Why was the Lord Jesus struck? Why did His sheep scatter? And who is it that strikes Him?

Let’s explore these questions by looking at Scripture.

Matthew 26:31 (ESV)

> “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”’”

Here, Jesus predicts that His disciples will abandon Him during His arrest and crucifixion. The phrase “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered” is a direct quotation from Zechariah 13:7, a prophecy about the coming Messiah.

Theological Significance of Jesus Being Struck

Jesus was “struck” or “pierced,” but not because He sinned He

was utterly sinless (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). Rather, this striking was part of God’s divine plan for salvation. Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for our sins, fulfilling the righteous judgment of God.

As Isaiah 53:4-5 (ESV) prophesies:

> “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”

This passage highlights the substitutionary atonement of Christ He bore the penalty that was rightfully ours. This is essential to Christian theology: Jesus is the Suffering Servant who suffers vicariously for sinners.

Why Did the Sheep Scatter?

The “sheep” (Jesus’ disciples and followers) scattered because their Shepherd was struck down. Without their leader present,

they were confused, afraid, and vulnerable. This scattering was temporary and fulfilled Scripture, but it also demonstrated the disciples’ human weakness.

Jesus’ words in John 16:19-20 (ESV) reinforce this:

> “I told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
> *Though they would grieve and feel forsaken, their sorrow would turn into joy after His resurrection.*

Jesus’ Role in the Divine Plan

Jesus did not come to abolish the penalty of sin arbitrarily He came to fulfill it. The justice of God demanded a penalty for sin, but in His mercy, God provided a substitute in Jesus (see Romans 3:25-26). Jesus bore the curse and punishment meant for humanity so that we could be reconciled to God.

This is illustrated by the metaphor of the stone thrown at us, with Jesus stepping in to take the hit. He did not remove the

punishment; He endured it on our behalf.

The Aftermath

Following His crucifixion, the disciples’ scattering was a real event showing human fear and weakness. But Jesus’ resurrection victory over sin and death restored the scattered sheep and established the church.

Matthew 26:31 speaks to this moment of crisis, but the gospel message ultimately points to hope and restoration through Christ.

Maranatha!

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