

Continuing the prophecy began in chapter 12, this chapter describes conditions going into Christ's millennial kingdom, including the cleansing of His people from sin, the purging of idolatry and false prophets from the land, Christ's sacrifice for His people, and the refinement of their faith through tribulation.

¹ In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

"In that day" - Refers to that future day when the Messiah has arrived and has taken His rightful place as the King of the Jews.

"shall be a fountain opened" - The tense of the Hebrew verb for "opened" indicates that it will be opened and will remain open. It is also a fountain, not a cistern or other static container of water that needs to be refilled when empty, indicating that it will be a never-ending supply. As we'll see, this is apparently not a literal fountain but a figure representing the forgiveness of the LORD.

"to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" - The focus of this prophecy that started back in chapter 12 is on what the LORD is planning for the Jews. Here the LORD explains that this fountain will be opened for the benefit of the Jews.

"for sin and for uncleanness" - This "fountain" refers to the endless supply of forgiveness and cleansing that comes from Jesus Christ through His blood shed at the cross. This verse was the inspiration for the beautiful hymn by William Cowper: "There Is A Fountain." The first verse is like a commentary on Zech. 13:1: "*There is a fountain filled with blood / drawn from Immanuel's veins / And sinners plunged beneath that flood / Lose all their guilty stains!*" Christ will offer that forgiveness to Israel.

² And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.

"I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered" - In that day the LORD will destroy all references to the idols and false gods that Israel has worshiped in the past as well as the memory of their names. His name will be the only name that they will need to remember to call on and worship.

"and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" - These are not the prophets of the LORD but the false prophets who speak lies either in the name of an idol or in the name of the LORD. The LORD takes spiritual deceit very seriously and there will be no place for false prophets among His people. The unclean spirits are the demonic spirits that speak through the false prophets and they will also be evicted from the land of Israel.

³ And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.

The Jews will be so in love with the LORD and grateful His for His redemption that they will be ready to put a stop to anyone who would attempt to lead others astray from the LORD, even if the false prophet was their own son. When they recognize what he is doing their loyalty to the LORD will outweigh even parental love for their children.

⁴ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: ⁵ But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied" - In that day the false prophets will hide what they are and what they do because they will know the punishment for prophesying lies and having visions that do not come from the LORD.

"neither shall they wear a rough [hair] garment to deceive" - The "rough garment" was a garment of hair and was the traditional garment of a prophet. John the Baptist wore such a garment (Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6), as apparently did Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). These false prophets normally would wear these garments of hair in order to deceive people into believing they were prophets of God but in Christ's kingdom they will not be so bold as to wear these garments.

"But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth" - Instead of parading around in the clothes of a prophet and looking for notoriety, they instead hide who they are and claim to have other occupations, such as being a farmer with livestock.

⁶ 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.

Some have interpreted this verse as referring to Christ with the wounds in His hands, probably because the next verse definitely refers to Christ. However, the context of false prophets and the Hebrew grammar of the sentence seems to indicate that the one with wounds in his hands is another false prophet attempting to hide what he is. The Hebrew is better translated "between thine hands." False prophets in the OT would often cut themselves to arouse spiritual ecstasy in their idolatrous rituals and there are numerous OT references to false prophets doing this as well as commands to Israel forbidding it. One familiar example is when the 450 prophets of Baal were calling on their god to answer by fire in response to Elijah's challenge on Mt. Carmel (**1 Kings 18:28**): "*And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.*"

The scenario in this verse is that someone has noticed these wounds and scars on the body of the false prophet and has asked about them. The false prophet then tries to cover up their true nature by making the excuse that they are accidental wounds that occurred while he was with his 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.

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts” - In this verse the focus turns to the Messiah and refers to how the LORD will pour out His wrath for our sins upon Jesus Christ. The LORD calls for the sword to be used against “my shepherd” - the One Whom the LORD has appointed as shepherd over His people. The LORD also describes this One as “the man that is my fellow,” making the Messiah co-equal with Himself. Thus the LORD speaks of Jesus Christ as the One Who would shepherd His people and also as being equal with God. This description of Christ reminds us of **Isa. 53:10a** *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...”* The LORD sacrificed His Own Son in order to redeem us.

“smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” - Christ quoted this verse during the Last Supper when He warned the disciples that He would be arrested that night (**Mark 14:27**): *“And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”* When Jesus was arrested, the disciples turned and ran.

“and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones” - The meaning of this phrase is unclear as it could refer to the persecution that the apostles suffered for the sake of Christ or it could speak of the LORD’s protecting hand preserving them spiritually.

⁸ And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

Only a third of the Jews living in the land of Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation will still be alive when Christ returns at the end. Some may question whether or not the LORD is able to protect His people when two thirds of them will die, but the next verse seems to indicate that the LORD allows them to die in order to purge His people of the rebellious and unbelieving. Paul addressed this question in **Rom. 9:6** when he says *“Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.”* He goes on to explain that only those Jews who are the spiritual descendants of Abraham (that is, through faith) are the true seed of Abraham and are thus partakers of the promises that God made to Israel.

⁹ And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

“And I will bring the third part through the fire” - The LORD will bring the remnant through the tribulation, ensuring their survival. It may be that these will be those that the LORD knows will repent and turn to Him in faith.

“and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried” - The purpose of the tribulation is to refine the LORD’s people and to not only bring them to faith but to strengthen and purify their faith. According to Zech. 14:1-2, the nations of the earth will gather to destroy Jerusalem at the battle of Armageddon and they will succeed in taking the city. Bringing the Jews to the point where they have no hope but Him will bring the faith of the Jews into focus.

The LORD often used this methodology elsewhere in the Bible as well as using it in our lives today. When we pray for the LORD to resolve a situation oftentimes it actually becomes worse and we wonder if the LORD has actually heard our prayer. However, sometimes the LORD allows our situation to become so desperate that we have no other hope to cling to but Him. When He delivers us from our hopeless situation we gain a better understanding of the power of God. A classic example of this is when Jesus received the message from Mary and Martha asking Him to come because their brother Lazarus was sick. Jesus purposely waited an extra two days before going to the see Lazarus, knowing that the man would be dead when He arrived. Jesus wanted the sisters to see that not only did He have the power to heal sickness but He had power over death itself.

“they shall call on my name, and I will hear them” - This may very well refer to the moment that the remaining Jews turn to the LORD in their time of tribulation. They will be surrounded by their enemies, the city of Jerusalem taken, their houses looted and their women raped, and half the people in the city are captured (Zech. 14:2). At that moment they will realize that their only hope is in the LORD and they will cry out to Him for help. When they do, the LORD will hear them and come to their rescue! It also represents the LORD’s attitude toward His people during the Millennium.

“I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God” - This sentence could represent the LORD’s response to the Jew’s cry for help or this could be expressing the relationship between the LORD and the Jews going into the Millennium (or both).