

Book of Zechariah

Chapter 11:1-17

The Coming Wrath (vss. 1-3)

Lindsey > This lamentation portrays the impending devastation that will result from the people rejecting the Messiah as the True and Good Shepherd

Cole > Verses 1-3 describe the ruin of the land when God’s judgment is unleashed.

Ironside > Surprisingly lovely have been the scenes briefly depicted in the preceding chapters. But the glory there promised is in abeyance during the present interval because of the rejection of the One upon whom it all depends. So we now have a sorrowful account of the scornful refusal of the Good Shepherd and the acceptance instead of the Anti-shepherd, who seeks only his own exaltation and cares not for the ruin and scattering of Jehovah’s flock.

(50,000-foot view)

¹Open your doors, O **Lebanon**, that a fire may feed on your **cedars**. ²Wail, O **cypress**, for the cedar has fallen, because the glorious trees have been destroyed; wail, O **oaks** of **Bashan**, for the impenetrable forest has come down.



Golan Heights > The hilly area overlooking the upper Jordan River valley on the west. The area was part of extreme southwestern Syria until 1967, when it came under Israeli military occupation, and in December 1981 Israel unilaterally annexed the part of the Golan it held. The area's name is from the biblical city of refuge Golan in Bashan (Deuteronomy 4:43; Joshua 20:8).

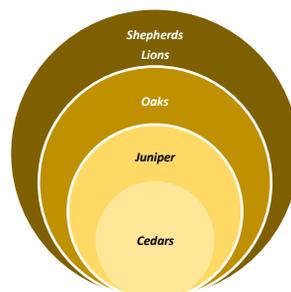
Boda > While 9:1-17 and 10:3b-12 emphasize God's promised restoration of Jerusalem, Judah, and Ephraim, 10:1-3a and 11:1-3 remind the audience that there are some negative issues within the community that demand resolution.

Cedars > (Constable) The prophet announced in vigorous poetic language that Lebanon's famous cedars would perish. The Israelites referred to the royal palace in Jerusalem as *Lebanon* because it contained so much cedar from Lebanon (Jeremiah 22:23; cf. **1 Kings 7:2**). The Talmud spoke of the second temple as Lebanon for the same reason.

1 Kings 7:2, 3 > ²He built the house of the forest of Lebanon; its length was 100 cubits and its width 50 cubits and its height 30 cubits, on four rows of cedar pillars with cedar beams on the pillars. ³It was paneled with cedar above the side chambers which were on the 45 pillars, 15 in each row.

Cypress ... Oaks > (Constable) Likewise the cypress (juniper, pine) and oaks of Bashan should wail because they too would perish in the coming devastation. Bashan was famous for its oak forests (cf. Isaiah 2:13; Ezekiel 27:6). Earlier Zechariah combined Lebanon and Bashan to indicate the whole land (Zechariah 10:10). All these trees suggest the people of the land as well as the land itself. A judgment that would affect the whole land of Palestine and all its people, including its rulers, is in view.

Boda > The overall flow of (verses 1-3) reveals a step like development, as a destructive element in one verse prompts a response in the next. The initial destruction is directed against the **cedars in Lebanon**, which prompts wailing from the **juniper tree** which grows alongside it, but also from the **oaks** which grow further afield in the region of Bashan. In turn, this affects **shepherds and lions** associated with the Jordan region. Judgment against Lebanon clearly has far-reaching effects upon leaders at various levels.



³*There is a sound of the shepherds' wail, for their glory is ruined; **there is a sound of the young lions' roar**, for the pride of the Jordan is ruined.*

There is a sound of the young lions' roar > (Barnes) > The lion lingered there even to the close of the 12th century.

The Cause of Devastation (vss. 4-14)

Lindsey > In this difficult but messianically significant passage, Zechariah was directed by God to portray Israel's true Shepherd-Messiah.

Cole > Verses 4-14 portray, through a prophetic parable acted out by Zechariah, the nation's rejection of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the consequences.

