Thursday Bible Class Zechariah 13 24/11/22

In that Day…

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.



The above fountain is located in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. It is interesting in that the fountain flows out of what is supposed to represent a book. The water is designed to spray out to look like pages turning.

We think this is an appropriate image for our study this evening, as the prophet Zechariah foretells a time when the city of Jerusalem, and in its inhabitants will be washed and forgiven their sins. In chapter 12 of the prophecy, which we looked at last time, we were reminded of how the nation of Israel would be brought to a situation where they would utterly humbled, and would repent of their national and wickedness, and lament greatly for the way they have denied their Saviour, and they will look upon Him and mourn greatly,

- these verses in chapter 13 are a continuation of this prophecy, remembering that there are no chapter breaks in the original text. So here Zechariah predicts how there will be this great cleansing process. It is not speaking of a literal great fountain, but is speaking of a symbolic fountain. The Saviour spoke of this at his first appearing: John 4:14: *But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* The water that the Lord Jesus gave was the Word. The Gospel, the Good News is the fountain of Life, so that is what we thought the image of the water coming from the Book was most fitting.

It is often suggested that verse 6 and 7 are speaking of the identity of the revealing of Christ to the nation, and it may well be referring to him. However there appears to be an alternative way of looking at it, which we will discuss.

It seems that from verse 2 – 6 is a section which all related to verse 1. These verses all describe the affects that the cleansing process will have upon the nation. They mirror the prophecy of Ezekiel in 36:25 *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*

Here in this chapter in verse 2, Zechariah declares the words of the Lord, saying how God will cut off the names of the idols out of the land. Often reforming kings like Hezekiah and Josiah, would cut down all the idols out of the land, and destroy them. But after their death, the idols would soon be remade and set up again. But here God is saying the very <u>names</u> of these idols will be cut off. When the nation of Israel first went into the land they were commanded: Joshua 23:7*That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither <u>make mention</u> of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:* By cutting off the names of the idols, it means that discussion about them will cease, the culture associated with them will be destroyed, the memory of them will fade, the need for them no

longer required. Won't even be talked about. Gone forever. What idols are we talking about? Pop stars, sports stars, reality show stars, greed, excessive wealth, sex industry, all things which distract and ultimately destroy the godly man and woman, but even the root cause of idolatry will be abolished: Covetousness. See Colossians 3:5

Zechariah then goes on to describe how all those people who revel in idolatry and live like leeches and parasites off of false religion and deceiving people, these will all be eradicated. He explains how, that when someone practices false religion, even those nearest and dearest, their own families, will be so angry and disappointed that they will expose them for what they are. - Not like Achan we remember, who hid the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold under the tent floor, and all his family kept quiet about the secret.(Joshua 7:21) No, going forward, when the consciences of Israel has been cleaned, such wicked behaviour will not be tolerated. Zechariah then gives examples in verses 3 -6. He uses extreme language to make the point -

When someone begins to preach false religion, it will horrify people so much that even his own parents will run him through with a sword.

The uniform of false religion will be rapidly discarded – for example people who wanted to be regarded as 'prophets' used to wear a hairy tunic to distinguish themselves and look holy – a bit like priests and popes today who wear red and purple skirts and dresses, but such foolish conduct, will be seen as ridiculous and pathetic, instead such people will quickly disassociate themselves with such a past, and when accused will pretend to have been a humble worker all their life. Now to verse 6 which is interesting. The KJV has 6 *And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.* However, it should be wounds <u>between</u> your hands. Other translations have wounds on your body, others have wounds on your chest. Bearing in mind the immediate context is the behaviour of

false prophets, and their behaviour, it makes far more sense, to understand that the prophet is not referring to the Lord Jesus here, who was wounded in his hands and his feet, but to the ridiculous custom of the false prophets of the time who lacerated their bodies – like the prophets of Baal on Carmel who cut themselves with lancets until the blood flowed to appease their god. (See also Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1; 1 Kings 18:28) Flagellation and other questionable self-harm has been carried out by false religion in the name of God to make the person appear to be holy, and genuine, when they are in fact a fake. Even today across Latin America, and Catholic Europe, devout catholics will enact the "stations of the cross" and beat themselves with thorns, to show bodily penance and remorse. Zechariah is here depicting someone then being accused, as a false prophet, no I have always been a humble workman all my life, and they discard their uniforms of false religion, - well what are these marks in your flesh then – look like religious marks to me – the answer will be shrugged off – oh, no, these are just scars from when I had an accident in the house of my friends.

This we submit is a different way of looking at this verse. But the context lends itself to it. The NET Bible also makes it clear.

Arriving at verse 7, there is also food for thought, when we read the commentary in the NET Bible for this verse: *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.* (KJV)

"Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. "Strike the shepherd that the flock may be scattered;[i]I will turn my hand against the insignificant ones. NET

The commentary or this verse in the New English Translation is as follows:

> "Zechariah 13:7 Despite the New Testament 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)."

The above suggestion is worth considering, as it explains the connection between verse 7 and 8. (If verse 7 refers to the revelation of Jesus as the true shepherd here, then what is the connection with two thirds being cut off?)

<u>A List of End Time Prophecies in the Book of Zechariah, in chronological order of fulfilment, with chapter and verse:</u>

1. The scattered Jews to be brought back from all directions Ch 8:8, 10:10
2. Jerusalem to be a cup of trembling, a massive problem to all nations Ch 12:12
3. Jerusalem to be a burdensome stone to all nations Ch 12:3
4. All nations will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle Ch14:2
5. North Country to be quietened Ch 6:8
6. The Messiah to appear on Mount of Olives Ch 14:4
7. Saints will appear with the Messiah Ch 14:5
8. A great earthquake will transform Jerusalem Ch 14:4,5
9. Two thirds will perish, but in the face of great anguish will call upon the Saviour Ch 13:9
10. The third will be purified as gold is tried Ch 13:9
11. Great reformation of the Jewish people who will be greatly humbled Ch 12:10

12. With great mourning they will acknowledge their Messiah Ch12:12
13. Judah to be God's goodly horse in battle to fight against the nations Ch 10:3-5
14. Judah to be a torch of fire among the chaff of the nations Ch 12:6
15. No need of mans defence, God will be a wall of fire Ch 2:5
16. A great destruction like the effects of nuclear war will fall upon people Ch 14:12
17. Many nations will be joined to the LORD Ch 2:11
18. False religion will be abolished Ch 13:2
19. God will be the glory in the midst of Judah Ch 2:5
20. God will dwell in the midst of all people Ch 2:11
21. Ten men will grab old of the clothes of a Jew and say we will go with you Ch 8:23
22. Many nations will seek to pray before the Lord Ch 8:22
23. The land of Israel will be the centre of the Kingdom Ch 2:12
24. Jerusalem to contain, and be known as the mountain of the Lord of hosts Ch 8:3
25. Jerusalem to be the capital the city of truth Ch 8:3
26. Dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth Ch 9:10
27. Great fertility, the seed shall be prosperous the vine shall give her fruit, ground will give its increase Ch 8:12
28. Every man dwelling under vine and fig tree Ch 3:10
29. Little children playing in the plazas of the city in peace Ch 8:6
30. A new watercourse, river will come from Jerusalem Ch 14:8
31. All nations will go up to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles Ch14: 16

Brother Terry