

## **Zechariah 13:2**

### **I will cut off the names of the idols from the land and they shall no longer be remembered**

- Every time someone reads this verse, the names of the idols are remembered.
- The context looks forward to the time of the Messiah, so it does not refer to the lack of idolatry in Israel after the return from captivity. Idols existed in neighboring countries in Zechariah's time and continued to exist as recorded in the New Testament. Idols still exist today in many parts of the world.
- A very similar passage is in Micah 5:10 – 15.
- God promised a qualitative change in idols during the time of the Messiah, characterized by "Cut off," "names," "from the land," and "remembered no longer."

### **Cut off**

- The word is used more than 170 times in the Old Testament.
- Another word is used to describe cutting something into pieces
- The word is used literally about 25 times (e.g., Deuteronomy 19:5 "...swings a stroke with the ax to cut down a tree.") although in many of those places the meaning seems larger (e.g., Exodus 34:13 "You shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images.")
- The most common figurative use is to be "cut off" from the nation (e.g., Exodus 12:15 "...that person shall be cut off from Israel.") Some have connected "cut off" to execution, but capital punishment in the Law is given literally.
- Four passages contain the "cut off the name" image:
  - Joshua 7:9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear it and surround us and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?
  - Isaiah 14:22 I will rise up against them...and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant and offspring and posterity.
  - Isaiah 48:18 – 19 Oh that you had heeded My commandment! Then...his name would not have been cut off nor destroyed from before Me.
  - Isaiah 56:5 I will give him an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

### **Remembered**

- The literal and most common use is to bring something to mind
- Many times, "God remembered" someone or His promises (Genesis 8:1, 12:29, 30:22, Exodus 2:24, 6:5, 1 Samuel 1:19)
- Remembering the name
  - Psalm 45:17 I will make Your name to be remembered to all generations
  - Psalm 119:55 I remembered Your name in the night, O Lord, and kept Your law.
  - Jeremiah 11:19 ...let us cut him off from the land of the living that his name may be remembered no more.
  - Hosea 2:17 I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals and they shall be remembered by their name no more.
- Remembering no more
  - Jeremiah 31:34 Their sin I will remember no more (Hebrews 8:8 – 12)
  - Ezekiel 21:32 You shall not be remembered

### **From the land**

- Zechariah 12 – 14 was believed to be Messianic by many ancient rabbis
- This was confirmed by citations of it in the New Testament
  - Zechariah 12:10, John 19:37, Revelation 1:7
  - Zechariah 13:7, Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27
- “The land” is extended to “all the earth” (14:9)

### **The name**

- The “name” is not one’s label, but one’s essence or essential quality
- See “In the Name of God” handout

### **Idols**

- Idols were often ridiculed as powerless (e.g., Isaiah 44:14 – 20, 46:5 – 7)
- But sometimes, seemingly unnatural powers were exhibited (e.g., 1 Samuel 28:7 – 19, Exodus 7:12, 22, 8:7)
- In the first century, some idols had unnatural powers (1 Corinthians 10:20, Revelation 13:4 – 15)
- In the first century, demons exercised considerable unnatural powers through idols (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

### **Summary of the promises in Zechariah 13**

- The idols described must have had real power.
- The essence of idols (that which made them powerful, their “names”) will be “cut off,” separated from God (Revelation 12:7 – 10, 20:2 – 3, Jude 6)
- The power of idols will no longer be taken into account, “remembered,” by those “in the land.” Those outside “the land” may still consider the claims of idols although the former powers have been curtailed.
- Deception from people or from within ourselves will continue until the end of time (Romans 16:18, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Timothy 3:13, 1 John 1:8)

### **Present Day Applications**

- The concept of “cut off” is parallel to the New Testament concept of spiritual death.
- The fact that our sins are remembered no more does not mean that God has no knowledge of them, but that they are no longer taken into account.
- Unlike the first century, unnatural powers cannot affect those in the Kingdom today.

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