

Biblical Notes — Zechariah 13:1

1 – In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

אֲבִינֹם הָהוּא יִהְיֶה מְקוֹר נִפְתָּח לְבֵית דָּוִיד וּלְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לְחַטָּאת וּלְנִדָּה

In terms of Zechariah 13:1, the term is better denoted as a washing of impurity or ritual cleansing, and not of sin.

“This connection to ritual cleansing appears to be in view throughout this verse. Although the first term, “sin” (חַטָּאת, *hat t’at*), is a more general term for human behavior that breaks God’s will (e.g., Deut. 9:18), it is nuanced here by its connection to the “fountain” (spring) and to the second term for sin, “impurity” (נִדָּה, *niddah*). These two terms for sin are found together in only one other context in the Old Testament (Num. 19:9), where they are linked to water as here. Numbers 19:9 speaks of the “water of impurity, sin.” The phrases “water of impurity” and “water of sin” are stock terms in the Torah for the waters that bring ritual cleansing: 8:7 (water of sin); 19:13, 20, 21; 31:23 (water of impurity). In all of these cases the term refers to purification from ritual impurity. These waters are usually related to the impurity that arises from contact with dead bodies (cf. 31:23), but in 8:7 it is used in the consecration of the Levites for service in the temple. Some have connected this ritual cleansing from defilement by a corpse to the involvement of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of David in the siege of 12:1–8.36 Although this is possible, more likely this alludes to the contact with death in 12:10, where there is mention of the same characters. The community that has slain their God has received the “spirit of grace and supplication” in order to mourn their actions and be ritually cleansed, a symbol of God’s acceptance.”

—— Mark J. Boda, *The NIV Application Commentary: Haggai, Zechariah* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004), 489-490.