

March 13, 2011
"The Sword against God's Shepherd"
Zechariah 13:7-9

We live in a day when many in our culture are now Biblically illiterate. The Biblical World-view that was the foundation of our nation's greatness is increasing forgotten. It has been replaced by evolutionary / atheist thinking which leads many to thinking that death is just the natural end of life.

The Bible says "the wages of sin is death..." and presents to us a JUST GOD, WHO condemns sin!

Salvation means God saves us from the deserved consequence of our sins, even the righteous judgment of God!

I. The Sword here represents God's just wrath against sin and yet it is falling upon His own Shepherd –

"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones. (Zechariah 13:7 NKJ)

1. This is obviously a reference to Jesus Christ our Good Shepherd "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (John 10:11 NKJ)

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'³² "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."³³ Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."³⁵ Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:31-35 NKJ)

Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34

2. In this we see the sovereignty of God, what He tells us will happen, does happen –

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together²⁸ "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27-28 NKJ)

- *Peter protests against our Lord's prediction and yet it happens as HE said –*

3. We also see the LOVE of God in this –

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 NKJ)

4. Yet, not only His LOVE but also His JUSTICE –

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26 NKJ)

II. Note, the response of the sheep –

1. To the prophesy –

³³ **Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.**

³⁵ **Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. (Matthew 26:31-35 NKJ)**

We tend to think more confidently of ourselves than we should -

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat."³² "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren."³³ But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." (Luke 22:31-33 NKJ)

The sheep don't save the Shepherd from the roaring lion, Satan can attack us, mess with us. Even when Peter was at his best, He is the first

to profess Jesus is the Christ, right after he makes this blessed confession Jesus has to say to him "Get, thee behind me Satan" when Peter speaks against the CROSS!

2. To the REALITY, to the fulfillment of this prophecy, we are NO MATCH!

"And the sheep will be scattered;" Zechariah 13:7

A. Without God's help we are no match for the Devil – Ephesians 6:10-12 ... "his craft and power are great and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal"

B. Yet, much less are we able to deal with God's JUSTICE / His wrath that we deserve, the sword that comes against Christ ... ALL THE POWER of God is behind this –

"he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (Revelation 14:10-11 NKJ)

C. Christ took all this wrath upon Himself on the cross

- God turned His face from Him
- The place was turned dark
- He cries, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

Never though all eternity had the relationship between the Father and the Son ever been in any way broken but here for a time in some sense it was!

III. Yet, God allows His children, His "little ones" to share a bit in their Shepherd's suffering –

... Then I will turn My hand against the little ones. (Zechariah 13:7 NKJ)

1. This is a reference to the persecution that happened to the early church and ultimately throughout the ages ...

2. This too is part of God's will –

I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:9 NKJ)

A. This is to refine them –

But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:10 NKJ)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of *your* souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9 NKJ)

B. This causes them to PRAY – "They will call on My name"

C. This prayer is ANSWERED with a sweet covenant relationship with God - And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (Zechariah 13:9 NKJ)

IV. Yet this is not for everyone –

And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But *one-third* shall be left in it: (Zechariah 13:8 NKJ)

Here is God's justice -

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.¹⁴ "Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14 NKJ)

I believe the two-thirds here represent those who travel the broad way, the majority who do not know the Lord. The one-third represents the remnant, those who are Christ's sheep!

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; (2 Peter 1:10 NKJ)