Zechariah 13:6-9

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

Wyn Laidig

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***Zechariah 13:6-9***  
**6** And if one asks him, ‘What are these wounds on your back?’ he will say, ‘The wounds I received in the house of my friends.’ **7**“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,” declares YHWH Tsava’ot. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. **8** In the whole land, declares YHWH, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. **9** 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, ‘YHWH is my God.’ ”

1. Summarize the first part of this oracle, found in Zech 12:1 – 13:5.

The first section is about victory “on that day” of the Messiah’s return. This will be a day final judgment, when God will bring both salvation to His people and overpowering wrath to the enemies of Israel. With God providing the strength, even the weakest will be like King David (recalling perhaps the battle of David and Goliath).

The last section is speaks of the sorrow and mourning that will be the initial response of all of Israel when the Messiah returns and they realize their rejection of Him and the depth of their sins. But God will hear their pleas for mercy and pour out his grace upon them. He will bathe them in living water to cleanse them of all sin.

Idolatry and false prophets will come to an end.

1. If Zech 13:6 starts a new thought, it could be linked back to Zech 12:10. Explain how these verses seem to refer to the Messiah.

***Zechariah 12:10*** (ESV)  
**10** “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on **him whom they have pierced**, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an **only child**, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a **firstborn**.

***Zechariah 13:6*** (ESV)  
**6** And if one asks him, ‘What are these **wounds on your back**?’ he will say, ‘**The wounds I received in the house of my friends (lit. those I love).**’

Yeshua was pierced by the sword while on the cross. He is referred to as the only child, the firstborn of YHWH. He was flogged before his crucifixion, at the request of those whom he loved.

1. In trying to understand who “the shepherd” of Zech 13:7 refers to, we find clues in that YHWH calls him “my shepherd” and “the man who stands next to me”. What do these clues hint at? Consider Matt 26:64, John 10:11, Acts 7:55-56.

In Zech 13:7, “shepherd” is singular rather than plural, so there is one particular shepherd in focus here. Furthermore, God says he is **MY** shepherd, and that **he stands next to me**. So there is a closeness as well as a sharing of power hinted at. We see this reflected in the following verses:

***Matthew 26:64*** (ESV)  
**64** Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

***John 10:11*** (ESV)  
**11** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

***Acts 7:55–56*** (ESV)  
**55** But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56** And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

1. The phrase “stands next to me” is really “my **‘amit**”. What does the Hebrew word עָמִית ‘amit really mean? How does that add strength to your answer to Question 3?

עָמִית (*ʿā·mîṯ*): ≡ associate, neighbor, countryman, i.e., **one in close, united relation**, relative to other more distant relationships either in close physical proximity, or close clan or national relationships (Lev 5:21; 18:20; 19:11, 15, 17; 24:19; 25:14,15, 17; Zec 13:7). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages.*

It can mean “my close relative” or “my close associate”. This is even stronger than “the one who stands next to me.”

1. In Zech 13:7, “strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” may be a saying that is being quoted –perhaps an common expression that illustrates a principle. If so, what is the principle being illustrated?

People, like sheep, need a leader. Without a leader the people will go off in all different directions. It could simply be expressing a principle of life, that without a leader people have no direction.

1. Look at Matt 26:30-31 (or Mark 14:26-27). How does Yeshua interpret Zech 13:7?

***Matthew 26:30–31*** (ESV)  
**30** And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. **31** Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

Yeshua quotes Zech 13:7 as referring to his crucifixion, and the falling away of his disciples that would follow.

1. Zech 13:7 begins by YHWH metaphorically addressing “the sword” and telling it to “awake”. Why would God be telling the sword to strike his shepherd (the one who stands next to him)?

In poetic language, this command seems to be used more as prophetic statement of what will happen. God knows what will happen, and is saying to those who would bear the sword, go ahead and do what you will do.

1. If our understanding of Zech 13:7 is correct, why would YHWH say “I will turn my hand against the little ones”? What does this mean? Who are the “little ones”, and are they innocent or guilty? Recall Zech 11:4-6. Also refer to Jer 46:28.

***Zechariah 11:4–6*** (ESV)  
**4** Thus said YHWH my God: “Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. **5** Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be YHWH, I have become rich,’ and their own shepherds have no pity on them. **6 For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of this land,** declares YHWH. Behold, **I will cause each of them to fall** into the hand of his neighbor, and each into the hand of his king, and they shall crush the land, and I will deliver none from their hand.”

