

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 13

In this chapter are prophecies concerning the purification of the penitent Jews before spoken of; the removal of idols, and false prophets, out of the earth; the death of Christ; the destruction of the greater part of men, and the salvation of a few of them. The cleansing of such that mourn for sin, in a fountain opened for that purpose, is spoken of, (~~3810~~ Zechariah 13:1) the utter abolition of idols, and false prophets, and unclean spirits, is affirmed, (~~3810~~ Zechariah 13:2) the parents of false prophets will forbid them to prophesy; they themselves will be ashamed of their visions; they will throw off the rough garment, which was a token of their being prophets, and by which they deceived: they will confess they are no prophets, and what they are, and own the wounds they have received from their friends on that account, (~~3810~~ Zechariah 13:3-6) and whereas the Messiah, as pierced and crucified, is spoken of in the preceding chapter (~~3820~~ Zechariah 12:10), whose blood is the cleansing fountain mentioned in this, an account is given of his death; who is described by his office, the Shepherd of the Lord; and by his natures, human and divine, the Man his fellow; his death is signified by smiting with the sword, which was done by the order of the Lord; the consequences of which were the scattering of the sheep, and the turning of the hand of the Lord upon them in a way of mercy, (~~3810~~ Zechariah 13:7) and then it is declared that two parts in three of the land should be cut off, and a third part saved, but yet so as by fire, whom the Lord would own as his people, and they should acknowledge him to be their God, (~~3810~~ Zechariah 13:8,9).

**Ver. 1.** *In that day there shall be a fountain opened*, etc.] Which Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand literally; but R. Moses the priest figuratively; and so the Targum, which interprets it of the doctrine of the law being open as a fountain of water; and so Abendana, who compares it with (~~2110~~ Isaiah 2:3) but rather it should be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of Gospel ordinances; though better of Christ himself, the fountain of gardens, and of living waters, from whose pierced side, of whom mention is made as pierced in the preceding chapter

(~~3120~~ Zechariah 12:10), sprung blood and water; blood for justification, remission, and cleansing, and water for sanctification: and best of all of his blood particularly, called a “fountain”, not so much for the quantity of blood shed, as for its full virtue and efficacy to answer the purposes for which it was shed; it being the blood not only of man, and of an innocent man, but of the Son of God; and may be said to be “opened”, because of its continued virtue to cleanse from sin; it is not sealed, but opened, and always stands open; there is no hinderance or obstruction in coming to it; not the meanness or poverty of persons, they that have no money may come to these waters; nor their sinfulness, even though they are the chief of sinners; nor their being of this and the other nation, it is exposed to all; to all that the Father has given to Christ; to all sensible sinners: though it follows,

*to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;* for this, as it may be literally understood of the Jews in the latter day, including their great men and common people, high and low, rich and poor; so mystically of all the family of Christ the son of David, and of all that belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, even the whole church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven:

*for sin, and for uncleanness;* that is, for sin, which is uncleanness; sin is an unclean thing, and has defiled all human nature, and nothing can remove the pollution of it; but the blood of Christ can remove it, and that being shed makes atonement for it, procures the pardon of it, and justifies from it in the sight of God; and being sprinkled on the conscience, removes it from that. The Targum interprets it mystically of the forgiveness of sins, paraphrasing it thus,

“I will forgive their iniquities, as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and the ashes of the heifer, which is for sin.”

