Zechariah 13:2-6

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 13:2–6***   
**2** “And on that day, declares YHWH Tsava’ot, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they shall be remembered no more. And also I will remove from the land the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness. **3** And if anyone again prophesies, his father and mother who bore him will say to him, ‘You shall not live, for you speak lies in the name of YHWH.’ And his father and mother who bore him shall pierce him through when he prophesies. **4** “On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, **5** but he will say, ‘I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.’ **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.’

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

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.

1. What does it mean that the names of the idols “shall be **remembered** no more”? Consider passages such as Ex 20:8, Num 15:39-40, and Lev 26:40-46. What does the word remember (Hebrew **zakar**) really mean?

***Leviticus 26:40–45*** (ESV)  
**40** “But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, **41** so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, **42** then **I will remember my covenant** with Jacob, and **I will remember my covenant** with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and **I will remember the land.** **43** But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes. **44** Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, **I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them** utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am YHWH their God. **45** But **I will for their sake remember the covenant** with their forefathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am YHWH.”

***Exodus 20:8–10*** (ESV)  
**8** “**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** **9** Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

***Numbers 15:38–41*** (ESV)  
**38** “Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. **39** And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and **remember all the commandments of YHWH, to do them,** not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. **40** So you shall **remember and do** all my commandments, and be holy to your God. **41** I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am YHWH your God.”

In Hebrew, **zakar** means to remember and also to take the appropriate action. Remember and do! Idolatry shall have no place among the people.

1. What does it mean that YHWH will “**cut off** the names” of the idols from the land? Also look at Zeph 1:4-5, Ex 23:13, Josh 23:6-8.

***Zephaniah 1:4–5*** (ESV)  
**4** “I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal and the name of the idolatrous priests along with the priests, **5** those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens, those who bow down and swear to YHWH and yet swear by Milcom,

***Exodus 23:13*** (ESV)  
**13** “Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips.

***Joshua 23:6–8*** (ESV)  
**6** Therefore, be very strong to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left, **7** that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, **8** but you shall cling to YHWH your God just as you have done to this day.

The names stand for the idols themselves. It’s not that the names will no longer be known in any way, but rather that worship of these idols will cease in entirety.

Do we speak the names of pagan gods? Should we be doing that, even if its not worship?

1. What kind of prophets are being referred to in this passage? Explain your answer.

They are false prophets because “they speak lies in the name of YHWH.” So they claim to be prophets of YHWH, but they are not speaking the truth,

1. What will the parents of a prophet do? See also Deut 13:1-11.

***Deuteronomy 13:1–11*** (ESV)  
**1** “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a **sign or a wonder,** **2** and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ **3** you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For YHWH your God is testing you, to know whether you love YHWH your God with all your heart and with all your soul. **4** You shall walk after YHWH your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. **5** But **that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death,** because he has taught rebellion against YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which YHWH your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. **6** “If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which neither you nor your fathers have known, **7** some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, **8** you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. **9** **But you shall kill him**. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. **10** You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **11** And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you.

The parents “will pierce him though”. According to Torah, a false prophet is to be killed.

1. Why do you think people would be tempted to listen to these prophets? Consider again Dt 13:1-11, as well as Matt 7:21-23 and Matt 24:21-24.

***Matthew 7:21–23*** (ESV)  
**21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not **prophesy in your name**, and **cast out demons in your name**, **and do many mighty works in your name?**’ **23** And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

***Matthew 24:21–27*** (ESV)  
**21** For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. **22** And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. **23** Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. **24** For false christs and **false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.** **25** See, I have told you beforehand. **26** So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. **27** For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

The false prophets will perform “signs and wonders” (Dt 13, and Matt 24) and “do many mighty works” (Matt 7).

1. The word “pierce though” is Hebrew **dakar.**  Where was this same word used previously in Zechariah? Is there any significance in connecting this two usages?

***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.

The Messiah, although a true prophet, received the punishment of a false prophet.

1. What is the “spirit of uncleanness” that will be removed? What does “unclean” (HB **tum’ah**) mean? The same word is used Ezek 36:26-32. Recall also that a similar phrase is used in Zech 13:1, although the Hebrew word there is **nidda**.

**ṭumʾāh**. n. fem. **unclean, impure.** Describes the state of uncleanness, whether ritual or moral, as it pertains to people, animals, objects, or places. With the exception of Num 5:19, which views marital infidelity as moral uncleanness, all instances in the Pentateuch are **related to ritual categories**. (Lexham Theological Wordbook).

**nidda**. **menstruation**, woman’s period, i.e., the action of a discharge of blood and tissue debris from the uterus, with the associative meaning of ceremonial uncleanness and undesirable filth (Lev 12:2); **impurity**, corruption, i.e., that which is a sin against a standard, implying defilement and uncleanness of an act[[1]](#footnote-1). (Lev 20:21; Ezr 9:11b; Zec 13:1), see also 5765; **defilement**, uncleanness, i.e., that which is no longer sanctified and so common and ceremonially impure (2Ch 29:5). (Dictionay of Biblical Languages, Hebew).

***Zechariah 13:1*** (ESV)  
**1** “On that day there shall be **a fountain opened** for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to **cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.**

***Ezekiel 36:24–29*** (ESV)  
**24** I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. **25** I will **sprinkle clean wate**r on you, and you shall be **clean from all your uncleannesses,** and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **26** **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** **28** You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. **29** And I will **deliver you from all your uncleannesses.**

Some say the “spirit of uncleanness” is an evil spirit, an unclean spirit. All evil spirits would really be “unclean.” Perhaps this refers not to a **particular** evil spirit, but the general spirit or attitude of the people. They were all living unclean lives, not even attempting to walk according to Torah.