***Jeremiah 46:28*** (ESV)  
**28** Fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the Lord, for I am with you. I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but **of you I will not make a full end.** **I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.**”

The little ones are the sheep… the flock doomed to slaughter. YHWH says he will no longer have pity on them (implied: because of their disobedience). He will “turn his hand against them”. They are not innocent bystanders who are now adversely affected by the loss of their shepherd.

1. Consider the “**and**” which links together “Strike the shepherd **AND** the sheep will be scattered.” What is the relationship between these two clauses?

At first reading it seems to be a consequence: “Strike the shepherd WITH THE RESULT THAT the sheep will be scattered.” But given guilt of the sheep, and the Father’s promise that he would no longer have pity on them, and will turn his hand against them, it would seem that a CAUSATIVE relationship is implied: Strike the shepherd SO THAT the sheep will be scattered.

The scattering of the sheep is not an accidental consequence of the striking of the shepherd, but rather is for the purpose of disciplining and purifying the flock.

1. Zech 13:8 literally says “two parts shall be cut off and they shall perish, and a third shall be left over.” What is the meaning of this?

The sheep will be scattered

1. Look at Ezek 5:1-12. How does this relate to our Zechariah passage?

***Ezekiel 5:1–12*** (ESV)  
**1** “And you, O son of man, take a sharp sword. Use it as a barber’s razor and pass it over your head and your beard. Then take balances for weighing and divide the hair. **2** **A third part you shall burn in the fire** in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. **And a third part you shall take and strike with the sword** all around the city. **And a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them. 3** And you shall take from these a small number and bind them in the skirts of your robe. **4** And of these again you shall take some and cast them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will come out into all the house of Israel. **5** “Thus says the Adonai YHWH: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. **6** And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes. **7** Therefore thus says the Adonai YHWH: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my statutes or obeyed my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, **8** therefore thus says the Adonai YHWH: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. **9** And because of all your abominations I will do with you what I have never yet done, and the like of which I will never do again. **10** Therefore fathers shall eat their sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers. And I will execute judgments on you, and any of you who survive I will scatter to all the winds. **11** Therefore, as I live, declares the Adonai YHWH, surely, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will withdraw. My eye will not spare, and I will have no pity. **12** **A third part of you shall die of pestilence** and be consumed with famine in your midst; **a third part shall fall by the sword** all around you; **and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.**

Ezekiel’s prophesy seemed to predict the Babylonian siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and the remnant that would be scattered to Babylon (and Egypt and elsewhere). But it is also possible that it could primarily predict the end times destruction, of which the Babylonian destruction was but a less severe precursor.

If Ezekiel’s prophesy was primarily referring to the Babylonian destruction, then two thirds were killed at that time, and the remaining one third was scattered. So Zechariah’s prophesy would apply to the remaining one third, meaning that of that of that remaining one third, two thirds would again be killed and one third would be scattered and purified.

However if Ezekiel’s prophesy was primarily referring to the end times (of which the Babylonian destruction was simply a less severe precursor), then both Zechariah and Ezekiel are prophesying the very same thing.

Either way, the end times can be viewed as “**an eschatological repetition of exile**”.

1. In light of the Ezekiel passage, what group of people may be referred to in Zech 13:7 “**the sheep will be scattered**”?

If we only look at the Zechariah passage, “the sheep will be scattered” seems to imply that the scattering applies to all the sheep, two thirds of which are killed in the process, and the remaining third of which is going to be refined and purified.

However after comparing to the Ezekiel passage, it may be that the scattered sheep are referring specifically to the remaining third that are not killed, as is the case in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, two thirds are killed, and the remaining third is the part that is both scattered and purified.

1. What happens to the remaining third in Zech 13:9? Compare to Prov 17:3 and Ezek 22:20-22.

***Proverbs 17:3*** (ESV)  
**3** The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and YHWH tests hearts.

***Ezekiel 22:20–22*** (ESV)  
**20** As one gathers silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into a furnace, to blow the fire on it in order to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my wrath, and I will put you in and melt you. **21** I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in the midst of it. **22** As silver is melted in a furnace, so you shall be melted in the midst of it, and you shall know that I am YHWH; I have poured out my wrath upon you.”

They are left alive, and put into the fire to be refined as one refines silver. They are to be “tested”, as gold is smelted and purified.

1. What is the result of this scattering and refining by fire? Compare to Zech 10:6-9.

Zech 13:9 “They will call upon my name and I will answer them.”

***Zechariah 10:6–9*** (ESV)  
**6** “I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and **they shall be as though I had not rejected them**, for I am YHWH their God and **I will answer them**. **7** Then Ephraim shall become like a mighty warrior, and their hearts shall be glad as with wine. Their children shall see it and be glad; their hearts shall rejoice in YHWH. **8** “I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be as many as they were before. **9** Though **I scattered them among the nations**, yet in far countries **they shall remember me,** and with their children they shall live and return.

1. What is the significance of the last sentence “I will say, ‘**They are my people**’ and they will say, ‘**YHWH is my God**’”? Look at Gen 17:1-8, Exod 6:7, Dt 4:20-31, and Dt 26:16-19.

***Genesis 17:1–8*** (ESV)  
**1** When Abram was ninety-nine years old YHWH appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, **2** that **I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.**” **3** Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, **4** “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. **5** No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. **6** I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. **7** And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for **an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring** after you. **8** And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and **I will be their God.”**

***Exodus 6:6–8*** (ESV)  
**6** Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. **7** **I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God,** and you shall know that I am YHWH your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. **8** I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am YHWH.’ ”

***Deuteronomy 4:20–31*** (ESV)  
**20** But YHWH has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, **to be a people of his own inheritance,** as you are this day. **21** Furthermore, YHWH was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan, and that I should not enter the good land that YHWH your God is giving you for an inheritance. **22** For I must die in this land; I must not go over the Jordan. But you shall go over and take possession of that good land. **23** **Take care, lest you forget the covenant of YHWH your God**, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that YHWH your God has forbidden you. **24** For YHWH your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. **25** “When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of YHWH your God, so as to provoke him to anger, **26** I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed. **27** And **YHWH will scatter you** among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where YHWH will drive you. **28** And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. **29** **But from there you will seek YHWH your God and you will find him,** if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. **30** When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days, you will return to YHWH your God and obey his voice**. **31** For YHWH your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.

***Deuteronomy 26:16–19*** (ESV)  
**16** “This day YHWH your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. **17** **You have declared today that YHWH is your God,** and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice. **18** And **YHWH has declared today that** **you are a people for his treasured possession,** as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments, **19** and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that **you shall be a people holy to YHWH your God**, as he promised.”

***Deuteronomy 29:10–15*** (ESV)  
**10** “You are standing today, all of you, before YHWH your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, **11** your little ones, your wives, and the sojourner who is in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, **12** so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of YHWH your God, which YHWH your God is making with you today, **13** **that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God**, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. **14** It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, **15** but with whoever is standing here with us today before YHWH our God, and **with whoever is not here with us today.**

This phrase reminds us of the original promise / covenant God made with Abraham. This promise was repeated over and over. And God’s people broke their end of the covenant over and over. But in the end, God will refine and purify, and in the end, because of his grace and mercy, he will have the relationship he desires with His people.

1. Zechariah used the same phrase in a previous vision. See Zech 8:8 and surrounding verses. What was the context and meaning there, and in what way was this to motivate the people?

***Zechariah 8:3–9*** (ESV)  
**3** Thus says YHWH: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of YHWH Tsava’ot, the holy mountain. **4** Thus says YHWH Tsava’ot: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. **5** And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. **6** Thus says YHWH Tsava’ot: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares YHWH Tsava’ot? **7** Thus says YHWH Tsava’ot: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, **8** and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. **And they shall be my people, and I will be their God**, **in faithfulness and in righteousness.**” **9** Thus says YHWH Tsava’ot: “**Let your hands be strong**, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of YHWH Tsava’ot was laid, **that the temple might be built**.

This vision spoke of peace and security that would again be in the land. YHWH would renew or restore the fullness of he covenant with his people. They will have the relationship He originally intended, in faithfulness and righteousness. This knowledge was to encourage them to be strong and stay focused on the task at hand. Finish the temple… the job they were tasked to do.

1. How would you summarize this section (Zech 13:6-9)?

The Shepherd (Messiah) will be struck down (his crucifixion) and his disobedient people will be scattered. Two thirds (or at least a majority) will be killed, but the remaining will be refined and purified with the result that their relationship with YHWH will be as it was originally intended. YHWH will be our God and we will be his people.

1. What does this passage say to you, personally?