⁴*Thus says the LORD my God, "**Pasture** the flock doomed to slaughter. ⁵"Those who buy them slay **them** and **go unpunished**, and each of those who sell them says, **'Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich!'** And their own shepherds have no pity on them.*

Constable > It seems more likely, in view of what follows, that Zechariah spoke for God, and sometimes as Messiah, as though he were a shepherd. He seems to have been presenting an allegory that was the product of a visionary experience

Pasture > (Strong's) A primitive root; to tend a flock; i.e. Pasture it; intransitively, to graze (literally or figuratively); generally to rule; by extension, to associate with (as a friend)

Them > (Constable) Those who bought sheep slew them (Heb. feminine) and went unpunished. This was bad because these were female sheep, ewes, intended for breeding and not for butchering. The slayers represent the foreign rulers who took over the Israelites, persecuted them, and had not paid the full penalty for their abusive treatment of them (Genesis 12:3). Those who sold the sheep were Israel's former rulers and leaders who, by their sins, had set the people up for divine judgment by foreigners.

Go unpunished > Why? Because (in verse 6), this was from the Lord and His displeasure

'Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich!' > (Barnes) > But Titus when he "entered Jerusalem, marveled at the strength of the city and its towers, which 'the tyrants' in phrensy (REAL word! I looked it up! Means > *violent and irrational excitement; delirium*) abandoned. When then he had beheld their solid strength and the greatness of each rock, and how accurately they were fitted in, and how great their length and breadth, he said 'By the help of God we have warred: and God it was who brought down the Jews from those bulwarks: for what avail the hands of man or his engines against such towers?'

The **Septuagint** translates these two verses this way (watch the flow) > ⁴*Thus saith the Lord Almighty, Feed the sheep of the slaughter; ⁵which their possessors have slain, and have not repented: and they that sold them said, Blessed be the Lord; for we have become rich: and their shepherds have suffered no sorrow for them.*

⁶*“For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land,” declares the LORD; “but behold, I will cause the men to fall, each into another’s power and into the power of his king; and they will strike the land, and I will not deliver them from their power.”*

For I will no longer have pity ... > This is the passage we referred to in verse 5 above.

I will cause the men to fall ... > (Leupold) "History demonstrates that these conditions did take place after Israel's rejection of their Messiah."

⁷*So I pastured the flock doomed to slaughter, hence the **afflicted** of the flock. And I took for myself two staves: the one I called **Favor** and the other I called **Union**; so I pastured the flock.*

Afflicted > (Strong’s) depressed, in mind or circumstances

Favor > (Constable) Hebrew > *no'am*, pleasantness, graciousness

Union > (Constable) Hebrew > *hobhelim*, binders, unifiers

Unger > The Eastern shepherd carried a rod or stout club hewed from a tree to beat away wild beasts attacking the sheep and a crooked staff for retrieving the sheep from difficult places

⁸*Then I **annihilated** the three shepherds in one month, for my soul was impatient with them, and their soul also was **weary** of me.*

Utley > There are over **forty** current theories as to the historical application of this verse, none of which literally occur in one month. The commentator's presupposition is often superimposed on this chapter to find an allusion to history. Interpreters must remember this is apocalyptic language, not historical narrative.

Annihilated > (Strong’s) A primitive root; to secrete, by act or word; hence (intensively) to destroy -- conceal, cut down (off), desolate, hide.

Weary > (Strong’s) to feel a loathing

Constable > Zechariah , as God's representative, did away with three shepherds that had been leading his flock within the first month that he took charge of the sheep. These appear to have been real shepherds and a real month. At least Zechariah's action prefigured that of Messiah in taking over the leadership of His flock from other leaders of Israel who did not appreciate His leadership. Who these shepherds were or will be has been the subject of much debate.

⁹*Then I said, "I will not **pasture** you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and **let those who are left eat one another's flesh.**"*

Pasture > (Strong's) A primitive root; to tend a flock; i.e. Pasture it; intransitively, to graze (literally or figuratively); generally to rule; by extension, to associate with (as a friend)

Barnes > **Deuteronomy 31:17, 18** > ¹⁷*"Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' ¹⁸"But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.*

Let those who are left eat one another's flesh > (Constable) According to Josephus the Jews did eat one another during the siege of Jerusalem in the first century A.D.

