

The Day of Salvation

October 08, 2017

Zechariah 13:7-9

Radio

Main Text: “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is My fellow,” declares Jehovah Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. In the whole land, declares the Lord, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. 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.’” (Zechariah 13:7-9)

Fourteen times in chapters 12-14 the phrase, "On that day," is used. There can be no question as to the day spoken of for the Lord, Himself, revealed it. In Matthew 26:31 we read, "Then saith Jesus unto them, 'All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.'"

Zechariah's prophecy refers to none other day than that day on which the LORD God made the soul of Christ to be an offering for sin - when justice exacted the awful penalty of our sin from Christ.

Three things are associated with that day: The suffering of the Savior, the scattering of the sheep, and the purifying of the church.

The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus is holy ground, so we must never treat it as common ground; we must ever approach it merely as an intellectual study. It is the most momentous event in history.

All of God's purpose hinges on this event. In The Revelation, it Was as the Lamb slain that Jesus had the right as the Lion of the

tribe of Judah, to take from the hand of God the book sealed with seven seals, and open it.

Furthermore, our eternal salvation is founded upon it. No cross; no salvation. No shed blood; no forgiveness of sin!

No ground is holier, no scene more awesome, no event more telling of the glory of the living God than the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

It is a work of God. The one who says He will smite the sheep identifies Himself as, "Jehovah Almighty." To the eye of the flesh, Christ's crucifixion may appear to be the work of Jews and Romans. But it is God Who did it. It was according to His purpose. It is written in Isaiah 53.10, "It pleased Jehovah to crush Him."

The crucifixion of Christ was a work of God's **justice**. "O sword" Psalm 145:17 says, "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." There is nothing that Jehovah does that is not righteous and holy. What Christ did on Calvary was done so that God could justly save His people. "Before God could do anything for us, He had to do something for Himself."

Romans 3:25,26 says, God has set forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his justice for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his justice: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

God put it this way in Isaiah 45:21 ". . . and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

Here is the hallmark of the gospel of God - justice! There are gods invented by men who are just and there are gods invented by men who are merciful. But Jehovah alone has designed a method in which justice is fully magnified and mercy given free rein. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." What glory to God!!

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a work of the LORD's will and pleasure. Isaiah 53:10 says. "Yet it pleased the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief"

It is a work against Jesus Christ. "All that God did to redeem His people, He did to the Lord Jesus Christ." He is the substitute for God's people. All that God would have done to His people because of their sin, He did to His Son instead.

Just Who is Jesus Christ that God could set Him up as a sacrifice of atonement for sinners? He is the man, Christ Jesus. Only a man can substitute for men. And what a man He is! And let us realize, He still is a man. Never a man spoke, lived, loved (God and men), worshipped, worked, or helped like Christ. He was and is the Father's delight. Of all the men who have ever lived, He is the only one who deserved good from God - the only one who gave to God and could have expect some recompense in return - the only one who deserved glory, honor and praise because of how He lived. Yet, what does He receive? "Awake O sword, against my Shepherd!"

Jesus Christ is The God-man. God calls this Shepherd "the man who is My fellow, who is close to me." Christ is close to God in desire and will. He said, "It is my food to do the will of Him who sent me."

Christ is close to God in character. Hebrews 1:3 says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."

Christ is close to God in nature. Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Christ, all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." In John 14:9, Christ says, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father," and in John 10.30 "I and my Father are one."

This is the essential meaning of the text, "the man who is My fellow." The word means, associate, companion, a peer - an equal. It is declaring that Jesus Christ is both God and man! God rose up against Himself in His Son in order to be just in saving His people.

Jesus Christ is The Shepherd of the Sheep. "The Lord is my Shepherd," wrote, David. The shepherds of Israel had proven false. So God chose a Shepherd - HIS shepherd - and struck Him down. How odd do the ways of God seem to us! But their apparent oddity is simply because God's ways are higher than our ways.

As the Shepherd, Jesus Christ knows the sheep, loves the sheep, and lays down his life for the sheep.

Then we read that the sheep are scattered. The sheep are the disciples of the Lord, all of whom forsook him and fled when he was arrested. Without a shepherd, sheep scatter. O, how we need Christ, our Shepherd! Yet, according to Christ, it was necessary that we be deprived of Him for awhile that we might receive Him forever.

Then we read something that sounds quite strange: The Lord's hand is turned against the little ones. The little ones are the descendants of those to whom Zechariah wrote, the Jews of the Lord's day. Because of the Jew's rejection of Christ, God brought

judgment on them. The purpose of this judgment was to reveal the remnant according to the election of grace.

Observe that there is only a remnant and even **they** go through the trial. But the purpose of the trial is different for the remnant than for the common stock. God brings trouble to goats to drive them away; He brings trouble to the sheep to draw them near. He **sends** goats in to trouble, but "**brings**" his sheep into it. As the 3 Hebrew children were not alone in the fire of the furnace, so the Lord's people are never alone in their troubles.

Isaiah 43:1-5 says, "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for **I am with thee.**"

The sheep are revealed in this: They call Him their God even in times of trouble. We could say especially in times of trouble. Zechariah's prophecy says, "They shall call on my name," and "they shall say, 'The LORD is my God.'" I do not know of any time that when the Psalmist was in trouble that He plead to the Lord on the basis that he was one of God's people. Rather, he based his plea on the fact that Jehovah was His God.

God calls them His people through the gospel. "I will say, 'It is my people.'" As God tries His people in order to prove and purify them, He speaks the word of comfort to them through the gospel.

It is as we listen to or think upon the gospel that the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God and we are moved to cry, "Abba, Father!"

How awesome are God's ways! He smites the Shepherd, scatters the sheep and turns His hand against the little ones; and in so doing saves His people with an everlasting salvation.

Until next week, the grace of the Lord be with you.