

Post-Exile Prophets
THE STRUCK SHEPHERD
Wednesday, September 17
Reading: Zechariah 13:7

Zechariah 13:7 *"Awake, sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is close to Me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn My hand against the little ones."*

The scene now shifts, as indicated by Zechariah's change from prose to poetry. Having discussed the cleansing of the people of Israel from sin and the land from idols and false prophets, Zechariah's prophecy now returns to the Good Shepherd. The reason forgiveness can happen is because of the sacrifice of the Messiah. We know this verse is speaking of Jesus' death because our Lord Himself quoted it the night before the crucifixion and applied it to Himself (Matthew 26:31).

The Messiah has been clearly identified as the Shepherd previously in Zechariah's book (see chapter 11). Now the Good Shepherd will be struck! This word reminds us of the mourning of Israel over "the One they have pierced" (12:10). The "sword" is a picture of judgment. But this judgment will fall on "My Shepherd" and it is God who calls for it! The death of Jesus was no accident or defeat. It was the plan of God from the beginning. Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost makes this abundantly clear.

This Man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead..." (Acts 2:23-24)

God's judgment would fall "against the man who is close to Me!" This phrase hints at both the deity and humanity of the Messiah. He is a man – stating His humanity. But He is not just a man. He is also "close to" or an associate of God – declaring His deity. Only One who was both God and man could pay the price for our sins and offer forgiveness.

"Strike the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered" – When Jesus was arrested and crucified, His disciples did indeed scatter. But this statement goes beyond that initial scattering. The early chapters of the book of Acts tell us how the followers of Jesus were scattered by persecution because of their faith in Him. This resulted in the spread of the gospel. Then ultimately all the sheep (the nation of Israel) was scattered by the Romans. Jesus said this would be a direct result of their rejection of Him (Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 19:41-44). But this scattering and turning His hand against the little ones is not for their destruction but for their salvation. Zechariah's next words show us that a remnant of Israel will be saved through the fire. (More on this tomorrow)

In the book of Revelation, we see a vision of the throne room of heaven. The apostle John is told that "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah...has triumphed." John turns, expecting to see a fierce lion, but instead sees "a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain" (Revelation 5:4-6) This is the Lord Jesus Christ! One day, we will see the One who was pierced and for all eternity see the marks of His death to remind us of the price He paid for our redemption. Then with all creation we will sing:

"You are worthy...because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priest to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth...Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:9-12)