

A Refined People
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Zechariah 13:1–9 (ESV)

Who was Zechariah? Anyone have a study Bible with some facts?

<http://www.insight.org/resources/bible/zechariah.html>

Why is Zechariah so important?

“The book of Zechariah contains the clearest and the largest number of messianic (about the Messiah) passages among the Minor Prophets. In that respect, it’s possible to think of the book of Zechariah as a kind of miniature book of Isaiah.” (Swindoll - Overview of Zechariah)

- In the time we have we will attempt to do two things:
 1. Give you an overview of Zechariah 13...what is Zechariah talking about?
 2. Ask/answer the question: How does this apply to me, today?

Zechariah 13:1

“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.

- Verse one: The phrase, “that day” appears more than 20 times in this book. **What day is it?**
- Look back at chapter twelve. 12:3–4, 6, 8–9. **Any ideas what “that day” is? Future or past?**

“In this second Oracle, Zechariah takes us to the end times. He describes the Gentile nations attacking Jerusalem, the Jews experiencing severe trials, and then the Lord returning in power and great glory to deliver his people and establish the promised kingdom.” (Matt. 24:4-31; Rev. 9-16) Wiersbe OT Bible Commentary

- We can debate timing, but **what does verse one say is certain about “that day?”**
- **What does this “fountain” accomplish? For whom (specifically in this verse) is this fountain opened? How had Israel as a nation defiled itself before God?**

John MacArthur writes:

“Israel has been defiled for many reasons. Number one, because of historic disobedience to the law of God. Number two, because of an outright wholesale rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. These things have brought about the defilement of the people of Israel. And they are guilty and they are kept from salvation by these rejections and by continual hardness of heart and continual unbelief.”

- To help us understand this, look back at chapter 12. 12:1- God is speaking. Look at 12:10:

10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

- **What does 12:10 say God will pour out? On whom will the inhabitants of Jerusalem look? What is this verse describing?**
- Back to 13:1 - Let’s read it again.
- **What is significant (and encouraging) about the image of a “fountain?”**
- This is good news for the nation of Israel. **How does it apply to us?**

John Piper writes:

“...by faith in Christ Gentile believers become full partners in the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament. The two key texts to support this principle are Galatians 3:29, "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise," and Ephesians 2:19 and 3:6, "So then you (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . . (You are) fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." So by faith in Christ we Gentile believers are no longer "alienated from the commonwealth of Israel" but are full partners in the "covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:12).”

The point is: Through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, we can all be cleansed from sin! The flowing fountain of forgiveness in Zechariah 13:1 is (as Paul wrote), *“...the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* (Rom. 1:16 ESV)

- Let’s quickly read what else will happen on “that day” that Zechariah is describing:

2 “And on that day, declares the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. (No more idol worship in “that day.”) And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. (No more “demonic forces.”)

3 And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of the Lord.’ And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. (No more false prophets. Deut.13)

4 “On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, 5 but he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.’ 6 And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back?’ he will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’ (False prophets will go in to hiding for fear they will be killed for their sin of false prophecy. They will pretend to be common workers. They will explain away the scars from the ritual cutting they’ve done to themselves.)

- Now Zechariah moves into a new prophecy in poetic style with a word directly from God:

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

“Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered;
I will turn my hand against the little ones.

- **What/who is he describing?** Jesus quoted part of this prophecy in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:31) and later when he was arrested (Matt. 26:56). **Can you think of another time in Hebrew history when the Jews were scattered?**

Warren Wiersbe:

“...there is also a wider meaning of this text as it relates to the scattering of the nation in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was taken by the Romans. The Jews had smitten their Shepherd on the cross (Isaiah 53:10) and this act of rejection led to the nation being scattered. Israel today is a dispersed people, but one day they shall be gathered; They are a defiled people, but one day they shall be cleansed.”

8 In the whole land, declares the Lord,
two thirds shall be cut off and perish,
and one third shall be left alive.

9 And I will put this third into the fire,
and refine them as one refines silver,
and test them as gold is tested.

- **Who are the “one third” that shall be left alive?**
- **How does the refining of silver and gold work?**
- **What does “refining” mean for this “third” or remnant of the nation of Israel?**
- **What does refining mean for EVERY believer?**
- **How does God use circumstances to refine His people?**
- **What do we mean by sanctification?**

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- When we look at this passage of scripture, I see a progression from REPENTANCE to RECONCILIATION:

Think of four R words in this order:

- Repentance (12:10) “...when they look on me, whom they have pierced, they shall mourn.”
- Redemption (13:1) “...a fountain to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”
- Refinement (13:9a) “I will...refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested.”
- Reconciliation (13:9b). “I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’ ”

“Remember: Sanctification only comes after salvation. We cannot be "refined" unless we have first been redeemed. And redemption comes through repentance"

- When we recognize our sin...
- And we repent (turn from) our sin...
- We'll find forgiveness at the "fountain" that cleanses...a fountain filled with the blood of Jesus.
- As forgiven people we can embrace the trials of life knowing God will use them to refine us.
- Then we'll hear the words of God in verse nine:

*They will call upon my name,
and I will answer them.
I will say, 'They are my people';
and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.' ”*

The question for every person is: *"Have you been to the fountain?"*