**Ver. 2.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts,* etc.] In the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, when they shall turn to the Lord, and their sins shall be forgiven, and washed away in the fountain of his blood; for this refers not to the times of the Babylonish captivity, and their deliverance from that, which was now over, when idolatry ceased among that people; nor to the times of Christ, when soon after the false prophets among the Heathens, and their lying oracles, ceased, and Paganism in the Roman empire was destroyed; but to the times before mentioned, of which it is predicted by the Lord, saying,

*[that] I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered;* meaning the idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood; images of the Virgin Mary, and saints departed, worshipped by the Papists, (<sup>666</sup>Revelation 9:20,21) for at this time mystical Babylon will fall, the idolatry of the church of Rome will be at an end, and will never be revived more:

*and also I will cause the prophets, and the unclean spirit, to pass out of the land;* by “the prophets” are meant false prophets, as the Targum explains it, even all the Popish hierarchy, pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, etc. all that wretched body, which goes by the name of the false prophet, who at the battle of Armageddon will be taken, and with the beast cast alive into the lake of fire, (<sup>666</sup>Revelation 19:20) and by “the unclean spirit”, or “spirits”, the singular for the plural, are meant the three unclean spirits like frogs, and which are the spirits of devils, that come out of the mouth of the dragon beast, and false prophet, the Jesuits, monks, and friars; these shall be no more then on the earth, after these times, (<sup>666</sup>Revelation 16:13,14). Jarchi and Kimchi interpret “the unclean spirit” of the corruption of nature; but that will not cease as long as men are in a mortal state. This prophecy is, by the ancient Jews,<sup>1280</sup> applied to the times of the Messiah.

**Ver. 3.** *And it shall come to pass, [that] when any shall yet prophesy,* etc.] Or attempt to prophesy, or propagate their idolatrous religion and principles after this time, when they shall be abundantly detected and exposed:

*then his father and his mother that begat him;* of whom he is born, and who, as his parents, must be supposed to have the most tender regard unto him, even to these the imposture will be so flagrant, that they will not encourage him, but, on the contrary,

*shall say unto him, Thou shall not live;* but die, according to the law against the false prophet in (<sup>666</sup>Deuteronomy 18:20):

*for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord;* which is the very character of the followers of the man of sin, who speak lies in hypocrisy, pretending that they are of God, and carrying a show of truth; religion, and holiness, (<sup>500</sup>1 Timothy 4:1,2):

*and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth;* so great will be their love to God, and to his truth,

that, notwithstanding the nearness of blood, their hands will be upon him first, and either beat him, or put him to death; a son, according to the law, not being to be spared in such a case, (~~f280~~ Deuteronomy 13:6-10).

**Ver. 4.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the prophets shall be ashamed, everyone of his vision, when he hath prophesied,* etc.] He shall be ashamed of the doctrines he has delivered, they will appear to all men so ridiculous and absurd; as the doctrines of merit, and the works of supererogation; of transubstantiation and purgatory; of pardons, penance, &c:

*neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive;* or, “a hairy garment”<sup>f281</sup>; such as the first and ancient inhabitants of the earth wore, who used the skins of beasts for covering, as Diodorus Siculus<sup>f282</sup> observes: and Pausanias<sup>f283</sup> says of the first natives of Locris, not knowing how to weave and make garments, used to cover their bodies, to preserve them from the cold, with the undressed skins of beasts, turning the hair outward, as more becoming: and such a hairy garment, or much like it, Elijah wore; hence he is called a hairy man, (~~f284~~ 2 Kings 1:8) and John the Baptist, who came in the power and spirit of that prophet, appeared in a like habit, clothed with camel’s hair, (~~f285~~ Matthew 3:4) and in like manner good men, especially in times of distress and trouble, used to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, (~~f286~~ Hebrews 11:37) which seem to be the same sort of raiment: and now, in imitation of such like good men, and true prophets of the Lord, particularly Elijah, the false prophets, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, in order to deceive the people, and pass for true prophets, put on such rough and hairy garments, as if they were very humble and self denying men. Braunius<sup>f284</sup> thinks the prophet may have respect to a custom among the idolatrous prophets, who used to clothe themselves with the skins of the sacrifices, and lie on them in their temples, in order to obtain dreams, and be able to foretell future things; of which (see Gill on ~~f287~~ Amos 2:8”) but it seems to have respect to the habits of the monks and friars, and of the different orders by which they are distinguished as religious persons, and gain respect and veneration among men; and under the guise of sanctity and devotion, and of an austere and mortified life, impose their lies and deceptions upon them; but now will lay their habits aside, as being ashamed of their profession and principles.

