

XIV. ZECHARIAH 13:6 - 7

A. Zechariah 13:6

Evangelical expositors are divided over whether or not this verse is Messianic.

1. Non-Messianic Interpreters (Feinberg, Keil, Baron, NIV)
 - a. Immediate context indicates that these words are those of a false prophet who will be cut off with his comrades. (v. 2-5)
 - b. Wounds are self-inflicted in idolatrous frenzy, or result of parental discipline, or from punishment for false prophecy.
 - c. Phrase "between hands" refers to his body.
2. Messianic Interpreters (Pusey, Unger, Bullinger)
 - a. Far context argues for recalling "piercing" of 12:10, plus leads into the "smiting" of 13:7. This "wounded one" contrasts with false prophets of verses 2-5. He is the cleanser of idolatry.
 - b. Wounds are not punishment - this was stoning and death (Deut. 13:2,10). Discipline was not on hands, either.
 - c. Harmonizes also with Ps. 22:16 as well as context.

B. Importance of Zechariah 13:7

1. "The divine witness to the death and deity of the prophesied Messiah makes this verse one of the most significant in the entire Old Testament." (Unger)
2. Whereas he was wounded by his friends (v. 6), he will be smitten by Jehovah (v. 7). (cf. Isa. 53:10)

C. Exegesis of Zechariah 13:7

1. The word "sword" is employed symbolically of the divine stroke - it need not be a literal sword.
2. Both terms employed of the smitten emphasize his close relation to the LORD
 - a. "Shepherd" - this is not the "foolish shepherd" cf. 11:15-17 (modern commentators), for this one is the LORD's shepherd ("my"). (cf. Ezek. 34:23; Isa. 40:11)
 - b. "Fellow" (*ameeth*) - this word is used of "an associate, an equal, a neighbor, one who shares the nature of another."
 - 1) The 10 other occurrences are always used of a man who is a brother Israelite. (Lev. 6:2 (twice); 18:20; 19:11 [another], 15,17; 24:19; 25:14,15,17 [another])
 - 2) This word in modern Hebrew means "colleague, comrade."

- 3) This shepherd is one who participates or shares in the Divine nature. “When the title is employed of the relation of an individual to God, it is clear that the individual can be no mere man, but must be one united with God by unity of being.” (Hengstenberg)

3. Following the shepherd’s smiting, his sheep (i.e. his followers) will be scattered.
 - a. “Turn my hand upon the little ones,” although taken in a good (protective) sense by some, probably refers to a bad (destructive) sense due to its uniform use, this way in Scripture. (cf. Amos 1:8; Ezekiel 38:12; Ps. 81:14)
 - b. Following verses speak of the preservation of the one-third remnant of Israel through the most severe days of suffering (13:8,9).
 - c. “It is my people...the Lord is my God” is an eschatological phrase used in the O.T. – Ex. 6:7; Jer. 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38; Ezek. 11:20; 37:23, 27; Zech. 8:8

D. Rabbinic Views of Zechariah 13:7

Rabbinic commentators see the force of the word “fellow” (*ameeth*), but do not interpret it as the Messiah. (see translations)

- a. This is a false claim on the part of some man – “my shepherd who thinks himself my fellow.” (Ibn Ezra)
 - but text identifies “fellow” with “shepherd,” and this approach imposes words on the text without good warrant to do so
- b. “Fellow” identified as each of the kings of the nations, punished for his oppression of Israel (Soncino Commentary, p. 325).
 - but “sheep” must be “Jewish sheep” to be consistent with 13:8,9
 - Gentile kings are not of the same nature as LORD
- c. Rabbinic commentators, refusing to admit that there could be a man who shares God’s nature, impose mistranslations and additions to the verse to explain it away.

E. Fulfillment of Zechariah 13:6

1. Quoted by Jesus in Matthew 26:31, and fulfilled literally on the night of His betrayal - further in 70 A.D.
2. This “remnant” of Jesus’ scattered followers also referred to eschatologically in 13:8,9.
3. “How clearly this passage predicts the wonderful association the Messiah, the Son, was to sustain to the Father in assuming a human nature in the incarnation. It was the foretelling by the Spirit of prophecy of that ineffable uniting of the divine (i.e. fellow) with the human (i.e. man), resulting in the birth of Immanuel, one with the Father, who could say, ‘I and the Father are one.’” (Unqer, p. 232)

JEWISH TRANSLATIONS OF ZECHARIAH 13:6-7

- Leeser: "And should some one say unto him, What are these wounds between thy hands? Then will he say, Those with which I have been wounded in the house of my (vicious) friends. (7) Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man whom I have associated with me, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; but I will turn my hand toward the feeble ones."
- Harkavy: "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. (7) 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."
- JPS: "And one shall say unto him: 'What are these wounds between thy hands?' Then he shall answer: 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' (7) Awake, O sword, against My shepherd, and against the man that is near unto Me, saith the LORD of hosts; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn My hand upon the little ones."
- NJPS: (7) 'O sword! Rouse yourself against My shepherd, the man in charge of My flock - says the LORD of Hosts. Strike down the shepherd and let the flock scatter; and I will also turn My hand against all the shepherd boys.'
- A Jewish Bible according to the Masoretic Text Hebrew & English, Sinai Publishing, Tel Aviv, Israel "And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall according answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends. (7) 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."

CHRISTIAN TRANSLATIONS OF ZECHARIAH 13:6-7

- KJV: "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. (7) 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."
- NKJV: "And *one* will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will answer, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' (7) " 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."
- ASV: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine arms? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. (7) Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones."
- RSV: "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," says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones."
- NIV "If someone asks him, 'What are these wounds on your body?' he will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.' (7) "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones."