sin is trivial in God's esteem. By the sacrifice of His Son, God renders it possible for Him to be merciful without being unjust (cf Ro 3:23-26). In the substitution of Christ Jesus, we see justice and mercy peacefully embracing and conferring double honor on one another (cf Ps 85:10). (CSB Spurgeon Study Bible)

Spurgeon (Exposition) - They shall see that pardon when they have truly seen their sin. When once the foulness of their transgression is perceived, then the fount, sin of cleansing shall be perceived, too. No man ever knows the preciousness of the God given remedy till he has felt the force of the terrible disease. No one by faith plunges into the crystal fount of perfect cleansing without first lamenting the filthiness which needs to be removed.

In his sermon on Zechariah 13:1 entitled [The Open Fountain](#), **C H Spurgeon** has this introduction

We do not grudge to the seed of Israel after the flesh (**NOTE HE IS AFFIRMING ZECHARIAH IS WRITTEN PRIMARILY TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND NOT THE CHURCH REPLACING ISRAEL! THANKFULLY THIS GREAT PREACHER DID NOT ESPOUSE [replacement theology](#)!**) the first application of this very precious promise. There will be a day when those (JEWS) who have so long refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah shall discern the marks of his mission, and shall mourn that they have pierced him. When the tribes of Israel shall lament their sin with holy earnestness, there shall be no mourning to exceed it, they shall weep even as in the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, when the well beloved Josiah was slain (Zech 12:11-14-note). Discovering that their nation rejected the Son of God, when they crucified Jesus of Nazareth their deeply religious spirit shall be filled with the utmost bitterness of repentance, and each man and each woman shall cry for pardon to the Lord of mercy. Then, close upon the heels of the weeping shall come the full and complete forgiveness; the transgression of the tribes shall be put away in one day; **they shall perceive that the very side which they pierced has yielded a fountain to cleanse them from their sin;**

joyfully shall they behold on Calvary the brazen serpent lifted up for their healing (Nu 21:9, Jn 3:14-15, Jn 12:32, 33), the Paschal Lamb slain for their redemption (1 Cor 5:7, John 1:29), the sin-offering sacrificed in their stead. What a blessed day will that be when **“all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”** (Ro 11:26-27-note) **O that you and I might live to see that happy era when all the Jewish race shall behold their Messiah; for then shall the fullness of the Gentiles be gathered in** (Ro 11:25-note). **(AMEN AND AMEN!) Our history is wrapped up with theirs.** “Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? (Ro 11:12KJV-note)” ([The Open Fountain](#))

Chambers has an interesting note on the image of a fountain in relation to other OT teachings - The reference appears to be to a twofold usage in the Mosaic ritual; one, the sprinkling of the Levites at their consecration with “water of purifying,” lit., sin-water, i. e., for purification from sin (Nu 8:7), and the other the sprinkling of persons contaminated by contact with death, with the water prepared from the ashes of the red heifer, called the water of uncleanness, i. e., which removed uncleanness. In both these cases the impurity denoted the defilement of sin, and the outward purification was a symbol of the inward. So the water which flows from the fountain in the text, is a water of sprinkling by which sin and uncleanness are removed. It does not need to be renewed from time to time, as was the case with the Levitical waters, but issues from a living well-spring.

For sin and impurity - **Sin** is the "missing" and **impurity** the "mess", "the former having to do with lack of conformity to the divine will and the latter with the condition or state of defilement brought about by any breach of the principles of holiness. One is more an active expression of sin and the other a passive result. Here in the passage both have to do with the matter of idolatry and false prophets." (Merrill)

This promise in Zechariah 13:1 is paralleled in Ezekiel's prophecy where God promises

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (Ezekiel 36:25-32-note).

Sprinkling in Ezekiel, a fountain in Zechariah. The purpose of the **fountain** being opened is for spiritual cleansing from sin and uncleanness. **Sin** is uncleanness or **impurity** before the Lord. Praise God for the "open fountain" available to believers today, so that we can have full assurance of full cleansing for "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn 1:9-note) When was the last time you specifically (not generally, but naming them one by one) confessed your sins to Jehovah? We do well to note that the verb **confess** is in the **present tense**, calling for confession to be a lifestyle, a habitual practice, a daily practice (for we sin daily, cf Mt 6:12-note), something that can only be empowered by the indwelling Spirit Who convicts of sin (Jn 16:8).

Guzik - Our own works at reform or restitution can't cleanse us; our past, present, or promised works can't cleanse—only His fountain! (Ed: A corollary message is "Don't TRY to **do** better (enabled by self)! Instead DIE to **be** better (enabled by the Spirit)" The first is external and legalistic. The latter is internal and liberating! Be free in Christ!

Morgan - Sin and uncleanness must be put away. They cannot be excused, condoned, or compromised with. The foundations of the throne of God are righteousness and justice.

Wiersbe - The Jews could cleanse their external ceremonial uncleanness by washing in water, but for internal cleansing the sinful heart of men and women can be cleansed only by the blood of the Savior (Lev 16:30-note; Lev 17:11-note). "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2-note, NKJV). (Be Heroic)

Sin (02403)(**chattat/chattath**) means wrong, iniquity, sin. **Chattat**, like it's NT counterpart (**hamartia**), means to miss or fall short of the mark (see this literal meaning "Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and **not miss.**" Jdg 20:16-note), which ultimately is the will and plan of God as revealed in Scripture. The result of chattat/chattah is that man misses the goal God has for him by failing to observe the requirements of holy living and thus falls short of spiritual wholeness.

Zechariah alluded to this cleansing from **sin and impurity** earlier (Zech 3:1–10,3 = filthy garments in Hebrew literally excrement-covered garments!), when Joshua the High Priest was cleansed of filthy robes as a symbol of Messiah's end-time cleansing of Israel. In other words in Zech 3:4 the removal of filthy garments by the angels ("who were standing before him") depicted the promised future forensic justification, the salvation of the nation (cf. Zech 3:9 where "stone" refers to Messiah; Zech 12:10–13:1; Ro 11:25–27).

Ezra returning from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem sums up Israel's **impurity** (niddah) writing

Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, which You have

commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land (ISRAEL) which you (EZRA) are entering to possess is an **unclean** (niddah) land with the **uncleanness** (niddah) of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations ([toebah](#)) which have filled (Heb = [male](#); Lxx = [pimplemi](#)) it from end to end and with their impurity ([tumah](#)). (Ezra 9:10-11)

Impurity (uncleanness)([05079](#))(**niddah** from **nadad** = to retreat, stray) means filthiness and describes the condition of being ceremonially impure and unsuitable for religious worship or service. **Niddah** refers first to a woman's flow of blood during her menstruation period (or childbirth), during which time she was considered impure and ritually unclean and had to be cleansed with water (Lev 12:2, 5-note, Lev 15:19-20,26-note; Nu. 19:9; Ezek 18:6; 22:10). Everything on which a menstruous women might lie or sit was pronounced ritually unclean (niddâh). **Niddah** came to mean anything polluted, detestable, or unclean (Lev. 20:21-note; Ezra 9:11; Lam. 1:17). The phrase hâyâh leniddâh means to become a detestable thing (Ezek. 7:19-note). Ezekiel applies the word to the menstrual period in his description of the righteous man who, among other things, does not have intercourse with a woman during the time of her period (Ezk 18:6; 22:10) (a law dependent on Lev 18:19). See also Ezk 22:10.

Thomas McComiskey - Metaphorically, the concept of the ritual impurity of the menstrual period was used by Ezekiel to describe the nature of Israel's sin (36:17). Basic to the metaphorical use of the term is the concept of abhorrence inherent in the physical origin of the term. It is used of useless currency cast into the streets like an abhorred thing (Ezk 7:19-20). It is applied to Israel's most heinous sins (Zech 13:1; Ezr 9:11; II Chr 29:5). The word is used in the technical expression (IN AN ANTITHETICAL SENSE) "water of impurity," (mê niddâ) a purifying water used in the ceremony of cleansing from the defilement of death (Nu 19:9, 13, 20-21, 31:23). (TWOT)

Niddah - 29x in 24v - abhorrent(1), abhorrent thing(2), impurity(8), menstrual(1), menstrual impurity(7), menstrual period(1), menstruation(2), menstruation*(1), period(1), time(1), unclean(1), unclean thing(1), uncleanness(2).

Lev. 12:2; Lev. 12:5; Lev. 15:19; Lev. 15:20; Lev. 15:24; Lev. 15:25; Lev. 15:26; Lev. 15:33; Lev. 18:19; Lev. 20:21; Num. 19:9; Num. 19:13; Num. 19:20; Num. 19:21; Num. 31:23; 2 Chr. 29:5; Ezr. 9:11; Lam. 1:17; Ezek. 7:19; Ezek. 7:20; Ezek. 18:6; Ezek. 22:10; Ezek. 36:17; Zech. 13:1

ADDENDUM - John Piper highly respected in reformed circles preached an interesting sermon in 1982 on Zechariah 13 entitled [There Shall Be A Fountain Opened](#). Here are quotes from that sermon

Here (Ro 11:12, 15) **Israel is distinct from converted Gentiles and is promised a glorious future** So a few verses later, in Ro 11:25, 26, Paul says, "A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, and so all Israel will be saved." In the context of Romans 11:12, 15, it is unwarranted to interpret "all Israel" here to mean anything other than corporate, ethnic Israel. So one of my guiding principles in reading Old Testament prophecy about Israel is that there is a glorious future ahead, when Israel will repent, turn to Christ, and be saved....

Finally we ask, for whom does this opened fountain provide cleansing? Who can read Zechariah and find personal hope in it? The most obvious answer is the Jewish people. Even though they have displeased God (1 Thessalonians 2:15) by rejecting his Son, their Messiah, to this day, God still promises mercy. He will one day lift the veil off their minds (2 Corinthians 3:14), take away the hardening of their hearts (Romans 11:25), and pour out a spirit of grace and supplication upon them, and they will turn to Jesus and confess him as Lord and Christ. We may even be seeing the beginnings of that final outpouring in the contemporary messianic Jewish movement. And we should pray for all our Jewish friends and associates, and speak to them with boldness about Christ.

Now to be fair Piper does say "by faith in Christ Gentile believers become full partners in the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament." So he does not go as far as dispensationalists who say ethnic Israel will receive the land promises. Nevertheless, he clearly states **Israel is distinct from converted Gentiles and is promised a glorious future**

Steven Cole - You've been working out in the yard on a hot summer day. Your sweaty body has attracted the dirt like a magnet. You're caked with grime. You need to attend a wedding that afternoon, so you go inside, put on your best clean clothes, and head out the door. Wait a minute! What's missing? A shower! Nobody would just change clothes without first washing off the dirt and sweat. When you're hot and dirty, nothing feels better than a shower. This physical picture has a spiritual analogy, but there's a difference. The entire human race reeks of sin in the presence of the holy God. But because we all smell the same, we tend not to notice how foul we really smell. Many go their entire lives without sensing their need for cleansing from sin. Others may think that their good works cover the foul odor of their sin, and so they put on their clean clothes without showering. But the Bible has great news: God has graciously provided a fountain for sinners to be cleansed so that they may become His holy people.

That's the message of Zechariah 13, which is closely connected with chapter 12. We saw there how God promised to save His people according to His purpose. The primary interpretation of these verses is with reference to the Jews ("the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem," Zechariah 12:10; 13:1). God promises to pour out on them "the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son" (Zech 12:10). When Zech 13:1 begins, "In that day," it refers to that day of great mourning in Jerusalem (Zech 12:11). Just prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ, God will pour out His Spirit on the Jews, so that, as Paul puts it, "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). But since the Gentiles have now been made partakers of the New Covenant through the gospel (Ro 11:12-24; 15:8-12), the promises of Zechariah 12 & 13 apply to all people. For us, as well as for the Jews, God has opened a fountain for sin and for impurity. Everyone who is dirty and defiled by sin may come to God's fountain for cleansing. Zechariah 13 makes four points:

1. We all need God's fountain to cleanse us from sin and impurity (Zech 13:1).

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). If we compare ourselves with ourselves, we may conclude that we're not very dirty: "I'm cleaner than the criminals in prison. I'm cleaner than the people who hang out in bars. I'm cleaner than my neighbor who doesn't go to church. I'm cleaner than my family members, who have numerous faults that I could tell you about. I'm cleaner than those hypocrites who go to my church. Sure, I've got my faults, but I'm not filthy!" But then, like Isaiah, we get a glimpse of the Lord, high and lifted up, and of the holy angels who never cease proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," and instantly we cry out, "I am undone!" One of the first evidences that God's Spirit is at work in your heart is that you recognize your sinfulness in the presence of the holy God and your need for cleansing. Note three things about God's fountain:

A. God's fountain stems from His grace.

Israel pierced the Messiah whom God sent to save them (Zech 12:10)! They did not deserve His mercy or forgiveness, but God graciously provided a fountain to cleanse from sin and impurity. The Hebrew word for "sin" comes from a root meaning, "to miss" (Merrill Unger, Zechariah: Prophet of God's Glory [Zondervan] p. 222). It is used of sins against other people and of sins against God. The word for "impurity" designates "that which is to be fled from or shunned" (ibid.). It was used of the ceremonial defilement of women on their menstrual cycle and of the defilement that came from touching a dead body. Together these words show that we all have missed God's standard of holiness in our relationships with Him and with one another. And, our sins are repugnant and offensive to God. To try to cover our sins with our good works would be like putting on clean clothes over a filthy body. If we are to be forgiven and cleansed, it can only come through God's undeserved favor, His grace. Augustus Toplady put it this way in his hymn, "[Rock of Ages](#)":

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

**Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.**

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

B. God's fountain is inexhaustible.

We don't often see natural fountains or springs in dry Northern Arizona, but there is an impressive one at Fossil Springs. As I recall, it pours forth over a million gallons of water every day, feeding Fossil Creek. A fountain like that is fed from huge underground aquifers, so that it keeps flowing, even in times of drought. That is a picture of God's inexhaustible fountain for sin and for impurity. It flows and flows and flows. God has grace greater than all of our sins! You may be thinking, "But you don't know how terrible some of my past sins were!" True, but God does know, and He opened this fountain for sin and for impurity. That fountain cleansed the sins of David, an adulterer and murderer. It cleansed the sins of wicked King Manasseh, who practiced witchcraft, offered his sons in the fire to false gods, and led Judah into horrible sin. It cleansed the sins of the chief of sinners, who described himself as "a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor." But he went on to say, "the grace of our Lord was more than abundant" (1 Tim. 1:13-15, italics mine). That same inexhaustible grace is available to you.