**Ver. 5.** *But he shall say, I [am] no prophet,* etc.] That he is not of the Romish clergy, or of any of their religious orders, having laid aside his habit:

*I [am] an husbandman;* he shall put on the habit of a husbandman, and work for his bread; for he will not be able to support himself, as before, with the sale of pardons and indulgences, and by praying souls out of purgatory; for no man hereafter will buy of his merchandise, (~~6811~~ Revelation 18:11) and he will be ashamed of his former calling and traffic, and will not own that he was ever concerned therein; but will affirm that he was never of the Romish clergy, but always a layman, and employed in husbandry:

*for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth;* he will say he was brought up to husbandry, or in some mechanic business, from his youth, and never was in any convent or monastery, or of any religious order: it may be rendered, “for man made me to work from my youth”<sup>285</sup>; and is not to be restrained to keeping cattle, or any particular employment.

**Ver. 6.** *And [one] shall say unto him, What [are] these wounds in thine hands?* etc.] That is, if thou art not a prophet, what is the meaning of these wounds in thine hands? which design either those his father and mother had given him, when they thrust him through for being a false prophet, (~~813~~ Zechariah 13:3) or the mark of the beast he received in his right hand, which he was obliged to take when he entered into holy orders, (~~6819~~ Revelation 13:9,16,17), or the wounds and stripes he gave himself, in the exercise of his superstition and will worship:

*then he shall answer, [Those] with which I was wounded [in] the house of my friends;* he will pretend that these were wounds he had privately in his father’s family, by way of correction, for not doing his civil and secular business as he ought to have done; or he shall be obliged to confess the mark of the beast on him; or that these were wounds he had given himself in the temples and churches, dedicated to angels and saints, his patrons, friends, and lovers; with whom he committed spiritual adultery or idolatry, and before whose images and shrines he had cut and given himself these wounds and gashes, to the great dishonour of Christ, as if his crucifixion and wounds were of no avail; wherefore his sufferings and death are next spoken of: and some understand these words of Christ, introduced after this manner; the prophet having spoken of the false prophet, thrust through by his parents, because that Christ would be reckoned a false prophet and

impostor by his countrymen the Jews, and be crucified by them as such, represents the Jews as upbraiding him with his crucifixion, which they suggest he righteously suffered, for seducing their nation: to which he replies, that indeed he was crucified, and thereby wounded with the nails drove into his hands and feet; and this usage he met with from those of his own nation, and who pretended to be the friends of the Messiah, and to expect his coming, and this at or near Jerusalem, where was the temple or house of God; but all this he endured, not for any crime he had been guilty of, but according to the counsel and will, purpose and decree, of God; whereby he was appointed the Shepherd of the flock; the Mediator between God and man; the Saviour of his people; and to die such a death, in order to obtain salvation for them; which counsel and will of God are clearly and strongly expressed in the following verse (<sup>3833</sup>Zechariah 13:7): and to this sense Capellus interprets the words.

**Ver. 7.** *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd*, etc.] Not Judas Maccabeus, slain in battle by Bacchis<sup>f286</sup>, as Grotius fancies; but Christ, Jehovah's Shepherd; for these are the words of Jehovah the Father, concerning his Son, whom he calls "my Shepherd"; because he has a property in him, as well as in the flock; and he was chosen, called, set up, and sent as such by him; on whom he laid the straying of all the sheep; and who as such died and rose again, and is accountable to his divine Father for the flock committed to him: by "the sword" awoke against him are meant either the sorrows and afflictions of Christ, which, like a sword, pierced through his soul; or the violent death he was put to, being stricken and cut off for the transgressions of his people; or the Jews, who were the instruments of it; so wicked men are called, (<sup>4973</sup>Psalms 17:13) or rather the glittering sword of justice, which was drawn against him, and sheathed in him; which is called upon to "awake", it seeming as though it was asleep; it having been a long time since the first sin of Adam was committed, in which all his posterity was concerned, and for which satisfaction to divine justice must be made; and longer still since Christ became a surety, and engaged to do it; moreover, it was a great while since it was promised that he should come, and be smitten and wounded for sin; and, after he was come into the world, it was some time before the orders were given to this sword to awake against him:

*even against the man [that is] my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts*; the human nature of Christ is signified by "the man"; not that he was really man before his incarnation, only in the purpose and covenant of God; and

he often appearing in a human form; and the Scripture speaking of things future as present; though here it regards him in the days of his flesh, and as suffering: his divine nature is expressed by being “the fellow” of the Lord of hosts; not only being near to him in place and affection, but his equal, being truly a divine Person; of the same nature, glory, and majesty, with him<sup>f287</sup>, though distinct from him; and so fit to be the Shepherd of the flock:

*smite the Shepherd*; the order is given to the sword of justice, by the Lord of hosts, to smite the Messiah, the Shepherd, even unto death: this was according to his purpose; was his will of command; agreeable to his mind; what he took a kind of pleasure in, and in which he had a hand himself; for it is rendered “I will smite”, (~~¶~~Matthew 26:31):

*and the sheep shall be scattered*; particularly the apostles, who, upon the seizure of Christ, were scattered from him, and one another, whereby this prophecy was fulfilled, (~~¶~~Matthew 26:31,56):

*and I will turn my hand upon the little ones*; the same with the sheep, the disciples of Christ<sup>f288</sup>; yea, all that Christ died for, and to whom God is gracious for his sake; even all the little ones that believe in him; who are few in number, little in their own sight, and contemptible in the eyes of the world; pusillanimous, fearful, and of little faith, as the apostles of Christ were at the time he died: on these the Lord turned his hand; not his chastising hand, though that is sometimes on the saints; much less his hand of justice, which was laid on Christ, and it would have been unjust to have laid it on sinner and surety both; but his hand of grace and mercy, power and protection; which was upon the apostles in their ministrations, succeeding them to the conversion of sinners, and preserving them from their enemies; and all the elect are saved in consequence of the death of Christ, and redemption by him. Aben Ezra says this prophecy refers to the great wars which shall be in all the earth in the times of Messiah ben Joseph; but they regard the times of Christ the son of David, who is already come. The Targum is,

“be revealed, O sword, against the king, and against the ruler his companion, who is like unto him;”

and Jarchi interprets it of the king of Moab; and Aben Ezra of every king of the nations that shall in the above times reign over the earth, who thinks himself to be as God; which sense Kimchi approves of, and observes, that

the “little ones” are governors and princes, who are less than kings: and another Jewish writer<sup>f289</sup> says the sense is, awake, O sword, against the king of Ishmael, who is called the king of the Turks (the grand seignior), that rules over Asia and Africa; which are more than three fourths of the world, and the greater part of the Jewish nation are in captivity under his hand; him God calls his Shepherd, because he hath given into his hand to feed his flock in their captivity, and this flock is the nation of Israel; and he is called the man his fellow, because he thinks himself, through the pride and haughtiness of his heart, to be as God; and upon the ruin of this prince, he supposes, will be the deliverance of the Jews, who, being scattered into several parts, will, in separate bodies, return to their own land: and by the “little ones” he thinks are meant the kings of the nations of Edom, or of the Roman nations, which are the lesser pastors of the sheep. Manasseh ben Israel<sup>f290</sup> makes mention of the same exposition of the passage, but is of opinion that the words are rather to be understood of the pope of Rome, who calls himself a pastor, and next to God, and his vicar on earth; and against him and those like to him, inferior in power, God will make war. But much more agreeable, and very remarkable, are the words of R. Samuel Marochianus<sup>f291</sup>, who, writing of the coming of the Messiah, says,

“I fear, O my Lord, that that which Zechariah the prophet said, “I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered”, was fulfilled when we smote the Shepherd of those little ones and holy apostles.”