¹⁰*I took my staff **Favor** and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. ¹¹So it was broken on that day, and thus the **afflicted** of the flock who were **watching** me **realized** that it was the word of the LORD.*

Favor > (Constable) Hebrew > *no'am*, pleasantness, graciousness

Afflicted > (Strong's) afflicted, humble, lowly, needy, poor

Watching > (Strong's) A primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. Guard; generally, to protect, attend to

Realized > (Strong's) to know

¹²*I said to them, "If it is **good** in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, **never mind!**" So they weighed out **thirty shekels of silver** as my wages.*

Good > (Strong's) pleasant, agreeable, good

Thirty shekels of silver > (Clarke) And we find they rated it contemptuously; thirty pieces of silver being the price of a slave, **Exodus 21:32** > ³²“If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Benson > This showed how little they regarded him, or his labors; that is, how little value the Jews would put on the ministry of Christ; or on his labors and sufferings for their salvation. For, according to St. Matthew 26:15; Matthew 27:9, this symbolical action was fulfilled when the chief priests and elders of the Jews paid that sum to Judas for betraying Christ to them and putting his life in their power.

Wiersbe > According to Matthew 27:1–10, Zechariah’s actions were prophetic, for Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, brought the money back, and threw it into the temple. The priests took the money and used it to buy an abandoned potter’s field as a cemetery for strangers. But verse 9 attributes the quotation to Jeremiah, not Zechariah, a fact that has puzzled Bible students for centuries.

Never mind > (Strong’s) A primitive root; properly, to be flabby, i.e. (by implication) desist; (figuratively) be lacking or idle

¹³Then the LORD said to me, “**Throw** it to the **potter**, that **magnificent** price at which I was valued by them.” So I took the thirty shekels of silver and **threw** them to the **potter** in the house of the LORD.

Throw > (Strong’s) A primitive root; to throw out, down or away

Potter > (Strong’s) earthen, fashion, form, frame, maker, potter, purpose

Magnificent > (Strong’s) glory, magnificence, a mantle, cloak

¹⁴Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

The Lord has promised to bring the two back together again in the future. **Barnes** presents us with multiple passages to confirm this promise:

- **Isaiah 11:12-13** > ¹²And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. ¹³Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart, and those who harass Judah will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, And Judah will not harass Ephraim.

- **Hosea 1:11** > ¹¹*And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.*
- **Jeremiah 3:18** > ¹⁸*"In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance.*
- **Ezekiel 37:16, 17** > ¹⁶*"And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.*
¹⁷*"Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand.*

The Consequences of Rejecting the True Shepherd (vss. 15-17)

Lindsey > After rejecting the True Shepherd, the flock of Israel will accept a foolish and worthless shepherd. This is a prophecy of the end-time Antichrist who will do the very opposite of Christ the True Shepherd.

Cole > Verses 15-17 predict the nation's subjection to the foolish or worthless shepherd, who will exploit them and then come under judgment himself. So Zechariah graphically portrays Israel's suffering for rejecting the Good Shepherd.

¹⁵*The LORD said to me, "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd.*

Equipment > (Strong's) From *kalah*; *something prepared*, i.e. Any apparatus (as an implement, utensil, dress, vessel or weapon)

Foolish shepherd > (Keil) After Israel has compelled the good shepherd to lay down his shepherd's office, in consequence of its own sin, it is not to be left to itself, but to be given into the hand of a foolish shepherd, who will destroy it.

The **Septuagint** translates this as > ¹⁵*And the Lord said to me, Take yet to thee shepherd's implements belonging to an unskillful shepherd.*

Unger > "The full fate of Israel is not recounted in the rejection of the good Shepherd God raised up to tend them. The complete tale of woe centers in their acceptance of the bad shepherd God will raise up to destroy them. The one dark episode centers in the events of Messiah's first advent and death, followed by the dissolution of the Jewish state (Zechariah 11:1-14).

The other tragic experience will occur in the events connected with Messiah's second advent and glory, and deals with the nation's final time of unparalleled trouble (Zechariah 11:15-17) previous to her entrance into kingdom blessing."

¹⁶*"For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will **not** care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat sheep and tear off their hoofs.*

Not > (Barker) "When one removes "not" from the sentence, he has an enlightening description of a truly effective pastoral ministry in the church today. (1) 'care for the lost ...' or ... 'care for those in the process of being ruined or destroyed'; (2) 'seek the young ... [or] 'the scattered'; (3) 'heal the injured,' and (4) 'feed the healthy.'"

¹⁷*"Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword will be on his arm and on his right eye! His arm will be totally withered and his right eye will be blind."*

Septuagint > ¹⁷*Alas for the vain shepherds that have forsaken the sheep! the sword shall be upon the arms of such a one, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be completely withered, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.*