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Essay 1 (Zech 13:7/Mark 14:50; Matt 26:31)

The very night the disciples betrayed, denied, and abandoned Jesus, He declared the shepherd would be smitten and sheep scattered abroad (Matt 26:31). These words prophesied by Prophet Zechariah serve great significance today to all believers everywhere. Through His death, Jesus became the substitutionary atonement, (John 10:11) obliterating the effect of Sin, and by His Holy Spirit empowered disciples to spread the Gospel in the entire world after the scattering.

Jesus Christ took on the iniquity of the world, and He dealt with sin once and for all (Isa 53:6, Heb 9:28), and served as propitiator (1 John 2:2, Heb 9:5, Rom 3:25). Primarily, Jesus eliminated the separation of God and man and reconciled sinners to God (2 Cor 5:18-19, Col 1:21). Sin caused man's separation from God (Isa 59:2) and spiritual death (Rom 6:23). Then, He delivered sinners from spiritual death, the penalty of sin (Rom 6:23) by dying in sinners' place. Through the New Birth experience, there is remission of sin (John 3:6,7, Acts 2:38). Zechariah prophesied God would have a fountain opened to wash away sin and unrighteousness (Zech 13:1). Jesus, the living water, offers Himself to the world today! Moreover, He flows from the belly of believers as they worship, praise, prophecy, speak in tongues (John 7:37-39), and commune with Him. Jesus, the Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:15), and today He offers any and all who believes in Him eternal life, and a fulfilling relationship.

Jesus secured the victory for believers and Israel, God's chosen people, and the Gospel is spread all over the world. The disciples and those that were filled with the Holy Spirit during the early days of the church became Jesus greatest witnesses. Originally, the Apostles were preaching in Judea and Jerusalem, and followers converted in the thousands. Then, believers were persecuted, and Jesus operated without limit in the lives of believers pilgrimage to various

locations outside Judea, and Jerusalem. Gentiles and messianic Jews performed His Word. First, they preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and countless souls were added daily (Acts 2:14, 41). Next, people who believed in Jesus, were baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). Even though God scattered Israel among the nations (Ezek 36:19, Luke 21:24), Jesus declared the salvation of gentiles emerged from the diaspora (Luke 21:24, Rom 22:25). The result of those moments are realized yet today.

All in all, the smiting of Jesus and the scattering of disciples resulted in human reconciliation to God. Jesus destroyed the power of Sin on the cross, the place of striking, and in the life of anyone who calls on His name (Acts 2:21). Furthermore, the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached draws people to Christ. Even though God allowed Israel's rebellion, rejection of Jesus, and scattering, Jesus most assuredly calls for the spiritual return of all Jews till this day. The Bible states, "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city" (Num 24:19). Jesus fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy about His death, and believers await now for His' second coming. Believers are assured of Jesus' return and reign forever and ever.

Personal Prayer (Exemplar)

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof”
(Prov. 18:21).

Lord, I love how you hold the world and sustain all that is in it by Your Words. You always keep Your promises. *(Praise)* I am so thankful that I can use Your Word to change any situation in my life. *(Thanksgiving)*

Heavenly Father, I repent of my sins. Please wash me and purify my heart with your Word. Yesterday, I was hurt by the words that were spoken to me and I responded very harshly. Please forgive me. *(Repentance)* I pray that the words that come out of my mouth are always encouraging, edifying, and building up. I ask that if there is anything that could fester in my heart that you bring it to the surface and remove it. I want to walk upright before you and use my tongue to produce life, joy, and peace. *(Petition)* You are life, joy, and peace.

In Jesus' Name *(Closure)*

Amen.