Moreover, it may be observed, that the word for “little ones” sometimes signifies great ones, as Mr. Pocock<sup>f292</sup> has observed, and particularly in this text; which, according to the sense some give of it, mentioned by R. Tanchum, is, “I will turn mine hand upon the illustrious and the princes”, and not “upon the little ones”, as commonly understood; and which he takes to be the best of the expositions adduced: and with this agree the several oriental versions; some copies of the Septuagint read, “upon the shepherds”; and so the Arabic version; and the Syriac version renders it, “the superiors”; and so may very well be applied to the apostles of Christ, who were in the highest office in the church, and shepherds of the flock; on whom, after the death of Christ, God turned his hand of power, which was upon them, and was with them in their ministrations, making them successful wherever they went; and also his hand of providence was upon them, protecting and preserving them, until they had done the work they were sent about. After this prophecy concerning the Messiah, occasionally



inserted here, the prophet returns to his prediction of the state of the church, and what shall befall it in the latter day.

**Ver. 8.** *And it shall come to pass, [that] in all the land, saith the Lord,* etc.] Either in all the land of Israel, as Kimchi interprets it; or rather in all the world, as Aben Ezra and others; for this prophecy seems to have respect, not to the calamities of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, after the death of Christ, when a few were saved, a remnant according to the election of grace, yet so as by fire, for whose sake the days of tribulation were shortened; but to the external state of the church, and the trouble of it throughout Christendom, about the time of the destruction of antichrist:

*two parts therein shall be cut off [and] die;* all hypocrites, formalists, and outward court worshippers; who seem as if they would be at this time two thirds of the professors of true religion; who will not be able to stand the hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it; which will be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, (<sup>(66:10)</sup> Revelation 3:10) but will be twice dead, plucked up by the roots; will die to the profession of religion, and be cut off from the people of God, and have no more a name with them:

*but the third shall be left therein;* the few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; the hundred forty and four thousand that will stand with Christ, and by him, on Mount Zion, being redeemed from among men, (<sup>(66:1)</sup> Revelation 3:4 14:1,4) compare with this (<sup>(66:19)</sup> Revelation 16:19).

**Ver. 9.** *And I will bring the third part through the fire,* etc.] Into tribulation, as the Targum explains it; or into great distresses, comparable to fire, as Kimchi observes; this is the hour of temptation that will be in the Philadelphian church state, (<sup>(66:10)</sup> Revelation 3:10). Daniel's time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation, (<sup>(27:1)</sup> Daniel 12:1) and the time of the slaying of the witnesses, (<sup>(66:10)</sup> Revelation 11:7-9):

*and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried;* their graces, principles, and profession, will be tried; their dross and tin will be removed, and they will be purged and purified; a more pure and glorious state of the church will take place, in which there will be great purity of Gospel worship, discipline, and conversation; when the word will be more purely preached, the ordinances more purely administered, and the saints

will live more holy lives and conversations, signified by the witnesses ascending up into heaven, (<sup><69112></sup>Revelation 11:12):

*they shall call on my name*; which includes the whole of divine worship, and particularly designs prayer, that pure offering and incense, which shall now be offered to the name of the Lord in every place, (<sup><30111></sup>Malachi 1:11) hence it follows,

*and I will hear them*; accept their prayers, and give an answer to them: so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“he shall pray in my name, and I will receive his prayer:”

*I will say, It [is] my people*; the Lord will make it appear to themselves and others that they are his special, peculiar, and covenant people, by calling them out of Babylon; by bestowing his favours upon them; and by granting his presence with them, as well as by the witnessing of his Spirit to them; (see <sup><6804></sup>Revelation 18:4 19:1):

*and they shall say, The Lord [is] my God*: they shall know him to be their covenant God and Father, and claim their interest in him, and acknowledge him as such; which is the greatest happiness that can be enjoyed, (<sup><4315></sup>Psalm 144:15 <sup><6213></sup>Revelation 21:3).