Charles Spurgeon ("[The Open Fountain.](#)" [Zechariah 13:1](#)) points out that it would be ludicrous for someone to protest, "I can't bathe because I am too filthy!" It would be equally ridiculous to say, "I need to clean up myself before I come to this fountain!" God provides the fountain to cleanse the most foul, dirty, defiled sinners. Their dirt can never pollute this fountain, because it just keeps on flowing to wash away all of our filth.

C. God's fountain must be applied individually.

This fountain won't do you any good if you look at it and think, "I wish my wife and kids would get under that water!" It won't do you any good to stand there and think, "It probably would be refreshing to plunge in." To receive the benefit of God's fountain, you must look to Jesus and recognize that your sins put Him on the cross. As God's Spirit opens your eyes to your true guilt before Him, you will mourn. But don't stop there! Let that mourning motivate you to jump into God's fountain. You've got to apply it individually to your heart. The instant that you do, you will know the joy of God's forgiveness.

I like the outdoors, but I'm not a true outdoorsman, because I can't stand to go for days without a shower. True outdoorsmen can hike for days with a heavy pack, sweating in the same underwear without taking a shower. Some of them are hearty enough to jump in a snow-fed stream to wash off, and I've done that when I was desperate. But I'm only good for a night or two in the backcountry before I am desperate for a warm shower.

To enter a relationship with the holy God, we must come to His fountain to cleanse us from our sins. And, we should take frequent showers to wash off the defilement of the sins that we commit after salvation. As 1 John 1:9 promises, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Come often to God's fountain! ([Zechariah 13:1-9 God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

William Cowper's famous hymn, "[There is a fountain filled with blood](#)" is based on Zechariah 13:1 Olney Hymns, by William Cowper,

**There is a fountain fill'd with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.**

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.

E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save;
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord I believe Thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And form'd by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but Thine.

One of my favorite hymns by **Charles Wesley** is [Arise My Soul, Arise](#) (or this [beautiful more traditional version](#)) which speaks of the cleansing power of the fountain from Emmanuel's veins

Arise, my soul, arise;
shake off thy guilty fears;
**the bleeding Sacrifice
in my behalf appears:**
before the throne my Surety stands,
before the throne my Surety stands:
my name is written on His hands.

2 He ever lives above,
for me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love,
**His precious blood to plead;
His blood atoned for all our race,
His blood atoned for all our race,
and sprinkles now the throne of grace.**

3 **Five bleeding wounds He bears,
received on Calvary;
they pour effectual pray'rs,
they strongly plead for me:**
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

4 The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
the presence of his Son;
**His Spirit answers to the blood,
His Spirit answers to the blood,**
and tells me I am born of God.

5 My God is reconciled;
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear;
with confidence I now draw nigh,
with confidence I now draw nigh,
and, "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

Ira Sankey records the following account of the amazing power of the Gospel as articulated in Wesley's words in [Arise My Soul, Arise](#): (O, for hymns so richly laden with Gospel truth in the modern church, so rich that men and women are saved even by singing the words!)

First published in 1742 under the title, "Behold the Man," this became one of the most useful of Charles Wesley's numerous hymns. In universal use in English countries, and translated into many languages, it has

been the direct instrumentality in the conversion of thousands of souls. It has found expression in the exultant cry on the lips of many a dying saint.

"I have a record," said a Wesleyan missionary laboring in the West Indies, "of two hundred persons, young and old, who received the most direct evidence of the forgiveness of their sins while singing "Arise, my soul." The conversion of the greater number of these persons took place while I was a missionary abroad." (from [Story of Gospel Hymns by Ira Sankey, 1907](#))

Zechariah 13:2 "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.

- **I will cut off the names of the idols from the land** Ex 22:13 De 12:3 Jos 23:7 Ps 16:4 Isa 2:18,20 Eze 30:13 36:25 Eze 37:23 Ho 2:17 14:8 Mic 5:12-14 Zep 1:3,4 2:11
- **I will also remove the prophets:** 1Ki 22:22 Jer 8:10-12 23:14,15 29:23 Eze 13:12-16,23 14:9 Mic 2:11 Mt 7:15 2Co 11:13-15 2Pe 2:1-3,15-19 1Jn 4:1,2 Rev 19:20
- **the unclean spirit from the land:** Mt 12:43 Lu 11:20 Rev 16:13,14 18:2 20:1-3

THE LAND PURGED OF IDOLS AND FALSE PROPHETS

It will come about [in that day](#)," declares the LORD of hosts - That day is the [Day of the Lord](#), specifically that aspect known as the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-[note](#), named - Mt 24:21-[note](#)) which the prophet Jeremiah called the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-[note](#)) and the prophet Daniel called "a time of distress" (Da 12:1-[note](#)). And **that day** in context speaks of the beginning of [Messiah's Millennial reign](#) at which time any and all usurpers to God's rightful role as Sole Supreme Sovereign (idols and false prophets) will be completely eliminated

Declares the LORD of hosts - God said it, that settles it! **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)** is God's Name for man's extremity, those times when we have reached our end, finding ourselves impotent, in turmoil, embroiled in real spiritual warfare (which by the way we are *always* in whether we realize it or not!) and with no other source of help (cp [Jehovah Ezer: The LORD our Helper](#)). So [meditate](#) deeply on the **truths revealed** in the magnificent, sufficient Name of Jehovah Sabaoth and you will find that you will be enabled to "Stand firm ([aorist imperative](#)) therefore, having girded your loins with truth" regarding the LORD of hosts (Eph 6:14- note)

Zechariah had spoken of the spiritual havoc spread by the idols and purveyors of lies in Zech 10:2 - "For the [teraphim](#) speak iniquity, And the diviners see lying visions and tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, They are afflicted, because there is no shepherd." But now in the Millennium the Jews will have the Good Shepherd.

Criswell points out that "Idolatry disappeared during the Babylonian captivity, but will be revived during the Tribulation (Da 9:27; 11:31; Mt. 24:15; 2 Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:4, 11-18)." (Believer's Study Bible)

McComiskey on the significance of even cutting off **the names of the idols** - The "name" of an idol is what gives cognitive reality and identity to it, transforming even a rude pillar into an object that the mind invests with spiritual reality and energy. An image is not a representative of deity until the mind designates it as such. Thus, the reference to the erasing of the idols' **names** from the memories of the people shows that it is this cognitive value that the text envisions. Once an object bore the name of a god, it took on a spiritual energy that could affect human consciousness and society in general. In this way, early Israel's toleration of idols led to societal decay (see the Exposition of Hos. 2:19). (The Minor Prophets)

Eugene Merrill - As part and parcel of the cleansing—indeed, as its manifestation—is the cutting off of the very names of the idols that Israel and Judah had embraced so frequently in the course of their history. The verb "to cut off" (כָּרַת, [karath](#)) is particularly poignant here because it is the technical term used to describe the making of a covenant (בְּרִית כָּרַת, *kārat bērit*), that is, "to cut a covenant." Israel had broken the covenant time and time again, particularly in the worship of other gods in idolatry. Now YHWH has restored the covenant relationship and will "cut off" the names of the idols. This means not only to do away with them by some destructive act such as that of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38–40), but to remove their very remembrance from the minds and hearts of the people (Zech 13:2; cf. Hos. 2:19). ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

That I will cut off the names of the idols from the land and they will no longer be remembered- The NIV is a bit mild in translating this as *banish*. The verb is more literally to **Cut off** means that God will utterly destroy (the meaning of the verb [exolethreuo](#) used in the Septuagint to translate "cut off") all idolatry when He returns as Israel's Deliverer (Ro 11:26-[note](#)). Notice

not only will He destroy the actual physical idols but even their **names**, so that they won't even be able to remember the names of the idols! That's what I call a divine "clean sweep!" purging the minds of men so that they will not even be able to recall these names, but rather will recall only the Name of Jesus, the Name above every name (Php 2:9-11) and worship Him alone in the glorious Millennium. Compare Hosea 2:17. Notice the "**I will**" indicating it is God Himself Who will eradicate the idols even as He had predicted in Micah (circa 750-686 B.C) even before the exile to Babylon...

"**I will cut off** (**karath** = same verb as Zech 13:2) your carved images And your sacred pillars from among you, So that you will no longer bow down To the work of your hands. 14 "**I will** root out (THINK OF WEEDS YOU CAN ONLY ERADICATE BY PULLING UP THEIR ROOTS!) your Asherim from among you And destroy your cities. (Micah 5:13-14-note)

Comment: This prophecy speaks of the coming Messianic Kingdom (Micah 5:4ff-note where "He" = Messiah) and thus directly parallels Zechariah's prophecy.

The phrase **cut off the names** speaks of complete and utter destruction much like happened to Achan in Joshua 7 when not only was he cut off because of his sin (Joshua 7:20-21) but his entire family was eliminated with him, so that there was no one to carry on his name. His name was forever completely **cut off!** (Joshua 7:24-25) and they placed a heap of stones and named it the valley of Achor so that Israel would not forget (Josh 7:26)! That's the idea in this passage!

God's point is clear and reiterates His words of Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the **LORD of hosts**: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.'" The Millennial Kingdom will have One God and give no place to sham gods.

Wiersbe adds "But not only will their hearts be cleansed, but the land itself will be purged of all that is deceitful and defiling. The idols and the false prophets—two of Israel's besetting sins—will be removed, as well as the very "unclean spirit" that caused people to turn from God. (See Zech. 5:5–11.) (Be Heroic)

Guzik has an interesting comment - When you see the gaudy and ornate shrines that supposedly mark holy sites in Israel today, you see that idolatry is still alive and well in the Holy Land. God promises to cleanse the land from such idolatry completely.

Spurgeon - Where there is pardon, there is sure to be sanctification. The idols must fall, and the false prophets must go. We cannot have our sins and have a Saviour too. If we have Christ to blot out our sin, we must have the same Christ to remove sin as to its authority, and power, and dominion over us.

Cut off (destroy) ([03772](#))(**karath**) literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts and implies a violent action. For example, Zipporah "**cut off** her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) or the Jews "cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes." (Nu 13:2-24, cf Dt 19:5, 20:19-20, Jdg 9:48-49, 1Sa 5:4, 17:51, 24:4-5,11, 31:9, 2Sa 10:4, 2Sa 20:22) In another literal use as punishment to Israel for breaking the Mosaic covenant (cf Dt 29:25, 31:16), God says He will "cut down (**karath**) your incense altars" (Lev 26:30, cf Jdg 6:25-26, cf 1Sa 28:9). A sacrificial animal was not to be offered if it was "cut" (**karath**) (Lev 22:24).

We can gain a good sense of the severity of this word by noting that the verb **karath** is used often in the OT for cutting a covenant, which was in fact often instituted by cutting an animal in two and the covenant partners walking between the animals indicating "May God do so to me if I do not keep this covenant." We see this for example in Jer 34:18-20

I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which **they made** (**karath**) before Me, when **they cut** (**karath**) the calf in two and passed between its parts (Jer 34:15)– 19 the officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf– 20 I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.

Karath is translated here in the **Septuagint** with the verb **exolethreuo** which means to eliminate by destruction, to utterly destroy, root out, completely cut off (e.g., Acts 3:23).

George Klein makes an excellent point writing that "The word choice offers a not so subtle irony for Zechariah's audience. The common English expression, "**the sword cuts both ways**," touches the point of the irony. The "**cut**" that established the Lord's gracious covenant with his people would also "**cut off**" everyone who rejected the holiness of the God who had "**cut**" a covenant with Israel (Lev 7:20; Nu 9:13; Isa 9:14). Zechariah leaves no room for doubt concerning who will conduct this purge—the Lord himself will complete the task." (New American Commentary - Zechariah)

Idols ([06091](#))(**atsab** from **atsab** = to shape, fashion, only in Job 10:8, Jer 44:19) is a masculine noun always in the plural in the OT "idols" and it always refers to a false god represented by an idol or image. Notice the origin is the verb '**āṣab**, meaning to form or

fashion, and emphasizes the fact that these idols (so-called "gods") were formed by human hands ("man-made gods" so to speak! Woe!). **Atsab** can allude to idols in general (Hos. 4:17); idols of silver (Hos. 13:2); or idols of gold and silver (Hos. 8:4). **Atsab** appears in parallel with *massēkâh*, meaning a molten image (Hos. 13:2); and *gillûl*, meaning idols (Jer. 50:2).

Second Chronicles gives a statement of the relationship of the Chosen People to **idols** -

"They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served (Lxx = [douleuo](#) in the imperfect tense = over and over, again and again! = NOTICE THEY DID NOT JUST "WORSHIP" THEM BUT WERE SERVANTS TO THEM - IDOLS WERE THEIR "MASTERS!") the Asherim and the **idols** (atsab); so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt."19 Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen. 20 Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest (not to be confused with Zechariah, son of Berechiah Zec 1:1; Mt 23:35); and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" (2 Chr 24:18-20)

Hosea writes

And now they sin more and more, And make for themselves molten images, **Idols** (atsab; Lxx = [eidolon](#)) skillfully made from their silver, All of them the work of craftsmen. They say of them, "Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves!" (Hos. 13:2)

Atsab - 17x in 17v - idols(13), images(4).

1 Sam. 31:9; 2 Sam. 5:21; 1 Chr. 10:9; 2 Chr. 24:18; Ps. 106:36; Ps. 106:38; Ps. 115:4; Ps. 135:15; Isa. 10:11; Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; Hos. 4:17; Hos. 8:4; Hos. 13:2; Hos. 14:8; Mic. 1:7; Zech. 13:2

And I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land- I will = God's sovereignty, authority and omnipotence are reiterated once again (6x in 3v - Zech 13:2, 7, 9). Notice it does not call them "false prophets" but the contextual associations (idols, unclean spirit) make it clear that they are false and the Lxx translates the Hebrew word *nabi* (prophet) with [pseudoprophetes](#) or false prophets (plural). There will be no need for prophecy for God's revelation will have been completed. This "external" cleansing of impurity from the land would match the "internal" cleansing of the Jews who would be inhabiting the land. It would be an almost "Eden-like" clean start in the Millennium.

Eugene Merrill elaborates on the **unclean spirit** - they are not motivated by the spirit of YHWH but by an "unclean spirit," unclean both because of its inherent nature as demonic and because it inspires the prophets to proclaim lies and other misleading and unclean speech. A classic illustration of this combination of a false prophet and an unclean spirit occurs in the heavenly scene described by the prophet Micaiah (1 Ki 22:19–23) who tells Ahab and Jehoshaphat that he saw YHWH surrounded by His royal court and seeking their counsel as to how to confound Ahab. Finally a "lying spirit" (רוּחַ שֶׁקֶר, *rûah šeqer*) volunteers to inspire Ahab's prophets to advise him to go to battle and to assure him of victory. According to Jdg 9:23 God sent an "evil spirit" (רַעַה רוּחַ, *rûah rā`â*) between Abimelech and the Shechemites. Its task was to cause the Shechemites to become traitorous toward Abimelech and turn on him. An "evil spirit" (also *rā`â*) from YHWH also came upon Saul once the spirit of YHWH had left him (1 Sa 16:14). This spirit terrified him and could be controlled only when David played soothing music on his harp (1 Sa 16:23). Though not involving prophesying in these cases, the notion of harmful, evil spirits is very much at home in the OT. It is in light of the ultimate sovereignty of YHWH over all creation, including the spirit world, that these instances must be understood. Though not the source of the wickedness that these unclean spirits purvey, YHWH could and did release them to accomplish His own mysterious purposes of judgment and discipline. Even Satan, the epitome of the evil spirits, could become a servant of YHWH, testing and evaluating the character of godly Job (Job 1:6–12; cf. 1 Chr 21:1). It is evident, then, that **the unclean spirit** of our passage is a spirit inspiring the false prophets who prophesy lies in the name of YHWH. He allows them to carry out their pernicious ministry, but when the time of repentance and renewal comes, He banishes them from the land (Zech 13:2). If any persists in prophesying (clearly as a false prophet, as Zech 13:3 shows), the ancient Mosaic penalty must be brought to bear: his father and mother must put him to death (Dt. 13:6–11; cf. Dt 18:20–22). Though the penalty of Deuteronomy is in immediate connection with false prophets who urge the people to follow other gods (Dt. 13:1–5), those who speak lies in YHWH's name are subject to the same judgment (Dt. 18:20). ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

The unclean spirit - This phrase is found 23 times in the Scripture but this is the only OT use. Remembering that this is a prophecy of the end times, we find that the phrase unclean spirit is found in Rev 16:13 and in Rev 18:2 so certainly they will be present in the last days. The implication is that they are in the land. In any event they will not last long in the the land because God will **remove** (Heb = *abar*; Lxx = *exairo* = to remove someone from a group, drive away) them.

Unclean spirit recalls Paul's teaching to the church at Corinth on the nature of idolatry and relationship to demons (unclean

spirits)...

What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, **they sacrifice to demons** and not to God (see Dt 32:17, Ps 106:37, Lev 17:7-note, 1 Ti 4:1); and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we? (1 Cor 10:19-22)

John records that in the period immediately preceding the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom men will worship demons to a degree never seen in the history of the world...

The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to **worship demons, and the idols** of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts. (Rev 9:20-21-note)

Tony Garland writes - The works of men's hands include the very gods they bow down to (Dt 4:28; 2Ki. 19:18; Ps. 115:4; 135:15; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; 44:10-20; Jer. 1:16; 10:3-5; 25:6; Acts 7:41; 19:26). This is the thrust of the meaning here—that men continue in idolatry—giving honor and attention to everything except their Creator. Worshiping the creature (Ro 1:25-note) and that which men have produced in the place of the one true God. In the context of the Tribulation, the image of the Beast is the ultimate work of their hands since the False Prophet “deceives those who dwell on the earth...to make an image to the beast” (Rev. 13:14-note). Thus, they themselves make the ultimate idol (icon) of their own worship! In the delusion which God sends upon the earth (2 Th. 2:11), men worship that which they themselves made rather than the God who made them.

During the Tribulation, the ultimate devil and idol worship will take place. Men will worship the dragon (Satan) who gives authority to the beast, they will worship the beast, and even the image (idol) of the beast (Rev. 13:4, 8, 15-note). Scripture indicates that although idols themselves are lifeless, the inspiration to make and worship them is demonic in origin. To worship or sacrifice to an idol is to worship or sacrifice to demons (Lev. 17:7; Dt. 32:17). Lest the reader assume sacrifice to demons is a thing of darkened cultures of the past, we only ask how many lives are being offered up in abortion clinics in worship of the “god of convenience” in our supposedly “modern” cultures today? Not only that, but the continuance and even increase of pagan practices around the world clearly show the tendency of men apart from God. In the time of the end, it will only be worse. **History records the descent of man, not his ascent.** (DEVOLUTION NOT EVOLUTION!) As one commentator entitled this section: “**Stone Hearts and Stone Idols.**” At the time of the end, men will worship idols made from the same basic materials as those praised by the men at Belshazzar's feast (ca. 550 BC, Da 5:4, 23-note).

Charles Feinberg adds "All idolatry sponsored by and connected with the Roman beast (Rev 13:1-10) and the false prophet or the man of sin (Rev 13:11-18) will be wiped out."

This prophecy recalls Zechariah's earlier quotation from the **LORD of hosts** Who promised "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. "I will remove the sin of this land in a single day." (Zech 3:9).

Feinberg - This is the only place in the Old Testament where the expression “**unclean spirit**” is found, although it occurs often in the New Testament. The unclean spirit contrasts diametrically with the Spirit of grace and supplication of Zech 12:10. Twice in verse 2 mention is made of the land. It has been maintained that this should be translated “earth,” because idolatry had already been wiped out of Israel by the Babylonian captivity. This is a failure to take into account the fact that Scripture reveals the revival of idolatry in Israel after the Church is taken to be with Christ the Lord. (Note carefully Mt 12:43-45 and Rev 13:11-18.) All idolatry sponsored by and connected with the Roman beast (Rev 13:1-10) and the false prophet or the man of sin (Rev 13:11-18) will be wiped out. The removal of the false prophets will require severe measures. The very measures prescribed by the Mosaic law for the rooting out of false prophecy, wherein the nearest of kin take the first steps to abolish the evil, are indicated here. There the means of death, however, was stoning; here the guilty one will be thrust through with a weapon. Love for God and His truth will transcend the dearest natural bonds. (See Dt 13:6-10, 18:20.) The glory of the name of the Lord will overshadow every earthly tie and sentiment.

Steven Cole - Cleansing from sin should lead to separation from sin (Zech 13:2-6). Again the Lord repeats the phrase, **that day**” (Zech 13:2, 4), which refers to the day just prior to Christ's return, when He will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to the peoples around and destroy the nations that come against her (Zech 12:2, 9). Also, in that day the Jews will mourn over their sin of crucifying

Messiah (Zech 12:10-11). At that time, God declares that He will completely cut off idolatry, false prophets, and the unclean spirit that is behind such false prophecy (Zech 13:2 is the only occurrence of “**unclean spirit**” in the O.T.). The thrust of these verses is that those who have received God’s cleansing from sin must also be zealous to separate themselves from every form of sin. Or, in Paul’s words, “**Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God**” (2 Cor. 7:1). We dare not continue in sin that grace might abound!

The sin of idolatry in its most blatant form involves worshiping man-made statues or images as if they were God. While that sin may be much more prevalent in other countries, it is right here in Flagstaff, where we have an entire store devoted to selling idols! But, as J. I. Packer argues in *Knowing God* (IIVP, p. 39), the commandment not to make graven images also forbids worshiping the true God by images that supposedly represent Him. Packer shows how such images dishonor God by obscuring His glory and mislead men by conveying false ideas about God (pp. 40-41). Packer goes further: “It needs to be said with the greatest possible emphasis that those who hold themselves free to think of God as they like are breaking the second commandment (p. 42, italics his). In other words, when people say, “I don’t like to think of God as Judge; I like to think of Him as my loving Father,” they are guilty of idolatry, because they are making God into their own image. We aren’t free to pick and choose which aspects of God’s attributes we like. We must submit to the revelation that God has given of Himself in His Word. Any deviation from that is idolatry.

Coupled with idolatry is **false prophecy or false teaching**, which is invariably demonically instigated. Being fallible humans, none of us teach the Bible infallibly. We should strive for greater accuracy and understanding, but in this life, we all will fall short. But there is a vast difference between errors or misunderstandings on minor points of doctrine and errors that pervert the nature of God and His salvation. Satan, the great deceiver, has always had his false teachers who infiltrate the ranks of God’s people to lead astray the unsuspecting. **We live in a day where even the evangelical church is downplaying the importance of sound doctrine** We hear statements such as, “Doctrine divides. Let’s come together on the things we agree on, not on the areas that divide us. They will know that we are Christians by our love, not by our doctrine.” ([Zechariah 13:1-9 God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

Zechariah 13:3 "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.

- **his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him:** Ex 32:27,28 Dt 13:6-11 18:20 33:9 Mt 10:37 Lu 14:26 2Co 5:16

THE PENALTY FOR FALSELY PROPHESYING

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 - The fact that parents will kill their own son emphasizes God's intense hatred of this sin which will absolutely not be tolerated in the [Millennium](#). In Zechariah 13:2 God will carry out the initial purging of false prophets from His Kingdom, but after that it will be the job of the parents to purge them from the land. This is the ultimate "hatred" and separation that Christ brings into a family as He described in Luke 14

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. (Lu 14:26-note)

The Law was clear on the fate of one who has spoken falsely in the Name of the LORD...

“If your brother, your mother’s son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), 8 you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. 9 **“But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.** 10 “So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 11 “Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you. (Dt 13:6-11)

You have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD- The truth of this verse is good to remember today, for not everyone who speaks in the Name of Jehovah is speaking truth no matter how erudite, charismatic or theologically credentialed! Paul gives good

advice commanding

Do not despise ([present imperative with a negative](#)) prophetic utterances. 21 But **examine** ([dokimazo](#) in the [present imperative](#)) everything carefully; **hold fast** ([present imperative](#)) to that which is good; 22 **abstain** ([present imperative](#)) from every form of evil. (1 Th 5:20-22-note)

Pierce him through when he prophesies- Death was the penalty required in the OT for prophesying falsely (Dt 13:6–11; 18:20–22).

Eugene Merrill on **pierce** ([daqar](#)) The same verb occurs not only in Zech 12:10 but in Nu 25:8 where an Israelite man and Midianite woman, engaged in a pagan act of sexual intercourse designed to facilitate the worship of Baal at Peor (Nu 25:1–3), were slain by being thrust through with a spear. The conceptual connections between that incident and the idolatry and false prophetism of Zech. 13:1–6 are quite apparent. ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

Pierce (01856)([daqar](#)) means to pierce through by a weapon resulting in death. This is the same verb used in Zechariah 12:10-note when the Jews will look on Him Whom they pierced on the Cross.

Steven Cole - The Lord commends the fact that in this day when He removes false prophets from Israel, parents will pierce through even their own son when he prophesies falsely in the name of the Lord! “Pierce through” is the same Hebrew word used for piercing Messiah in 12:10. The Jews would have immediately thought of Deuteronomy 13:6-11, where Moses directed that “if your brother ... or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul” entice you to serve other gods, not only were you not to listen to them. Moses said that you were not to pity him, spare him or conceal him, but rather, to kill him! I am not suggesting that we are to apply such commandments literally, of course! We are not a theocratic nation, bound by such laws. But these commands should impress on us the importance of God’s truth and increase our zeal to hold firmly to sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict (Titus 1:9). False teaching on the fundamentals of the faith is not just a different way of looking at things. It is eternally destructive to the souls of people. We must love God and His Word of truth so fervently that by way of comparison, we hate our father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, and even our own lives (Luke 14:26). ([Zechariah 13:1-9 God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

Zechariah 13:4 "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;

- **the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies** Jer 2:26 Mic 3:6,7
- **they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive** 2Ki 1:8 Isa 20:2 Mt 3:4 11:8,9 Mk 1:6 Rev 11:3

FALSE PROPHETS ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT

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 - Because it would cost them their life, (1) the false prophets will jettison their "prophet garb," (cf 2 Ki 1:8, Mt 3:4), (2) lie about their occupation (Zech 13:3) claiming to be tillers of the ground (Zech 13:5), and (3) will lie when asked about their scars (on chest or back, Zech 13:6), claiming others did this to them, when the truth was that they had cut themselves in worship of their false gods (cf 1 Ki 18:28).

Ashamed (0954)(**bosh** from root = “to become pale” or “to blush”) When failure or sin occurs, there is a disconcerting feeling, a flushing of the face. Always take a moment to ponder what is being explained. Bosh often occurs in contexts of humiliation. It is the feeling of public disgrace. The confusion, embarrassment, or dismay when things do not turn out as expected. **Merrill** notes that in the present context **bosh** means "shame in the sense of a refusal to divulge what one knows or has seen."

NET Note on a hairy robe - The “hairy garment of a prophet” (אֲדָרֶת שֵׁעָר, 'adderet she'ar) was the rough clothing of Elijah (1 Kgs 19:13), Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 2:14), and even John the Baptist (Matt 3:4). Yet, אֲדָרֶת alone suggests something of beauty and honor (Josh 7:21). The prophet’s attire may have been simple the image it conveyed was one of great dignity.

Merrill on hairy robe - The “hairy garment” (אֲדָרֶת שֵׁעָר, 'adderet šē'ār) was the distinctive attire of many of the OT prophets, notably Elijah. He wrapped his face in such an apparel when confronted by the living God at Horeb (1 Kings 19:13) and, on transferring his office to Elisha, did so by casting the hairy cloak upon him (19:19). He used it also to part the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:8), a feat Elisha was able to duplicate using the same cloak (2:14). John the Baptist, a NT prophet in the tradition of Elijah, was recognized as such by his clothing of camel’s hair (Matt. 3:4). ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

Spurgeon on hairy robe - Imitating Elijah's garb the false prophets hoped to win the attention of the people by the roughness of their dress; but all this would be dropped for the people would be so well instructed that they would refuse to hear the false prophet.

POSB - Think of the astounding contrast between false gods and the one and only true God (Yahweh, Jehovah). To say that the difference is infinitely greater than that between night and day still falls short of its mark. There simply is no comparison—for the one is absolutely real and the others are utterly false. There can be only one true God, only one true Creator. This is declared repeatedly and consistently in God's Word, and it is imprinted in the hearts and minds of every human being. Sadly, though, there is so much deception in this area that sin has blinded the eyes of the masses. People see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear. But it will not be so forever. Zechariah prophesies of a time when all false prophets will look upon the Savior and be utterly ashamed of their lives and deception, their animosity and rejection of Christ. They will face their Creator and know without a doubt that there is no other God than the LORD; and there is no Savior other than Jesus Christ. But it will be too late to escape. Scripture says the only future for them will be the wrath of God (Ro 1:18-23, Isaiah 45:9-12, Isaiah 45:18).

