

LIFE GROUP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Zechariah Series

These questions are for the **February 11, 2023** message, "The Shepherd Story." Please read the sermon passage (Zechariah 13:7-9) together out loud.

Passage Outline

AS WE CONSIDER CHRIST'S RETURN, NOTE THE IMAGERY OF . . .

1. The shepherd and the sword. (7)
 - a. The sword symbolizes the government (Romans 13:4) in power when Jesus came.
 - b. The shepherd symbolizes the One who came to lay down his life for his people.
 - i. He is "my shepherd" (7) (deity, equal with God).
 - ii. He is "the man" (7) (humanity, having taken on flesh).
 - c. In his first coming, Christ was "pierced" (12:10) and "struck" (13:7).
2. The sheep and the scattering. (8-9)
 - a. "The sheep" symbolizes ethnic Israel.
 - i. 2/3 will be "cut-off," and 1/3 will be preserved and "refined" or "tested."
 - ii. We should expect another holocaust against the Jews before Christ comes.
 - b. The goal and effect of this future refining of Israel is purification.
 - i. They will (when he returns) "call upon my name." ("They are My people.")
 - ii. The LORD will answer them. ("The LORD is my God.")

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: The LORD uses human government ("O sword," v. 7) to bring his wise and good purposes to pass; in this case, to "strike" his own Son. Where do you see the world's governments "against" God's purposes (7), or "striking"? Or "scattering"? How can we be at peace with the fact that God is sovereign over all the "swords" (governments) of the earth?
2. Based on #1, above: Jesus is "the Shepherd," who came to take away the sins of the world. His mission was to die in our place. Christ died so that those who trust him will live forever. Describe the real hope, confidence and joy that you have because Christ has forever removed the power of death.
3. Based on #2, above: How has testing produced purity in your life?
4. Based on #2, above: When Jesus returns, the times will be characterized by great difficulty, including many (unbelievers) being "cut off" (8), and each (believer) being "refined" (9). The LORD is able to preserve his own people through these difficult days. How can we be full of faith (believe God's Word) as we wait? How can we be "faithful" (on God's mission) as we wait?