1. Why are the prophets “ashamed”? The word is Hebrew בּוֹשׁ ***bosh***. How does **bosh** differ from “ashamed”? The same word is used in Micah 3:7. How is it translated there?

***Micah 3:7*** (ESV)  
**7** the seers shall be **disgraced**, and the diviners put to shame; they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer from God.

In Micah 3:7, **bosh** is translated as “disgraced”, in contrast with **hapar** translated as “put to shame.”

חָפַר (**hapar**) have dismay, be in confusion, be abashed, i.e., have feelings of anxiety and distress;   
 be disgraced, be ashamed, i.e., be in a state of low status and dishonor   
 (Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains).

בּוֹשׁ (**bosh***)* The primary meaning of this root is “to fall into disgrace, normally through failure, either of self or of an object of trust.” Along with its derivatives, it occurs 155 times, all but 25 times in the prophets or the Psalms. No less than 38 occurrences are found in Jeremiah and 20 in Isaiah. The word is often paralleled with kālam “to be humiliated,” and less frequently with ḥātat “to be shattered, dismayed.” As these parallels suggest, the force of **bôš is somewhat in contrast to the primary meaning of the English “to be ashamed,” in that the English stresses the inner attitude, the state of mind, while the Hebrew means “to come to shame” and stresses the sense of public disgrace, a physical state.** (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.)

It seems the false prophets were publicly humiliated and disgraced, because their wrong doings were made known.

1. What was the purpose of wearing a hairy cloak? Why would these prophets have ever wanted to put one on? What other prophets in Scripture wore a hairy cloak?

***2 Kings 1:5–8*** (ESV) **Elijah work the hairy cloak.  
5** The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?” **6** And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, Thus says YHWH, Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ” **7** He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” **8** They answered him, “**He wore a garment of hair,** with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

***1 Kings 19:19–20*** (ESV) **Elijah gave his cloak to Elisha as a sign of his calling**  
**19** So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. **Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. 20** And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”

***2 Kings 2:12–14*** (ESV) **Elisha work the Elijah’s cloak**  
**12** And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. **13** **And he took up the cloak of Elijah** that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. **14** Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, “Where is YHWH, the God of Elijah?” And when he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

***Matthew 3:1–4*** (ESV) **John the baptist work the hairy cloak**  
**1** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, **2** “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” **3** For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ” **4** **Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair** and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Elijah was the prototypical prophet. Since he wore a hairy cloak, and also passed it on to Elisha as a sign of calling to be a prophet, apparently this would be used by others as a symbol to try and show that they too were prophets from the same like of that great and respected prophet Elijah.

1. Why would the prophets no longer put on a hairy cloak?

In the last days, when people are repenting and returning to YHWH, exposing the false prophets for they are, and even giving the death penalty for being a false prophet, it is no longer fashionable or profitable to be a false prophet. Therefore these false prophets no longer claim to be prophets. They discard the clothing of a prophet, and say “I am no prophet.”

1. What does it mean, “I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth”? Notice the similar wording of Amos 7:14.

***Amos 7:14–15*** (ESV)  
**14** Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor a prophet’s son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. **15** But YHWH took me from following the flock, and YHWH said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’

The false prophet will say I have been a simple farmer all my life, sold as a slave since I was a child. In other words, I could have never been prophet. I have been nothing but a poor farmer all my life.

1. What is the meaning of the reference to “the wounds on his back” that he received “in the house of his friends”? Look at 1 Kings 18:28, Lev 19:28, and Dt 14:1.

***1 Kings 18:27–28*** (ESV)  
**27** And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, “Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened.” **28** And they cried aloud and **cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances**, until the blood gushed out upon them.

***Leviticus 19:28*** (ESV)  
**28** You shall not make any **cuts on your body for the dead** or tattoo yourselves: I am YHWH.

***Deuteronomy 14:1*** (ESV)  
**1** “You are the sons of YHWH your God. You shall not **cut yourselves** or make any baldness on your foreheads **for the dead**.

It seems that self mutilation was often a part of pagan rituals. Apparently similar practices will be used by false prophets in the last days as well.

Although they deny that they were ever false prophets, the scars of self mutilation bear a different testimony. However they will give the alibi that they received these scars from fighting with their friends.

1. The word “friends” in Zech 13:6 is from the Hebrew **‘ahav** meaning “lover”. So it more than just “friends” here – it would be better to translate it as “those who are loved, or those who are very dear”. How would it make sense to have received these wounds in the house of those who are so close to him?

This really doesn’t make much sense. There doesn’t seem to be a good explanation for this. It they are using this as an alibi, it is a very weak alibi.

1. Remember that there are no paragraph markings in the Hebrew text. And this is prophesy where things get “mixed up” at times. And note that Zech 13:7 begins a new poetic section talking about the shepherd, which is clearly Messianic. Therefore, could it be that Zech 13:6 begins a new thought distinctly separate from Zech 13:5? If this were speaking of the Messiah what would it mean, and how would it make sense? Also consider that this verse could in a sense be connected with Zech 12:10.

Yeshua was wounded – whipped, beaten, pierced hand, foot and side. Where? It could be said in the house of those he loved. His family, those he loved with his life, took that very life from him.

It could be that the “him” of Zech 13:6 is the same as the “him” of Zech 12:10. In both cases, it would be the Messiah. Prophesy is not always written as a cohesive, grammatically-correct prose document. The Messiah is implied, and not directly referenced in both these verses.

***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**.

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

Idolatry and false prophets will come to an end.

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

1. act. active voice [↑](#footnote-ref-1)