

THE FOUNTAIN OPENED FOR SIN

Zech. 13:1; 14:8-9

Introduction:

1. Jesus Christ, dying between two covenants, always stands forth as the central character of the Bible. Everything that happened and was written before Him looked forward to His coming; everything that happened and was written later was because of His having come into the world!
2. In prospect, the prophets portrayed Him as the longed-for Messiah! In retrospect, the New Testament writers revealed Him as our risen Lord, who rules as prophet, priest and king!
3. But whatever the view, whether through the prophets of old, or by the apostles who were the eye-witnesses of His resurrection, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the great climax in the stirring story of man's quest for eternal happiness. There was shown man's inhumanity to man, and God manifest His great love for His creatures, in the gift of His Son!

I. THE GRAND ANNOUNCEMENT.

- A. It was a prophet of old that introduced the subject of our lesson with the prophecy: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).
- B. Later this same prophet wrote, "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. 14:8-9).
- C. Thus the prophet foretold the time when a fountain would be opened for sin and uncleanness in Jerusalem.
 1. God was instructing the world that His Son would die for sin! Yet there are the modernists of our day who decry that Christ could die for others. They scoff at the whole idea of "vicarious atonement."
 2. But Isaiah had said, "Surely he hath borne our grief and carried our

sorrows . . . but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-5). And again he wrote, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquity" (verse 11).

II. CHRIST DIED FOR THOSE OF THIS AGE.

A. It is commonly accepted by most that Jesus Christ died to save those who live and die under this present dispensation.

1. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jno. 15:13).
2. This He was willing to do, so that Paul spoke of "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14).
3. Jesus said plainly, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).
4. And again we read, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19).
5. And so all must readily agree that the blood of Christ is efficacious in saving us from sins, for "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins" (1 Jno. 1:7). Yes, in Him "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7).

B. But the question is often raised, "What about those who died before the Christ came?" And this is a question that must confront us.

1. They could not be saved from sin by any offering which they were able to make.
2. Some have made the error of saying, "Their sins were rolled forward from year to year." But this is just not so! Their sins could not be moved! The Bible states very plainly that there was just a remembrance made of sins year by year continually (Heb. 10:1-3). Then the next verse declares that it was not possible for the blood of

bulls and goats to take away sin. Yet, blood had to be shed that sins might be remitted (Heb. 9:22).

3. The writer of the Hebrew letter clears up the matter by saying, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

C. Bear in mind that the blood of Christ was shed in retrospect as well as prospect. It looked forward to our need, but it also flowed back to the salvation of them that were dead and gone.

III. A COMMON MISCONCEPTION: CHRIST DIED ONLY FOR US.

A. Too often we labor under the egotistical idea that Christ died only for us. Bear in mind that Christ was a "lamb slain from the beginning of the world," and that it would have been necessary for Him to die for man's sins even though none lived after His blood was shed.

B. There is a sense in which Jesus died primarily for them who had lived and died before He came.

1. Those under the Old Testament had looked forward to that blood to cleanse them in every sacrifice and offering they brought before God. Though they did not understand and could not appreciate fully what the Messiah was to do for them, yet every bleeding lamb and bullock was a type of His coming. For these Jesus was to die. They were to be redeemed by His blood.
2. This means of redemption gave hope to the prophets, and caused them to rejoice in hope. Job could say, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after the skin worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25-26). And the Psalmist also declared, "My flesh shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psa. 16:8-9).

IV. OUR GREATEST CONCERN.

A. We may rest assured that the blessings of Christ's death flowed back to the

faithful of God under the two previous ages. But we must be even more concerned about how we may reach that blood and be saved by it.

- B. We are told, "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). But we are made nigh **IN CHRIST**, and not **OUTSIDE!**
- C. We are saved by the blood, but that blood is located, and we must preach it!
 - 1. Paul wrote, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).
 - 2. Christ's blood was shed in His death. It is only there that we can reach it. And we must be baptized into His death!
- D. Rather than spending so much of our time worrying about how those are saved before the blood was shed (God made provision for them through His Son), we should give our thought to what we must do to be saved.
- E. Why not enter into the body of Christ where His blood is located? Paul says we are baptized into that one body, the church (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:21-22). Why not be baptized **INTO** Christ, and **INTO** His death?

— Outlined by Walton Weaver from
Charting the Old Paths,
by Dillard Thruman