Charles Feinberg - As wolves in sheep's clothing, the false prophets had donned the apparel of the true messenger of God. The genuine prophets wore this garment to show their frugal manner of life; it was also in keeping with their mournful pronouncements. (Note 1 Ki 19:13, 19; 2 Ki 1:8; 2:8, 13; Mt 3:4; and Mk 1:6.) The false prophets will fear to make known their false revelations and will not be able to deceive the people with the wearing of the garment of the prophet of God. They will not hesitate to cover up their evil activity by resorting to lying. In verses 5 and 6 we have a description of the detection of one of the false prophets. He is accused by one of the people of being a false prophet and of speaking falsely in the name of the Lord. He knows that such a charge may well result in the forfeiture of his life by those zealous for the name and glory of the Lord. (The Minor Prophets)

Steven Cole - In 13:4-6, Zechariah illustrates how God will purge the land of false prophets. These men will be ashamed and will put off their hairy robes that they had worn to deceive people into thinking that they were true prophets. They will renounce their role as prophet and say instead that they were workers in the soil, sold as a slave in their youth. But then someone notices the wounds between his arms (lit., "hands"; probably referring to his chest). Most likely, these were the wounds that false prophets inflicted on themselves in the frenzy of their worship or prayers (1 Kings 18:28; Jer. 47:5; 48:37). The false prophet's response is subject to several interpretations. He may be making an excuse to dodge judgment, saying that he was wounded either by his parents or by friends (Hebrew = "those who love me") in some accidental manner. Or, the wounds may have been inflicted by parents or friends out of loving discipline (Calvin's view). Or, he is admitting that the idols were formerly his friends, but he now renounces them, either in repentance or out of fear of reprisal. Whatever the interpretation of the illustration, the overall point of this section is that God will purge all sin from those who profess His name, and that we should be quick to judge all sin in our own lives. But, lest we fall into the common error that salvation is a matter of our own efforts to purge our lives from sin, Zechariah abruptly comes back to the only way that a fountain for cleansing can be opened. ([Zechariah 13:1-9 God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

Zechariah 13:5 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.'

- **I am not a prophet:** Am 7:14 Ac 19:17-20

FALSE PROPHETS WILL GIVE FALSE IDENTITY

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- The false prophets do what they are skilled at -- they tell falsehoods! They continue to try to deceive by claiming they are farmers, not false prophets! We used to tell our children when their lie was so overt "Liar, liar, pants on fire!" These false prophets pants are surely on fire!

Merrill on I am - The repetition of the first person independent personal pronoun אֲנִי ('ănōkî), "I," suggests the vigor of his protestations. Literally, he will say, "Not a prophet am I; a worker of the soil am I!" That farming is not a recent occupation, he says, is evident from the fact that he has been a bondman from the days of his youth. Those who have known him know better, however, and one will ask, "If you are no prophet, how do you explain these wounds on your chest?" (v. 6) His answer is a feeble lie, "I got them in the house of friends." ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

These false prophets ultimately are deceived as Paul writes describing the **"last days"** (2 Ti 3:1) "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving (active voice = willful choice) and (continually) being deceived (passive voice = no choice, but the consequence of their active choice)." (2 Ti 3:13-[note](#))

Spurgeon remarks "They shall be so ashamed of it that, to have kept cattle shall seem to be a far more noble employment than to have falsely set up to be a prophet of the Lord. He shall say anything rather than confess that he is a false prophet, he shall be so

ashamed of himself. What a mercy it is when God makes men ashamed of sin, and when he makes them so ashamed of false doctrine that they cannot bear it, and will not any longer proclaim it! Oh, that that day were already come!

Zechariah 13:6 "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.'

- **What are these wounds between your arms:** 1Ki 18:28 Rev 13:16,17 14:11
- **Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends:** Ps 22:16 Pr 27:5,6 Joh 18:35 19:14-16

FALSE PROPHET'S FALSEHOOD ABOUT THEIR SCARS

And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' - This verse is NOT referring to the wounds of Messiah on the Cross, but to the scars on the bodies of the false prophets. They had cut themselves in an attempt to appease their so-called gods, a practice clearly condemned in the OT....

Leviticus 19:28 'You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks [NOTE](#) on yourselves: I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 14:1 "You are the sons of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave your forehead for the sake of the dead.

1 Kgs 18:28 So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them.

The false prophet betrayed his true identity by these **graphic and ineradicable** marks. This reminds me of Nu 32:23 which says "if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and **be sure your sin will find you out**"

Eugene Merrill on wounds between your arms - Such translations for this last phrase as "between the arms" or the like are much too literal. Comparative Semitic evidence has been very helpful in clarifying the idiom. The OT itself makes clear that it is the thorax that is intended, for in 2 Kings 9:24 the arrow Jehu shoots at King Joram of Israel strikes him "between the arms," piercing his heart. Incisions on the body were characteristic of many of the religious practitioners of the ancient Near East, particularly among the Canaanites. The OT, in response to this sign of paganism, warns the priest and prophets of Israel (and, indeed, the people at large) to forgo such things in the interests of maintaining pure faith toward YHWH (Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1). The purpose of these self-lacerations is not entirely clear, but they apparently had something to do with sympathetic rituals undertaken to induce certain action by the gods. A biblical case no doubt is that of the contest between Elijah and the Baal prophets at Carmel. After those prophets had prayed and pleaded for Baal to ignite their sacrifices, with abysmal lack of success, they became frenzied and began to cut themselves until the blood poured from their veins and arteries (1 Kings 18:28). The objective was to impress the deity with their act of wholesale devotion and self-denial so much that Baal would have no recourse but to be moved to send the fire from heaven for which he was so famous. ([Exegetical Commentary](#))

POSB - They inflicted these wounds upon themselves in a vain attempt to appease their so-called gods or to win their favor. This is what the prophets of Baal did in the contest with Elijah. When they failed to get Baal to consume their sacrifice by fire, they began to cut and slash themselves in an attempt to get their false god's attention (see 1 Ki 18:16–45, 28 = "they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them"). Naturally, Baal did not hear them and could not answer them because he was not real. He did not exist. Likewise, false prophets in the end times will bear similar scars. And when confronted by the righteous in Israel, they will lie about these wounds. Zechariah went on to say that they will claim the wounds were inflicted by friends or family members as discipline or in rough play. These false prophets who made their living by deceit will keep on trying to deceive until the very end.

Then he will say, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends' - This is not a prophecy of the Crucifixion (as some commentaries propose) but is a continuation of the false prophet theme.

Stephen Ger on wounds between your arms - These false prophets will be ashamed of their activities and for fear of judgment will seek to cover them up on the pretense of being merely farmers, but the self-inflicted chest lacerations characteristic of their office betray them (Zech 13:3–6). ([Zechariah: Minor Prophet With A Major Message - Conservative Theological Journal 03:8 Apr 1999](#))

Spurgeon - Idolatry shall become so detestable a thing that he will say anything rather than acknowledge that he has had aught to do with idols. Those very marks in which the false prophets once gloried, they shall loathe. The Brahmin shall throw away his sacred

thread, and those who have been tattooed is honour of other false gods shall hate the marks of shame that are upon their persons. Now, brethren, inasmuch as the heathen prophets received in their bodies the marks of their gods, we understand something of what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." He regarded his baptism as a kind of water-mark that could not be removed. He looked upon the marks of the scourge, with which he had been beaten again and again for Christ's sake, as being proofs that he belonged to Jesus. They stamped him with the broad arrow of the great King, so that all men might know that he was dedicated to him and to his service, tattooed with marks in his flesh that were indelible, and never to be removed.

Charles Feinberg refutes the interpretation that this verse refers to Christ - Some hold that the one in verse 6 is Christ because of the mention of wounds between the arms. This view, though held somewhat generally, has nothing to commend it except a superficial reference to wounds.

It is an untenable position for several reasons.

In the **first** place, Christ was not wounded between His arms with a number of wounds. His wounds, blessed evidences of a finished redemption, were in His hands and feet and the spear wound in His blessed side. It takes some juggling of the wording of the passage to make this wounds between His arms.

Second, He was not wounded in the house of His friends but on a cross of Roman devising.

Third, at what place after His resurrection could He be questioned by an inquirer as indicated in this text? We know from Scripture that He never appeared to the world after His death and resurrection; it was always to His own for confirmation of their faith and instruction (Ac 1) in the truth of God.

Furthermore, there are other reasons which militate against understanding the passage of Christ. **Fourth**, Christ could not and would not say He was not a prophet. He was not only a prophet, but the Prophet, and the Prophet of prophets. (See Deu 18:15-18; Jn 1:18; Ac 3:22; 7:37; and Rev 1:5.)

Fifth, Christ could not and would not say that He was a tiller of the ground. Doubtless, He aided His legal father, Joseph, in the carpenter shop in Nazareth in His youth, but this was not the work of a farmer.

Sixth, Christ could not and would not say that He had been a slave from His youth, or that a man had bought Him for service from the days of His youth. How could any one of the untrue statements already mentioned ever be attributed to the Christ who is the truth?

Finally, the position under discussion pays no attention to the context as to time or circumstances. It stems from the most superficial type of Bible interpretation, yet it lives on because we like to cling to an accepted view. But this one has nothing to commend it, and it does grave injustice to our blessed Lord. ([The Minor Prophets](#))

Here is one of the expositors that feels this is a reference to Jesus, **an interpretation with which I do not agree - Henry Morris** writes "wounds in thine hands. Most expositors say this question is addressed to the "false prophet" discussed in Zechariah 13:3-5, on the assumption that his wounds were somehow caused by mutilation in his occult rituals. This seems unlikely since in the post-Armageddon context of this section, any false prophets operating during the tribulation period would already have been "cut off" (Zechariah 13:2) and dispatched to the lake of fire along with the Beast and his False Prophet (Revelation 19:20; Matthew 25:41). Zechariah 12:11-13:5 seems rather to be a parenthetical section inserted between two profoundly moving descriptions of Messiah's wounds (Zechariah 12:10; 13:6). The sight of these will result in Israel's conversion, great mourning and cleansing, accompanied by their purging the land of any remaining idols and false prophets, together with the evil spirits possessing and energizing them. **I was wounded.** It seems more appropriate to the whole amazing scene here described to understand these words as addressed to the one on whom they had looked and for whom they were mourning (Zechariah 12:10). Not only had His side been pierced, but also His hands (Psalm 22:16), and these wounds remained even in His resurrected body (John 20:24-28). With great sadness, He replies that these everlasting wounds had been inflicted at the urging of those who should have been His friends, the leaders of the nation He had come to redeem. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the succeeding verse is explicitly applied to the wounding of Messiah. (**ED**: Again I want to emphasize I disagree with this interpretation but present it so that you are aware that are a few respected writers who hold an interpretation similar to Dr Morris.)

Zechariah 13:7 "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.

- **Awake, O sword:** De 32:41,42 Isa 27:1 Jer 47:6 Eze 21:4,5,9,10,28
- **against My Shepherd:** Zec 11:4,7 Isa 40:11 Eze 34:23,24 37:24 Mic 5:2,4 Joh 10:10-18 Heb 13:20 1Pe 5:4
- **And against the man, My Associate:** Isa 9:6 Jer 23:5,6 Ho 12:3-5 Mt 1:23 11:27 Joh 1:1,2 5:17,18 Joh 5:23 8:58 10:30,38 14:1,9-11,23 16:15 17:21-23 Php 2:6 Col 1:15-19 Heb 1:6-12 Rev 1:8,11,17 2:23 21:6 22:13-16
- **Strike the Shepherd:** Isa 53:4-10 Da 9:24-26 Joh 1:29 3:14-17 Ac 2:23 4:26-28 Ro 3:24-26 4:25 5:6-10 8:32 2Co 5:21 Ga 3:13 Col 1:19,20 Heb 10:5-10 1Pe 1:18-20 2:24,25 3:18 1Jn 2:2 4:9,10 Rev 13:8

- **that the sheep may be scattered:** Mt 26:31,56 Mk 14:27,50 Joh 16:32
- **I will turn My hand against the little ones:** Zec 11:7,11 Mt 10:42 18:10,11,14 Lu 12:32 17:2 Joh 18:8,9

GOD'S PROVISION FOR CLEANSING: CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd - God is clearly speaking. His command to the sword (personified) to **awake against My Shepherd** is a figure of speech that speaks of death. God is directing the death of His Son, the Good Shepherd! The following phrase **strike the Shepherd** leaves no doubt that this is a command to kill the Shepherd. Notice that the LORD of hosts calls Him **"My Shepherd"** (or **"My Associate"**) which Jehovah would hardly do if this were one of the false shepherds from the preceding passages as some commentaries suggest.

POSB - In the previous verses, the LORD promised to cleanse His people and to cleanse the land, purging sin, idolatry, and false prophecy from all Israel. Now, in the next several verses, Zechariah explains how the LORD will cleanse His people. The LORD's provision for cleansing is the crucified Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Micah prophesies of this great Shepherd...

And He will arise and shepherd His flock
In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD
His God. And they will remain, Because at that time He will be great
To the ends of the earth. (Micah 5:4-note)

Comment: Notice the **"time gap"** in the prophecy in Micah 5:2-note and Micah 5:4, the first passage predicting Messiah's birth and the second Messiah's rule over all the earth. See [Time gaps in interpretation of prophecy](#).

Shepherd (07462)(**raah**) is actually a verb meaning to feed, to tend; to be a shepherd (its participial form rō'eh), its sense in over 60 of the 160 uses in the OT. And so raah means generally to care for, to protect, to graze, to feed flocks and herds (Ge. 30:31, 36; 37:2; Ex. 3:1; 1 Sa 17:15). The first use describes "Abel was a keeper of flocks" (Ge 4:2) and later shepherders (Ge 29:9) those who pasture and lead the sheep. Figuratively raah is used of God as the Shepherd of Jacob (Ge 48:15; Isa. 40:11; Hos. 4:16). Raah referred to the king of Israel who was to shepherd the people for God (2 Sa 5:2; 7:7; Jer. 3:15) and in general to leaders of God's people (Jer. 2:8; 22:22; Ezek. 34:2, 3, 8, 10). God is pictured as the one who shepherds an individual soul, a person (Ps. 49:14).

