

Zechariah 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This enigmatic verse has generated much interpretive discussion. Someone questions the false prophet about "**wounds in thine hands**" (hammakot ha-eleh bein yadekha, הַמַּכּוֹת הָאֵלֶּה בֵּין יָדַיָךְ), literally "between your hands" or "on your hands." The false prophet answers: "**Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends**" (asher hukketi beit me'ahavay, אֲשֶׁר הִכִּיתִי בֵּית מְאֻהָבַי).

The immediate context suggests these wounds resulted from discipline or punishment. Verse 3 described parents executing false prophets who persisted; these wounds might be marks from attempted correction or public punishment. Alternatively, some false prophets practiced self-mutilation to appear ecstatic or devoted (1 Kings 18:28), and these scars would expose their fraudulent practices. The phrase "**in the house of my friends**" could mean either punishment by family/community or wounds self-inflicted during false prophetic rituals among fellow deceivers.

Christian tradition has sometimes seen Messianic typology here—Christ wounded "in the house of his friends" (betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, abandoned by disciples). However, the immediate context concerns false prophets' shame and exposure, not Messiah's redemptive suffering. If there is typological connection,

it's by contrast: false prophets wounded for deception, Christ wounded for our redemption; false prophets shamed and exposed, Christ vindicated and exalted.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern prophetic cults sometimes practiced self-mutilation as ecstatic expression or to demonstrate devotion to their gods (1 Kings 18:28 describes Baal prophets cutting themselves). Israelite law prohibited such practices (Leviticus 19:28, Deuteronomy 14:1), marking them as pagan. If false prophets in Israel adopted such practices to appear spiritually powerful, the scars would become evidence of their fraudulence and covenant-breaking.

The phrase 'in the house of my friends' suggests these wounds occurred in familiar, domestic settings—either discipline from family (as verse 3 describes parents executing false prophets) or self-inflicted wounds during false prophetic gatherings with fellow deceivers. The false prophet's evasive answer ('wounded among friends') attempts to minimize the scars' significance, perhaps claiming they were accidental or trivial rather than marks of false prophecy and attempted discipline.

Historically, this prophecy envisions such thorough purification that evidence of false prophecy (whether scars from ecstatic practices or marks of punishment) becomes embarrassing rather than prestigious. What once might have been displayed as signs of spiritual fervor becomes shameful evidence of deception. This reversal demonstrates God's triumph over falsehood.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the exposure of false prophets' 'wounds' (evidence of their deception) demonstrate that hidden sins will eventually come to light?
2. What does the false prophet's evasive answer teach about how people attempt to minimize or explain away evidence of their wrongdoing?
3. In what ways should anticipation of ultimate exposure and judgment shape our commitment to truth and integrity now, even when deception seems successful temporarily?

Interlinear Text

וְאֶמַר	אֵלַי	מָה	הַמַּכּוֹת	בְּיָדָיו	הָאֵלֶּה
And one shall say	H413	H4100	unto him What are these wounds	H428	H996
H559			H4347		
בְּיָדָיו	וְאֶמַר	אֵשׁ	הַכּוֹתֵנִי		
in thine hands	And one shall say	H834	Those with which I was wounded		
H3027	H559		H5221		
בְּבֵית	מֵאֲהָבָי				
in the house	of my friends				
H1004	H157				

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