The shepherd must be familiar with the available pastures and the routes to them. The shepherd must also be timely in leading the flock to a watering place, a permanent stream (Am. 5:24; Ps. 23:2; 74:15; Jer. 15:18), or a well dug to provide water (Ge 21:25, 30; 26:18, 19, 25, 32). A vivid picture of how flocks were watered is painted by the well episodes in Ge. 29:1-10 and Ex. 2:15b-16, in which women also appear. The shepherd must be timely in bringing the flock to a pen where they can safely spend the night, especially when the pasture is too distant to permit returning to house and stall or the encampment (Gen. 37:12-18) and the fold does not provide adequate protection. In an emergency the shepherd must keep watch over the flock in the open field (Lk. 2:8). A shepherd needs appropriate equipment if he is to do the job of protecting the flock entrusted to his care against wild animals or other human beings. These included the staff, used to control the flock, and a club (šēḇeṭ, Ps. 23:4; Lev. 27:32), a stick with a knob of hardened asphalt. David may have used the latter to fight off wild animals (1 Sa 17:35). A shepherd also needed a sling (qela') to confront both wild animals and robbers (1 Sa. 17:40, 50; Sir. 47:4), as David boasts. A watchdog could also be very helpful to a shepherd (Isa. 56:10; Job 30:1). In addition to his other responsibilities, a shepherd also had to use careful selection to breed robust animals to provide meat, leather, and wool. Musical instruments were also very helpful in calming and influencing the behavior of the flock. The commonest instrument used by shepherds was the pipe (Jdg 5:16) (Summarized from TDOT)

Related Resources on Shepherd:

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Shepherds](#)
- American Tract Society [Shepherd](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Shepherd](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Shepherd Sheep, Shepherd](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Shepherd](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia • [Shepherd](#)

- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia • [Shepherd](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia • [Shepherd](#) • [Shepherd Kings](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia • [Shepherd](#)

Raah is used figuratively to describe the lips of the wise as shepherding the people (Prov. 10:21). It is used figuratively of the land of Israel, the pastures of the shepherds mourn or dry up (Amos 1:2). It indicates the grazing, feeding of animals, flocks, herds, cattle (Gen. 41:2).

William White summarizes the metaphorical uses of raah - Among them are: the tranquility of two animals, normally pursuer and prey, grazing together: bear and cow (Isaiah 11:7); wolf and lamb (Isaiah 65:25). The root rā'â also appears in philosophical and theological metaphors as (Pr 15:14) "the mouths of fools feed on folly"; (Isa 44:20) "he feeds on ashes." Invading armies pictured as a horde of beasts or insects are said to "feed" in the sense of "devour" conquered towns (Micah 5:6). From very ancient antiquity, rulers were described as demonstrating their legitimacy to rule by their ability to "pasture" their people. Hammurabi and many other rulers of ancient western Asia are called "shepherd" or described as "pasturing" their subjects. In the OT, however, it is the Lord who feeds his people and is praised for his mercy in providing for them (Ge 48:15; Ps 23:1; Ps 28:9; Isa 40:11; Hos 4:16 et al). This attribute of God is one of the marks of the offices of prophets, priest, and king. David's claim to the throne is based upon God's command that he feed the people (2 Sa 5:2). Failure of the officers of Israel to feed the people either physical or spiritual nourishment was deemed a severe transgression (Ezek 24:2ff.) In this chapter the prophet plays repeatedly on the two forms of the root, rā'â, the verb meaning "to pasture" and the noun meaning the "pastor" or shepherd. The true repetition of the ideas is lost in all the versions by supplying synonyms where the Hebrew uses the same term throughout. The OT theological idea of the good shepherd who feeds his flock with God's truth (Jeremiah 3:15 etc.) becomes prominent in the NT (John 10:11). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Raah - 139v - consume(1), devour(1), eat(3), fed(1), feed(16), feeding(4), feeds(4), graze(7), grazed(2), grazing(1), herdsmen(6), keeper(1), pasture(12), pastured(2), pastures(2), pasturing(5), rulers(1), shaved(1), Shepherd(5), shepherd(34), shepherd's(1), shepherded(1), shepherdess(1), shepherds(37), shepherds who are tending(1), shepherds will not feed(1), shepherds fed(1), shepherds feed(1), shepherds'(2), sweep away(1), sweep away your shepherds(1), tend(3), tending(3), wrongs(1).

Gen. 4:2; Gen. 13:7; Gen. 13:8; Gen. 26:20; Gen. 29:7; Gen. 29:9; Gen. 30:31; Gen. 30:36; Gen. 36:24; Gen. 37:2; Gen. 37:12; Gen. 37:13; Gen. 37:16; Gen. 41:2; Gen. 41:18; Gen. 46:32; Gen. 46:34; Gen. 47:3; Gen. 48:15; Gen. 49:24; Exod. 2:17; Exod. 2:19; Exod. 3:1; Exod. 34:3; Num. 14:33; Num. 27:17; 1 Sam. 16:11; 1 Sam. 17:15; 1 Sam. 17:34; 1 Sam. 17:40; 1 Sam. 21:7; 1 Sam. 25:7; 1 Sam. 25:16; 2 Sam. 5:2; 2 Sam. 7:7; 1 Ki. 22:17; 2 Ki. 10:12; 1 Chr. 11:2; 1 Chr. 17:6; 1 Chr. 27:29; 2 Chr. 18:16; Job 1:14; Job 20:26; Job 24:2; Job 24:21; Ps. 23:1; Ps. 28:9; Ps. 49:14; Ps. 78:71; Ps. 78:72; Ps. 80:1; Ps. 80:13; Prov. 10:21; Prov. 15:14; Eccl. 12:11; Cant. 1:7; Cant. 1:8; Cant. 2:16; Cant. 4:5; Cant. 6:2; Cant. 6:3; Isa. 5:17; Isa. 11:7; Isa. 13:20; Isa. 14:30; Isa. 27:10; Isa. 30:23; Isa. 31:4; Isa. 40:11; Isa. 44:20; Isa. 44:28; Isa. 49:9; Isa. 56:11; Isa. 61:5; Isa. 63:11; Isa. 65:25; Jer. 2:8; Jer. 2:16; Jer. 3:15; Jer. 6:3; Jer. 10:21; Jer. 12:10; Jer. 17:16; Jer. 22:22; Jer. 23:1; Jer. 23:2; Jer. 23:4; Jer. 25:34; Jer. 25:35; Jer. 25:36; Jer. 31:10; Jer. 33:12; Jer. 43:12; Jer. 49:19; Jer. 50:6; Jer. 50:19; Jer. 50:44; Jer. 51:23; Ezek. 34:2; Ezek. 34:3; Ezek. 34:5; Ezek. 34:7; Ezek. 34:8; Ezek. 34:9; Ezek. 34:10; Ezek. 34:12; Ezek. 34:13; Ezek. 34:14; Ezek. 34:15; Ezek. 34:16; Ezek. 34:18; Ezek. 34:19; Ezek. 34:23; Ezek. 37:24; Hos. 4:16; Hos. 9:2; Hos. 12:1; Amos 1:2; Amos 3:12; Jon. 3:7; Mic. 5:4; Mic. 5:5; Mic. 5:6; Mic. 7:14; Nah. 3:18; Zeph. 2:6; Zeph. 2:7; Zeph. 3:13; Zech. 10:2; Zech. 10:3; Zech. 11:3; Zech. 11:4; Zech. 11:5; Zech. 11:7; Zech. 11:8; Zech. 11:9; Zech. 11:15; Zech. 11:16; Zech. 13:7

And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts - Here Jehovah calls the Shepherd My Associate, a name God would hardly ascribe to a false shepherd. No, this is not a reference to a false shepherd, but to the Good Shepherd, the Messiah. Notice that implicit in this passage is that the Shepherd is a man, in fact He is the God-Man, so that this passage implies the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Lindsey writes that "In Zechariah 13:7 the Lord is claiming identity of nature or unity of essence with His Shepherd, thus strongly affirming the Messiah's deity." (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Charles Feinberg on **My Associate** - the designation "My Fellow" is both rare in Scripture and filled with much spiritual truth for us. It is found in the Old Testament only here and in Leviticus 6:2; 18:20; 19:11, 15, 17; 24:19; 25:14, 15, 17. It has reference to persons united in law, rights, and privileges. The word comes from a verb "to bind together." The Hebrew term for "people" (those united in common origin and interest) has the same root. God is speaking of One as "My Companion, My Associate, My Friend, My Confidant, the One united to Me, the One whom I have associated with Myself, My Equal, My Nearest of Kin." It would not be possible to state in stronger terms the unimpeachable deity of the Messiah of Israel. (See Jn 10:30; 14:10-11; and Phil 2:6.) The word Man denotes His humanity; Fellow, His deity. When the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were to be scattered. The reference is not just to the

scattering of the disciples at the arrest of the Lord Jesus (Mt 26:31), but ultimately to the dispersion of Israel as a nation. But God in grace promises that His hand would be turned upon the little ones, a designation of tender affection. The Lord will intervene on their behalf; that is, for the sake of the poor of the flock, the remnant. The Lord will watch over His own. (The Minor Prophets)

My **Associate** (Fellow, Companion)([05997](#))(**amith** possibly from verb 'āmam = "to be equal to" but this is not certain) is a masculine noun which means fellow, neighbor, or associate. It general conveys the sense of one being close to another in some way. Most of the uses are in Leviticus and all the passages deal with proper conduct toward a fellow citizen. Thus amith refers to a fellow friend, a comrade, a companion (Lev. 6:2); a neighbor (Lev. 18:20); other persons in a community in general (Lev. 19:11, 15). Every neighbor or friend was to be dealt with in truth (Lev. 25:14, 15, 17). But in times of God's judgments, things could be turned upside down against a neighbor (Zech. 13:7).

Hebrew Christian writer **David Baron** writes that "it is interesting to observe that Jewish commentators themselves have admitted that the word **amith** ("my Fellow") implies equality with God only since they own not Him who was God and Man they must interpret it of a false claim on the part of man, overlooking that it is God Himself who thus speaks of the shepherd of his text. Aben Ezra (1088-1177) interprets it of the Gentile kings, who in their arrogance are styled Divine, and thus called themselves "God's fellows." Kimchi adopts the same interpretation, adding, "thinks himself my Fellow." ([Zechariah Commentary](#))

Amith - 12x in 10v - another(2), associate(1), companion(2), friend(2), friend's(1), neighbor(3), neighbor's(1).

Lev. 6:2; Lev. 18:20; Lev. 19:11; Lev. 19:15; Lev. 19:17; Lev. 24:19; Lev. 25:14; Lev. 25:15; Lev. 25:17; Zech. 13:7

Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered- This passage is quoted by Jesus in the NT as described below. Israel's striking the Good Shepherd led to the sheep, the disciples, being scattered (Mk 14:27, Mt 26:31). And then in 70AD after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the Jews were scattered into all the world. Another "scattering" of Israel will take place in the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - [Mt 24:15-note](#), named - [Mt 24:21-note](#)) prior to Christ's return

Then the woman (ISRAEL) fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for **one thousand two hundred and sixty days** (HOW LONG? SEE V.14). 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child (MESSIAH). 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for **a time and times and half a time** ([synonymous with 1260 days and 42 months](#)), from the presence of the serpent. 15 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman (ISRAEL), so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman (ISRAEL), and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. 17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman (ISRAEL), and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.(Rev 12:6, 13–17-[note](#)).

Isaiah prophesies of the striking of the **Shepherd** -

Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 10 But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.

A portion of the Zechariah 13:7 passage is quoted in two of the Gospels, both quotes directly from Jesus Himself, in the context of the imminent "striking" of the Good Shepherd on the old rugged cross...

Mark 14:27 And Jesus *said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, **I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.**'

MacArthur comments - Applying those words to Himself as the shepherd and to His disciples as the sheep, Jesus assured His followers that even their failings would not overturn the purposes of God. Their desertion had been foretold by the prophet Zechariah hundreds of years earlier. Jesus knew that He would be struck down while they scattered in fear, yet His resolve did not waver even in the face of abandonment and death. His undaunted courage stands in stark contrast to their disoriented cowardice. (Mark Commentary)

Matthew 26:31 Then Jesus said to them (NOTE THIS IS A PROPHECY [BY MESSIAH] THAT QUOTES A PROPHECY [RECORDED BY ZECHARIAH]!), "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I

WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK SHALL BE SCATTERED.'

There are some commentators who think that Zechariah 13:7 is a reference to the false shepherds in the preceding context. And yes, if one relied only on the immediate context, that might be a reasonable interpretation. But remember that the best commentary on Scripture is Scripture itself (see [Compare Scripture with Scripture](#)) and in this particular passage we can obtain help from a notable Jewish Rabbi, the Messiah Himself! I agree with Dr MacArthur's logic in explaining Zechariah 13:7 (from his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew). MacArthur writes...

Jesus' comment **for it is written** (in Mt 26:31) referred to Zechariah 13:7, which predicted the desertion He had just mentioned. He then quoted part of that verse: "**I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.**" In quoting the Old Testament prophecy Jesus assured the disciples that their abandonment of Him, just as Judas's betrayal, was part of the eternal plan of God. Without Jesus' explanation, the Zechariah passage would have been impossible for the disciples to have understood correctly. Zechariah's prediction was veiled, and its meaning could not have been discerned apart from the Lord's own interpretation. Zechariah was speaking about idolatrous false prophets whom the Lord would remove from among His people, but some of whom would renounce their deceitful practices (Zech 13:2-6). But in Zech 13:7 the attention turns abruptly to a man the Lord calls "My Shepherd,...the man, My Associate." "The man, My Associate" could be rendered "the mighty man of My union" or "the mighty man equal to Me," clearly indicating that this person also was deity. It is against this divine Shepherd-Associate that God commanded the sword to be struck: "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered." In the broadest sense, the sheep that would be scattered represented Israel. Because Israel as a nation rejected and crucified her Messiah, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. From that time (A.D. 70) the people of Israel were scattered throughout the world-where they have largely remained scattered for nearly 2,000 years. Even today, only a minority of them live in the state of Israel. But the sheep of whom Jesus spoke that night on the Mount of Olives were the disciples, the first group, as it were, representative of and picturing all those who would be scattered when He, the shepherd, was struck.

Here is an example from the NET Notes representative of the comments that do not interpret this passage as a reference to the Good Shepherd's Crucifixion (and this is a resource I use frequently -- I just strongly disagree with their conclusion in this case and feel they have given little weight to the fact that Jesus Himself quoted this passage just after He had told them of the New Covenant in His blood!) -

Despite the NT use of this text to speak of the scattering of the disciples following Jesus' crucifixion (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27), the immediate context of Zechariah suggests that unfaithful shepherds (kings) will be punished by the LORD precisely so their flocks (disobedient Israel) can be scattered (cf. Zech 11:6, 8, 9, 16). It is likely that Jesus drew on this passage merely to make the point that whenever shepherds are incapacitated, sheep will scatter. Thus he was not identifying himself with the shepherd in this text (the shepherd in the Zechariah text is a character who is portrayed negatively). (NET Notes) **(DISCLAIMER - I STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION! ALSO HOW ABSURD WOULD IT BE FOR GOD TO CALL A FALSE SHEPHERD "MY ASSOCIATE"!)**

ESV Study Bible on Zechariah 13:7 - The disciples are scattered at the time when Christ the shepherd is crucified (Matt. 26:31).

Hebrew Christian writer **David Baron** writes on scattered - It was primarily fulfilled when, after the crucifixion of our Lord, "the people of the prince that shall come" (Da 9:26-note), that is, the Romans destroyed the city and the sanctuary (70 A D), and brought about the new and more universal phase of the dispersal of the Jewish people among all the nations of the earth, which is continued to this day (Baron wrote in 1919). ([Zechariah Commentary](#))

Henry Morris in the Defender's Study Bible - his verse is quoted in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27 by Christ Himself. He, the Good Shepherd, would give His life for the sheep (John 10:11), but in the trauma of these world-changing events, His sheep would be "scattered" for a while. The "sword" would "smite the shepherd," and they would be scattered for 2000 years, but the time would come when they would return to Him, exactly as Zechariah had predicted.

Charles Feinberg - Whereas verse 6 cannot possibly refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, **verse 7 can refer to no other than to Him**. The words apply exclusively to the sufferings of Christ. (See Mt 26:31, also the connection with Zech 11:4, 7, 10-14.) Christ referred this prophecy to Himself. The death of the Messiah is here viewed as God's act. (Cp. Jn 3:16; Ac 2:23; 3:18; 4:28.)

Charles Ryrie in the Ryrie Study Bible - A reference to the death of Christ and the scattering of the disciples (cf. Matt. 26:31).

W A Criswell in the Believer's Study Bible - This verse applies exclusively to the suffering of the Messiah (Matt. 26:31). "My Companion" is used of a confidant, an associate, an equal, the nearest of kin (Lev. 6:2; 18:20), and thus it is a strong affirmation of

the deity of the Messiah. The verse indicates that the Lord will be the ultimate and efficient cause of the Messiah's death. It also prophesies the disciples' abandoning Jesus (Matt. 26:31, 56), as well as the scattering of the nation after A.D. 70 and again in the Tribulation (cf. Rev. 12:6, 13-17).

Thomas Constable - Almighty Yahweh personified a sword, the instrument of violent death, which he commanded to execute His Shepherd, the royal Good Shepherd of Zech 11:4-14. Yahweh further described this Shepherd as the man who was very close to Him, even His Associate. "The expression 'who stands next to me' is used elsewhere only in Leviticus (e.g. 6:2; 18:12) to mean 'near neighbour'; similarly the shepherd is one who dwells side by side with the Lord, His equal." In Zech 11:17 it was the worthless shepherd whom the Lord would strike, but here it is the Good Shepherd. The one doing the striking is evidently God Himself since "strike" is masculine in the Hebrew text and agrees with "the LORD of hosts." If so, Zechariah presented Messiah's death as God's activity (cf. Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23) as well as Israel's (Zech 12:10-14). The striking (death) of the Shepherd would result in the scattering of the Shepherd's sheep (i.e., Israel, Zech 11:4-14). The Lord Jesus quoted this part of the verse, claiming the role of the Shepherd, when he anticipated the scattering of His disciples following His death (cf. Matt. 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27, 50)...."The divine witness to the death and deity of the prophesied Messiah makes this verse one of the most significant in the entire Old Testament." (Unger) ([Expository Notes of Dr Thomas Constable](#))

Will Pounds - The smiting of the Shepherd is according to the will of God. The smitten one is the Shepherd of Yahweh. (Pounds quotes an unknown source) "The shepherd of Jehovah, whom Jehovah describes as a man who is His next one (neighbor), cannot of course be a bad shepherd, who is displeasing to Jehovah, and destroys the flock, or the foolish shepherd. . . . The idea of nearest one (or fellow) involves not only similarity in vocation, but community of physical or spiritual descent, according to which He whom God calls His neighbor cannot be a mere man, but can only be one who participates in the divine nature, or is essentially divine. The shepherd of Jehovah, whom the sword is to smite, is therefore no other than the Messiah, Who is also identified with Jehovah in Zech 12:10; or the good shepherd, who says of Himself, 'I and My Father are one' (John 10:30)" Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of Israel, appointed by God Himself (John 10:11). He alone can be called "Yahweh's fellow" for he was God as well as man (Jn. 1:1), even the true God (Jn 5:20), although One with the Father Himself (Jn 5:30) He assumed our nature with the purpose that He might suffer for our sins. Yahweh calls His True Prophet as opposed to the false prophets (Zech 13:2-6), the Messiah, My Shepherd (Zech 13:7-9). Not only does the prophet give us a picture of the smitten Shepherd, but also the scattering of the sheep and the saved remnant. ([Zechariah 13:1, 6-7 The Precious Fountain Opened](#))

Bob Utley - There is an obvious radical break between Zech 12:6 and Zech 12:7. As verse 6 refers to false prophets, verse 7 refers to the coming Messiah. Notice in your translation that Zech 13:1-6 is in prose, while Zech 13:7-9 is poetry. This poetry is definitely related to 11:4-14, which describes the godly shepherd.

POSB has a thoughtful note - This verse proves that God planned and directed the death of His Son in order to save the human race. This obviously does not excuse Israel for her rejection and killing of the Messiah; neither does it excuse us for our sins or anyone else for rejecting the Savior today. It only further proves that God works with the free will of man to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

And I will turn My hand against the little ones- The Jews, those in Israel whom Jehovah of hosts will deliver through fire and testing, in part the time of testing in the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-note, named - Mt 24:21-note) which the prophet Jeremiah called the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-note) and the prophet Daniel called "a time of distress" (Da 12:1-note).

Steven Cole - God is the only one who can open a fountain for cleansing, and He has done so by killing His Shepherd (Zech 13:7a). In Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah pictured the false shepherds of Israel in contrast with the Good Shepherd. In our text, the contrast seems to be that just as the false prophet endeavored to turn people from God, but was slain by his father, so the true prophet would be slain by His Father to turn people to God ([Charles Simeon, Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible](#)). Echoing the language of Isaiah 53:1-12 (and Ps 22:15), which says that Messiah would be smitten of God and crushed by God, Zechariah pictures God as calling for the implement of death (sword) against His Shepherd, Whom He also calls, "**the man, My Associate.**" In the garden, with reference to Himself, Jesus cited the phrase, "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered," just before the disciples all left Him and fled (Mt. 26:31).

Woven into Zechariah 13:7 are several crucial theological concepts. First, God's Shepherd, Jesus Christ, is both man and God. He had to take on our flesh in the incarnation or He could not die for the sins of the fallen human race. But in so doing, He did not cease to be what He is from eternity, the fulness of God (Col. 2:9).

"Associate," in Hebrew, is used only in Leviticus, and in all cases of an equal, an associate, or neighbor (Unger, p. 232). The great German scholar, [C. F. Keil](#), says that "God would not apply this epithet to any godly or ungodly man whom He might have appointed shepherd over a nation." He goes on to state that this term means "community of physical or spiritual descent." The one whom God calls His neighbor "cannot be a mere man, but can only be one who participates in the divine nature, or is essentially divine" (Commentary on the Old Testament). Jesus, speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for the sheep, said in the same context, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Jews recognized it as a claim to deity and took up stones to

stone Him. They should have fallen at His feet in worship!

There is a sense in which evil men crucified the Good Shepherd, and they are accountable for doing so. But at the same time, such evil men, acting according to their own sinful choices, only fulfilled the sovereign purpose of God to provide a substitute for our sins (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). By putting His own Son to death in the place of sinners, God can be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). That God would strike His own Son for our sins shows both His great love for us and His utter intolerance of sin.

Thus Zechariah has shown that we all need God's fountain to cleanse us from sin and impurity (Zech 13:1). Those who are cleansed from sin will be zealous to separate themselves from it (Zech 13:2-6). God Himself is the only one who can open a fountain for cleansing from sin, and He has done so by killing His Shepherd, Jesus Christ (Zech 13:7a). ([Zechariah 13:1-9 God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

Although in context this text speaks of the true believers in the remnant of the nation of Israel, **Charles Simeon** applies these truth to true believers of all ages - It is no uncommon thing for persons to receive their first serious impressions by means of some afflictive dispensation: many must say with David, "Before I was afflicted I went astray." But, in whatever way they are converted to God, they seldom continue long in his service without experiencing some temporal or spiritual affliction. God, who is a wise physician, knows what is most conducive to the health of our souls. He sees that there is much "folly bound up in our hearts, and that nothing but the rod of correction can effectually drive it out." He sees it necessary "to try us, as gold, and to purify us as silver," that we may both manifest what we are, and become what we should be. If we be only superficial Christians, who, like "the stony-ground hearers, have no root in ourselves," we shall "be offended as soon as tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word:" but if we be "Israelites indeed," the trial of our faith, which is much more precious than gold, which, though it stand the trial of fire, yet perisheth at last, will be found to praise, and honour, and glory in the day of his appearing [Note: 1 Peter 4:12; 1 Peter 1:6-7.]" Besides, the very best have much amiss within them, which escapes their notice, till "God counsels them in the night season" of affliction, and discovers to them the hidden abominations of their hearts. On this account especially the saints have testified with one consent that they have found it "good to be afflicted;" and have seen reason to bless God more for their heaviest trials, than for their richest comforts

ZECHARIAH QUOTES IN NT RELATED TO MESSIAH		
ZECHARIAH	SUBJECT	NT PASSAGES
Zechariah 9:9	Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey	Matthew 21:5 John 12:15
Zechariah 11:13	"Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.	Matthew 27:9
Zechariah 12:10	they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only so	John 19:37 Revelation 1:7
Zechariah 13:7	"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered"	Matthew 26:31 Mark 14:27

Zechariah 13:8 "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.

- **two parts in it will be cut off and perish:** Zec 11:6-9 De 28:49-68 Isa 65:12-15 66:4-6,24 Eze 5:2-4,12 Da 9:27 Mal 3:1,2,5 4:1-3 Mt 3:10-12 21:43,44 22:7 23:35-37 24:21 Lu 19:41-44 20:16-18 21:20-24 23:28-30 1Th 2:15,16 Rev 8:7-12 Rev 16:19
- **But the third will be left in it** Zec 14:1,2 Isa 6:13 Jer 30:11 Joe 2:31,32 Am 9:8,9 Mt 24:22 Mk 13:20 Ro 9:27-29 11:1-5

**TWO THIRDS CUT OFF
ONE THIRD LEFT**

Declares the LORD - Klein writes "The seemingly unobtrusive phrase "declares the LORD" translates the important prophetic formula nē'um YHWH. This significant expression predominates in prophetic writings to reiterate the divine origins and therefore the

consummate authority of the message the prophet delivered. This occurrence of nē'um YHWH represents the final occurrence in chap. 13 (cf. Zech 13:2, 7), an important emphasis in a chapter focusing on sweeping eschatological events." (NAC)

Note that while some see a similarity with Ezek 5:2, 12 it is only superficial in the sense that Ezekiel was speaking in the context of the Babylonian exile and when he mentions the third ("One third you shall burn in the fire"), he is describing their destruction not their deliverance. In stark contrast, in Zechariah 13:8-9, the third describes those in the nation of Israel in the last days who will be delivered by Yahweh. In short, the passages are not parallel texts.

It is interesting that Zechariah 13 begins and ends with emphasis on purification (Zech 13:1, 8, 9) and these passages are clearly related.

It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD- He is speaking of the last days, **in that day**, [Day of the Lord](#), specifically that segment that is known as the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15-note, named - Mt 24:21-note), **AKA** the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jeremiah 30:7-note) or **AKA** "[a time of distress](#)" (Da 12:1-note). This period of the Day of the Lord corresponds to the last 3.5 years of [Daniel's Seventieth Week](#) during which time the **Campaign of Armageddon** will be waged and be brought to an abrupt termination when the King o kings returns (Rev 19:11-16-note) and defeats all of His and Israel's enemies (Rev 19:17-21-note). Daniel depicts this final destruction of the Gentile nations by Messiah as a**Stone** (Messiah) that returns to crush Nebuchadnezzar's statue which symbolizes all of the anti-God, anti-Christ nations of the world. After crushing the Gentile kingdoms Messiah establishes His [Millennial Kingdom](#) (Da 2:34-35-note, Da 2:44-45-note).

The prophet **Daniel** spoke about this time writing...

Now **at that time** Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a **time of distress** (Heb = [tsarah](#); Lxx = [thlipsis](#) the same word used by Jesus in His phrase "The Great Tribulation" [thlipsis megale]) such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued....7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time ([synonymous time phrases](#) = 1260 days, 42 months, "middle of the week"); and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people (ISRAEL), all these events will be completed. 8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 **"Many (OF ISRAEL) will be purged, purified and refined** (ZECHARIAH IS QUANTIFYING HOW "MANY" = 1/3), but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Da 12:1, 7-10-note)

The Hebrew word for **left** ([yathar](#)) is also translated **remnant**. In context, then Zechariah is prophesying about the [doctrine of the remnant](#), that portion of the Chosen People who throughout the centuries have placed their faith in the Messiah and who will enter the Kingdom of God. The remnant of Israel has always been relatively small and in this case represents one-third of the Jews who are alive at the [Time of Jacob's Distress](#) (Jer 30:7). As Daniel described them, they are the third that **will be purged, purified and refined** during the last 3.5 years of [Daniel's Seventieth Week](#).

Left (03498)([yathar](#)) refers to one portion of a quantity which has been divided and generally refers to the smaller part remaining. **Remnant** can mean that which is spared, preserved, escaped, survived, and thus that which is not in a condition of danger or death. The idea of the **remnant** is "those being left" or "having escaped," especially a portion of a community which has escaped a devastating calamity and will form the basis for a new community. **Yathar** refers to one portion of a quantity which has been divided. Generally it is the smaller part.

The **Septuagint** translates **left** with the verb **hupoleipo** which means to be left, left behind, be remaining (used in Ro 11:3-note where Paul quotes Elijah's lament "I alone am **left**," from 1 Kings 19:10).

Related Resources:

- See Paul's description in Romans 11:5ff - [see commentary](#)
- See study of another Hebrew word for "remnant" (07604) [sha'ar/sa'ar](#)

That two parts in it will be cut off and perish - Cut off means they will be killed and **perish** speaks of their eternal destiny when they will be told "Depart from Me, all you evildoers" (Lk 13:27-note) and be sent to the outer darkness (Mt 8:12), outside the Kingdom of God, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Lk 13:28-note), away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power (2 Th 1:7-9). See discussion of Eternal Punishment.

Cut off is the same verb [karath](#) used in Zechariah 13:2 describing God's action against the idols in the land.

But the third will be left in it- The **third** (one-third) refers to those in Israel, specifically those who have looked with mourning and repentance on Messiah "whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him." (Zech 12:10-note). The **third** will come to the ever flowing **fountain** of spiritual life (Zech 13:1-note), the blood of the Lamb that flows from Emmanuel's veins, and will receive and repent and believe and experience cleansing from their **sins and impurity**, and experiencing the truth described in Isaiah's invitation "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." (Isa 1:18) In short, the third that is the **remnant** of "**All Israel**" who will be saved **in that day** (see Ro 11:26-note).

Spurgeon So, in the times of God's fiercest judgments, he has a remnant according to the election of grace who shall escape the sword, because that sword has been awakened against him who was their Representative, their Surety, and who stood as Substitute in their place.

NET Note - The fractions mentioned here call to mind the affliction of God's people described by Ezekiel, though Ezekiel referred to his own times whereas Zechariah is looking forward to a future eschatological age. Ezekiel spoke of cutting his hair at God's command (Ezek 5:1-4) and then of burning a third of it, striking a third with a sword, and scattering the rest. From this last third a few hairs would survive to become the nucleus of a new Israel. It is this "third" Zechariah speaks of (v. 9), the remnant who will be purified and reclaimed as God's covenant people.

Zechariah 13:9 "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.'"

- **And I will bring the third part through the fire:**Ps 66:10-12 Isa 43:2 1Co 3:11-13 1Pe 4:12 b
- **Refine them as silver is refined:** Job 23:10 Pr 17:3 Isa 48:10 Mal 3:2,3 Jas 1:12 1Pe 1:6,7
- **They will call on My name** Zec 10:6 12:10 Ps 34:15-19 50:15 91:15 Isa 58:9 65:23,24 Jer 29:11,12 Ho 2:21-23 Joel 2:32 Ac 2:21 Ro 10:12-14
- **They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God** Zec 8:8 Lev 26:12,44,45 De 26:17-19 Ps 144:15 Isa 44:1-6 Jer 30:22 Jer 31:33 32:38 Eze 11:20 36:28 37:27 Ho 2:23 Mt 22:29-32 Heb 8:10 Rev 21:3,4,7

It breaks my heart to read modern commentators relate these great prophecies to the Church instead of relating them to the nation of Israel, to whom they are plainly and clearly addressed. To relate them to the Church is simply to read with "theological sunglasses" that are "tinted" with the false teaching of "[spiritual Israel](#)" (see also [spiritual Israel](#) and an [example of how the literal truth is twisted](#)). And sadly many of those in the reformed movement (which I highly respect for their generally very orthodox theology especially in soteriology), espouse the false teaching of "[replacement theology](#)."

POSB - Verses 8 and 9 continue to speak of coming judgment. In addition, they reveal a fundamental truth: what man means for evil, God means for good. Put another way, the evil that man plans or does is used by God to accomplish His good and perfect will. This is exactly what happened on the cross at Calvary. It is also what will happen in the Great Tribulation when many nations band together to conquer and destroy Israel. Suffering beyond anything the world has ever known will be brought about by the antichrist—in these very last days. Not only will the invading nations bring destruction upon themselves but they will also accomplish the plan of God. Through these nations' evil assault, the nation of Israel and the entire world will be purged and refined.

And I will bring the third part through the fire- "**I will**" identifies this passage through the fire as God's sovereign, supernatural work of salvation in context speaking of the nation of Israel who will experience the "fire" of the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's Trouble. As to the identity of the third they are clearly Jews, but whether they include the 144,000 Jews in Rev 7:1-8, Rev 14:1-5 is debatable and will not be further addressed in these notes.

In Numbers 31 we read of a purification by fire, where Eleazar the priest required the captured goods from the Midianite battle to be purified by the fire

everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water. (Nu 31:23)

NET Note - Purification by fire is unique to this event. Making these metallic objects "pass through the fire" was not only a way of purifying (burning off impurities), but it seems to be a dedicatory rite as well to the LORD and his people. The aspect of passing through the fire is one used by these pagans for child sacrifice.

The expression to pass through "the fire" also appears frequently in the Old Testament as a figure for affliction and judgment

Malachi 3:2-3-note "But who can endure the day of His coming (SECOND COMING)? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.

Moody Bible Commentary - Having told those who doubted God's justice that the Messiah would indeed come, Malachi also reminded them that judgment would fall not just on their enemies but on them as well. No one can endure **the day of His coming**. When Messiah comes in judgment, He will purify all, from the sons of Levi to all Judah and Jerusalem (**Ed**: This is clearly that terminal event to which Zech 12:10 and Zech 13:8-9 refer).

Isaiah 43:2 "When you (Jacob...Israel - Isa 43:1) pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. **When you walk through the fire**, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you.

MacArthur - Many perils symbolized by these words have confronted the Israelites through the centuries and will continue to do so until the nation's final redemption, but the Lord promises the nation survival through them all. (MacArthur Study Bible)

Constable - Water and fire are traditional symbols for testing that suggest totality when used together (cf. Ps. 32:6; 42:7; 66:12; James 1:2). God promised to protect His people from total destruction when they underwent their various trials. He had done this in the past, and He would do it in the future because He would be with His special people

Isaiah 6:13-note "Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will again be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump."

Zechariah 3:2 The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Ps 66:10 For You have tried (**bachan/bahan**) us, O God; You have refined (**tsaraph**) us as silver is refined.

Comment: The psalmist uses the same two Hebrew verbs used in Zechariah 13:8.

Ps 66:12 You made men ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance.

Isaiah 48:10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

MacArthur - Since Isaiah's time, Israel's testings have included the Babylonian captivity and present worldwide dispersion from her Land; unlike silver purged in the furnace, the purging of Israel is not complete, and they are not refined. But God keeps up the afflictions until they are, so His name is not defamed through the destruction of Israel. The nation will be purged (cf. Zec 13:1, 8-9). God's plan is such that He alone, not man or man-made idols, will receive credit for Israel's salvation (Isa 42:8; cf. Ro 11:25-27, 33-36). The adversaries of God are never to be given legitimate reasons for scoffing at God and His work.

This theme of fires of affliction as a purifier is carried over into the NT, Peter writing

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:6-7-note)

These passages on fiery afflictions beg the question - Are you in the "fire?" As one has said, we are either in the fire, have just come out of the fire, or will soon be in the fire! Too truth!

Through the fire - The implication is that the fire is not the end but is a part of the journey which the Jews composing the **third** must walk. It is also interesting that the metaphor of fire was used in Zechariah 12:6 to destroy the Gentile nations. And so while one fire destroyed the peoples from God, here in Zechariah 13, another "fire" served to purify a people for God.

The fire is an apt metaphor for one can hardly read this description without recalling with horror the fires of the ovens in the concentration camps where millions of Jewish bodies were burned creating a snow like shower of ashes from the chimneys. Under

Hitler, the satanically inspired Nazi holocaust (Gk word "[holokautoma](#)" is used in Lxx for the BURNT OFFERINGS [Hebrew word = 'olah]!) succeeded in removing one-third of the world's Jewish population, but here during the [Great Tribulation](#) the [Antichrist](#) achieves a removal of two-thirds! Michael, the great angelic watcher of Israel, will intervene to see that these Jews are brought through the fire of affliction in these last three and one-half years. (Da 12:1-note).

MacArthur: From the midst of their fiery refinement, the elect [remnant](#) of Israel will see Jesus Christ, their Messiah and call on Him as their Savior and Lord. Israel will thus be saved and restored to covenant relationship with the Lord. ([Read MacArthur's sermon on "The Cleansing of Israel"](#))

Jamieson (one of the best, literal older commentaries - much better than Matthew Henry on prophecy) - It hence appears that the Jews' conversion is not to precede, but to follow, their external deliverance by the special interposition of Jehovah; which latter shall be the main cause of their conversion, combined with a preparatory inward shedding abroad in their hearts of the Holy Spirit (Zec 12:10–14); and "they shall call on My name," in their trouble, which brings Jehovah to their help (Ps 50:15).

Baldwin on God the Refiner - The beauty of this picture is that the refiner looks into the open furnace, or pot, and knows that the process of purifying is complete, and the dross all burnt away, when he can see his image plainly reflected in the molten metal.

The prophet Malachi asks

"But who can endure the day of His coming? (ANSWER: THOSE WHOM HE BRINGS THROUGH THE FIRE BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY AND GRACE!) And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap." (Mal 3:2-note)

MacArthur commenting on this passage writes "Instead of bringing rewards, His coming is likened to two purifying agents—fire to burn off dross and alkali to whiten—an indication of the true condition of their hearts. The fire will burn off the dross of iniquity; the soap will wash out the stain of sin. His coming will be one in which He removes all impurities. No one will escape this cleansing. Importantly, He will come purifying and cleansing, but not necessarily destroying (cf. Is 1:25; 48:10; Jer 6:29, 30; Eze 22:17–22). (Study Bible).

Spurgeon - "Saved; yet so as by fire." (cf Jude 1:23) This is true in a certain sense of all the righteous. They shall certainly be saved, and though the fires of persecution should rage around, the Lord will bring them through the fire. They shall not perish in it, but they shall even derive good from it; "I will bring the third part through the fire,"—If you are God's people, you will certainly be tried and tested. As surely as ever God has put you in the third part that he will save (AS HE DID WITH THE ELECT OF ISRAEL), he has also ordained that you should pass through the fire. You shall have, both within and without, that which shall test your sincerity, and prove whether your faith is of divine origin or not. There is no easy road to heaven.

Application - Are you currently in the Refiner's fire? See [Refiner's Fire](#)

POSB - The nation of Israel as a whole (cf "all Israel will be saved" Ro 11:26) will be cleansed because the unfaithful will be removed. Individuals, too, will be refined through the fire of affliction, the trial of the Great Tribulation. Through the refining process, only the truly faithful will remain, and they will be made stronger and more pure.... the purging of Israel also speaks to the purging of the church. Not everyone who is a member of a church will be saved. Nor will everyone who calls him- or herself a Christian be saved. There are many people who are church members or Christians in name only; they have not truly believed in Christ nor committed their lives to Him (See Mt 7:21-23-note).

A METALLURGY METAPHOR

Zechariah metaphorically describes the spiritual cleansing and salvation of the third.

Refine them as silver is refined - Our English word refine means to reduce to a fine, unmixed, or pure state, to separate from extraneous matter or cleanse from impurities. That's in the physical sense, but God is a Refiner of hearts and when He refines the third, He will bring them forth pure, righteous, holy, fit for entrance into His Kingdom. As Warren Wiersbe once said "When God puts His own people into the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much." God is not an arsonist, but a Refiner!

Refine...refined (smelt, test) ([06884](#))([tsaraph](#)) means to refine, test, try, purge away. As a participle tsaraph was used for goldsmiths and silversmiths. **Tsaraph** describes the process of refining metals before worked into fine vessels (Pr 25:4). **Tsaraph** means to test, examine, refine, to try to learn the information about the true nature or moral purity of an object, as a figurative extension of refining metals (Jdg 7:4; Ps 17:3; 26:2; 66:10) **Tsaraph** means to purify, purge, figuratively to be or become morally

pure and without moral blemish through a process of testing or trial (Isa 1:25; Isa 48:10; Jer 6:29, cf Da 11:35, 12:10, Zech 13:9) A significant use of **tsaraph** is to describe the Word of God as flawless, perfect, pure, formally, tested and refined, i.e., to be pure and without flaw, with a focus on moral purity (2Sa 22:31; Ps 18:31; Pr 30:5).

Refine is the Hebrew word **tsaraph** and is translated in the Septuagint with *puroo* meaning burn with fire.

Tsaraph describes the process of melting precious metals in order to purify the metal by precipitating any impurities as in (Ezek 22:17–22).

George Klein adds that "Several other prophetic texts express comparable messages (Isa 1:21–26; 48:10; Jer 6:27–30; 9:6). The promised heat from the Lord's refining fire anticipates the ultimate sorrows and victories surveyed in Zech 14." (New American Commentary - Zechariah)

John Hartley - "Various aspects of the **refining process** are vividly used for judgment on and purification from sin; e.g. a blazing furnace, bellows, lead, dross, refuse silver (e.g. Isa 1:25; Jer 6:27–30; Ezek 22:18–22). God seeks to remove from his people all wickedness and sin so that they can endure his holy presence. Man has the responsibility of purifying himself so that he can be refined; i.e. he must respond obediently to God's word in order to experience cleansing (Dan 12:10). Further, when his people are wayward and violate the covenant, God seeks to bring them back by refining them (Jer 9:7). God tries them in the furnace of affliction (Isa 48:10). Although they have to endure difficult circumstances, as long as their faith in him remains firm, they will eventually experience deliverance (Ps 66:6–12). Between the promise and its fulfillment, the word itself tests and refines the one who has heard it (Ps 105:19). However, sometimes the people become so obstinate that no matter how intense the refining fire becomes, it is in vain (Jer 6:27–30). Then God must come against his people in judgment. But in the midst of this judgment, God is still preparing a people for himself. **Those who undergo the judgment as a refining shall turn to God and enter into covenant with him once again** (Zech 13:9). According to Malachi, God shall refine the Levites as gold and silver; then they will offer the sacrifices correctly and these sacrifices will be accepted (Mal 3:2ff.). The climax of God's refining process will result in the establishment of a city over which he has complete rule; that city shall be called "the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa 1:25f.). (TWOT)

Tsaraph is used in a similar text in Isaiah 48

"Behold, I have **refined** (**tsaraph**) you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.(Isaiah 48:10-11)

MacArthur Study Bible - Since Isaiah's time, Israel's testings have included the Babylonian captivity and present worldwide dispersion from her Land; unlike silver purged in the furnace, the purging of Israel is not complete, and they are not refined. But God keeps up the afflictions until they are, so His name is not defamed through the destruction of Israel. The nation will be purged (cf. Zec 13:1). God's plan is such that He alone, not man or man-made idols, will receive credit for Israel's salvation (Isa 42:8; cf. Ro 11:25–27, 33–36). The adversaries of God are never to be given legitimate reasons for scoffing at God and His work.

Moody Bible Commentary - Refinement through affliction is a common occurrence throughout the OT (cf. Ps 66:10; Jr 9:7; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:3). This refinement process is designed to purify the people of Israel and to strengthen their faith in the Lord. God does not do this for Israel but rather for His own sake and for His own reputation (Isa 48:11). God does not want His name to be defiled by Israel in rebellion or by the nations in their disdain. He will not share His glory with another (Isa 48:11; cf. Isa 42:8).

And test them as gold is tested - Whereas the refining above is to remove the "spiritual dross," the testing is to "assay" the purity of the product in order to approve it.

Job 23:10 shows the verb in an illustrative context: "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold." God will put the people to the test, not to punish, but to judge and to effect their purity, that is, their ability to serve in God's kingdom. Thus, the Lord's purpose in putting his people through times of suffering has a positive objective for the nation and especially for the kingdom.

Test...tested (0974)(**bachan/bahan**) means to examine, to try, to prove, to scrutinize.**Bachan** is a primary (or root) word which depicts examination to determine (and bring out) the essential qualities of something, and in the moral realm speaks particularly of a person's integrity (think of integer = indivisible - undivided ~ think undivided heart or single minded focus/purpose). In Scripture **bachan** is used almost exclusively in this moral/spiritual sense meaning to try, search out, examine or prove one's spiritual heart or character.

This verb **bachan** is used in an instructive passage in Job 23

"But He knows the way I take; When He has tried (bachan) me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:10^{note})

Just as God did not put Job to the test to destroy him but to purify him, so too God will do with **the third** of the nation of Israel in the last days.

Gilbrant adds "The figurative or metaphorical sense of the verb describes various aspects of the refining process used for judgment on and purification from sin (Isa. 1:25; Jer. 6:27-30; Ezek. 22:18-22; Dan. 11:35; 12:10). God sought to remove all wickedness and sin from his people so they could endure his holy presence. However, sometimes the people became so obstinate that no matter how intense the refining fire became, it was in vain (Jer. 6:27-30). At this point, God must come against his people in judgment. However, in the midst of this judgment, God is still preparing a people for Himself (**ED**: Exactly what Zechariah 13:8-9 is describing).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates bachan in Zech 13:9 with **dokimazo** which means to assay, to put to the test, to make a trial of, to discern to approve. **Dokimazo** involves not only testing but determining the genuineness or value of an event or object. That which has been tested is demonstrated to be genuine and trustworthy. In the present case **the third** will be genuine "**gold**," true followers of the Messiah.

They will call on My name - The verb "**call**" (qara - [07121](#)) is often used in the OT of calling on God in prayer. In Jeremiah 33:3-note God invites His people to "Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know." (cf 1 Chr 16:8, 2 Chr 14:11)

For example in Ge 4:26 we read

"To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then **men began to call upon the name of the LORD.**"

Several other times in Genesis we see this same pattern in the life of the godly patriarchs Abraham and Isaac, where the call is also linked with building of an altar indicating an attitude of worship...

Genesis 12:8 Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and **called upon the name of the LORD.**

Genesis 13:4 to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram **called on the name of the LORD.**

Genesis 21:33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he **called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God.**

Genesis 26:25 So he (ISAAC) built an altar there and **called upon the name of the LORD**, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Exodus 34:5 (MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI) The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as **he called upon the name of the LORD.**

Psalms 99:6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who **called on His name**; They **called upon the LORD** and He answered them.

Psalms 105:1 Oh give thanks to the LORD, **call upon His name**; Make known His deeds among the peoples. (cf Ps 116:4,13, 17)

Lam 3:55 I (JEREMIAH) called on Your name, O LORD, Out of the lowest pit. (A GOOD PLACE TO CALL FROM!)

Joel prophesies that "it will come about that **whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered** For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls." (Joel 2:32-note) So here in Zechariah 13:9 we see they **call on the name of the LORD** and are delivered in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

The Psalmist prays "Revive us and we will call on Thy Name." (Ps 80:18).

The prayer of Asaph in Psalm 79 is instructive for in this prayer he links **not knowing God** and **not calling on His Name**..

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which **do not call upon Your name.** (Ps 79:6, cf Isa 64:7, Isa 65:1, Jer 10:25)

In light of the truth in Psalm 79:6, the fact that **the third call** on God's **Name** underscores the fact that they know Him, they are intimate with Him, and have entered into covenant (the New Covenant) with Him.

Zephaniah prophecies of this same event as Zechariah 13:9 writing

“For then (IN THAT DAY - JUST AS IN ZECHARIAH 12-14) I will give to the peoples purified lips (cf Zech 13:1), **That all of them may call on the name of the LORD**, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. (Zephaniah 3:9-note)

And I will answer them - God answers the callers indicating that they have entered into covenant with Him and are in union and communion with Him because of their mourning and repentance in Zechariah 12:10-14-note and the cleansing fountain in Zechariah 13:1.

George Klein on answer them - God's promise to “**answer**” (‘e‘ēneh = [06030](#)) employs an important Old Testament verb that often carries great theological weight (see 1 Kgs 18:24–26, 36–37). When God is subject of the verb ‘ānāh, it signifies that the Lord listens attentively to the needs of His people. Isaiah 30:19 portrays the idea well: “O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious He will be when you cry for help! As soon as He hears, He will answer you” (cf. Zech 10:6). (Ibid)

POSB - Many people in days of Tribulation will turn to the antichrist for their deliverance. Tragically, this will ensure their doom. Rather than being delivered, they will be among the two-thirds who are destroyed, for only those who call on the name of the LORD will be saved.

Spurgeon - What a precious little sentence: “**they shall call on my name**”! And God will give ear to their prayer: “**And I will hear them.**” The “shall” and the “will” are put close together, and the one is as much the work of God's grace as the other is: “They shall call on my name, and I will hear them.” Note these quick responses,—echoes, as it were. They call and God hears. God speaks, and they reply. God says, “It is my people.” They answer, “The Lord is my God.” Blessed are you if you can join in these heart-echoes, or can say, with the spouse, “My Beloved is mine, and I am his.” Is there this mutual interchange of love between you and the all-glorious Lord? If so, thrice happy are you; but if not, God grant that you may speedily enter into this secret of the Lord! May he bless to every one of us the reading of his Word, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'- This is further proof that **the third** has entered into the New Covenant in His blood by grace through faith. Both God and the third use the possessive pronoun “MY.” They now are the permanent possession of Jehovah, and He is their God forever.

Earlier in Zechariah God had given a similar prophetic promise which include a geographic regathering and a spiritual regathering. As Guzik says “It won't just be that their address changes, but their heart also.” --

Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west (INDICATES A WORLDWIDE DISPERSION/RESTORATION OF THE JEWS); 8 and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and **they shall be My people**, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’ (Zechariah 8:7-8)

MacArthur - this return speaks of a worldwide regathering at the Second Advent of Christ. The return from Babylon cannot be in view also, since Israel had not been scattered to the W until the diaspora engineered by the Romans in the first century A.D. This refers to Israel's national conversion, spoken of in Zech 12:10–13:1, and by Jeremiah 32:38–41 and Paul in Ro 11:25–27.

George Klein - The bygone days when God declared Israel “Not My People” (lō’ ‘ammî; Hos 1:8–11) will transform into a new glorious day. In this wonderful day Judah will return to her former status as “My People” (‘ammî; Hos 2:23) in the estimation of the Lord...Verse 8 concludes with two added attributes characterizing the Lord's relationship to his people. He shows himself to be “faithful and righteous.” In Isa 1:26 the same two terms also describe the future Jerusalem: “afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.” (NAC)

POSB - This verse is a reminder that, “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved” (Ro. 10:13; see Ac. 2:21; Joel 2:32; Zep. 3:9). This is true whether a person lives in the Great Tribulation of the last days or in the fire of affliction today.

This echoes a promise in Lev 26:12 ‘I will also walk among you and be your God, and **you shall be My people.**”

In Jeremiah as the remnant, **the third** enter into the New Covenant (Jer 31:31), God says that

“this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put

My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people** (Jer 31:33-note; Heb 8:10-note; cf Ezek 36:28-note which will be fulfilled in the Millennium)

NET Note - The expression I will say 'It is my people,' and they will say 'the LORD is my God' is reminiscent of the restoration of Israel predicted by Hosea, who said that those who had been rejected as God's people would be reclaimed and once more become his sons and daughters (Hos 2:23).

Charles Feinberg - Just as in Zech 11, the prophet advances from the rejection of the Messiah by the nation Israel to the judgment of God for this unbelief in the time of the Great Tribulation (Zech 11:15-17), so we have the smiting of the Shepherd followed by the time of Jacob's trouble. A great gap of time exists between Zech 13:7 and Zech 13:8. In the hour of Israel's national distress, two parts will be cut off by judgment in all the land and die; a third will remain. The third represents the remnant. Mathematical exactness is not in view here, we know, because the remnant is spoken of in Isaiah 6:13 as a tenth. (See Eze 20:34-38 for this remnant.) The remnant will be brought through trying circumstances and will be refined as silver and gold. This is not the annihilation carried out by the Romans, as some suggest, but the purging brought about by Israel's time of trial when back in the land in the last days. The purpose of the refining is to purify and develop faith in the remnant. Physical deliverance will be followed by conversion. Thus will the new covenant be fulfilled. This will be the full and final renunciation of idolatry. (Note Jer 30:18-22; 31:33; Eze 11:19-20; and Hos 2:23.) Israel the people of the Lord and God their Lord—this is the climax and culmination of Israel's history. (The Minor Prophets)

George Klein notes that "For many interpreters, the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 provides the fulfillment of 13:7–8. Despite how devastating it was, the survivors of Titus's sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple did not come forth as a renewed people spiritually. Further, these remnants, with rare exception, did not evidence faith in the Messiah who had so recently suffered piercing on their behalf. Instead, these people persisted in their unbelief. Moreover, the universal scope of Zechariah's prophecies in chap. 13 look to an eschatological fulfillment. Zechariah 13:8–9 gazes on a more remote period, just as Paul predicted: "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliver will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins' " (Rom 11:26–27)." (New American Commentary)

Klein adds that "The eschatological perspective of Zech 13 finds eloquent expression in the moving hymn written by Charles Wesley, "[Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending](#)":

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train:
Alleluia, alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in splendor's majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Now the Savior, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear;
All who have not Him rejected
Now shall meet him in the air:
Alleluia, alleluia!
See the day of God appear

Steven Cole - Those whom God cleanses from sin He purifies through the fires of affliction (Zech 13:7b-9). The scattering of the sheep after the Shepherd is struck down refers initially to the apostles' reaction to Jesus' arrest. Beyond that, it refers to the dispersion of the Jewish nation after Titus destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Then God says that He will turn His hand "against the little ones" (NASB, NIV). The phrase can also be translated, "bring my hand back over the little ones." It is used to express either judgment or salvation, depending on the context (Keil, p. 398). In light of Zech 13:8-9, it probably here refers to God's protection of the [remnant](#) of Jewish believers, both in history and especially during the [Great Tribulation](#), when the majority of the nation ("two parts," a general term for the majority) will perish, but God will bring **the third** part through the fire to refine them. The final result is, "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.'" Again, while the primary interpretation of these verses is for the Jews, the truth of these verses certainly applies to all of God's people. He

promises to preserve us, even though He takes us through the refining fires of affliction, so that we will share His holiness (**Ed**: cf Hebrews 12:10-11). I know that you can say with me that while affliction is never pleasant, it is during such times that I call upon the Lord with more intensity than at other times. When He answers me, He gives the assurance that I am one of His people, and I can then testify to others that He is my God. As the great hymn, "How Firm a Foundation," puts it:

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to apply these verses:

- Have you come in faith to the fountain of Jesus Christ and His shed blood to cleanse your heart from sin and impurity?
- Are you regularly confessing and forsaking your sin in accordance with God's Word?
- Are you looking daily to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who was willing to be put to death for your sins?
- Are you striving to grow in holiness?
- Are you growing to love and submit yourself to all of God's truth and growing to hate false teaching?
- Are you submitting to God as He refines you through trials, calling out to Him as your God, and knowing His assurance that you are His child?

If you feel dirty, remember that God's fountain doesn't maintain business hours. It is always open. As sinners, we may come for cleansing as often as needed, so that we may become a people for God's own possession, set apart for Him. ([Zechariah 13:1-9](#) [God's Fountain for Cleansing](#))

Again **Charles Simeon** applies the refining and testing through the fire to all believers - Though God brings his dearest children into the fire, he does not leave them there; he engages to bring them "through" it. While they are yet in it, he will be with them, that they may not be burned [Note: Isaiah 43:2.]: yea, "he will sit by them as a refiner and purifier of silver," to watch the process which he has ordained for their good [Note: Malachi 3:3.]. He knows what heat is requisite for the accomplishment of his gracious purposes; and, when their dross is purged out, he will bring them forth as "vessels of honour meet for their Master's use [Note: Job 23:10.]" Be patient then under your trials, knowing from whom they proceed, and for what blessed ends he has appointed them: and be rather solicitous to have your troubles sanctified than removed. Only let them drive you to a throne of grace, and not, as they too often do, discourage you from drawing nigh to God. Let them make you more earnest in seeking an assured confidence in his love, and an increasing meetness for his glory. Then shall you in due time be numbered with those blessed spirits, "who came out of great tribulation, and made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb." Nor need you fear but that the "eternal weight of glory" which you shall possess, shall abundantly compensate "the light and momentary afflictions" which you endured in the way to it.