

Zech 11:1-17

Session Ten, Zechariah

Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

“Zechariah 11 is one of the most difficult sections of the OT. YHWH cares for the sheep (10:3), but now he announces they are doomed to be slaughtered (11:4,7). He turns them against one another (11:6), an idea that appears inconceivable in earlier oracles (9:13; 10:6-7). Two staffs are broken (11:10, 14); the prophet is sold for the sum of thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13); then YHWH raises up an uncaring shepherd whom he subsequently judges (11:16-17). Complexities abound! What is going on?” (Lessing, 431)

Chapter 11 is a massive _____; the exalted are humbled, the humbled exalted.

Zechariah 11 is a _____ view of Israel and Judah’s monarchial history. Chapter 11 explains the past to make the future salvation depicted in Zech 9-10 and 12-14 all the more glorious. Therefore, Zech 11, far from being an erratic intrusion, serves as the interpretive guide for the book’s last six chapters.

Zechariah 11:1-3 A poetic taunt against corrupt leaders

T / F The cedar tree was the tallest and longest living tree in Lebanon.

Who are the trees? Lebanon (v. 1) = Israel’s unfaithful _____

YHWH pledges to punish corrupt _____ and their people.

Why are the shepherds wailing? Why should they wail?

“We might expect the shepherds to mourn because the pastureland is ruined. It is surprising, therefore, that the shepherds are grieving because they have lost ‘their _____ (v. 3). They lament only for themselves and their interests. They care nothing about anyone else” (Lessing, 435).

Zechariah role-plays. He recalls the history by _____ it out, representing YHWH.

Zechariah 11:4-16 A prose allegorical prophetic sign act

Who are the “fallen trees” and “evil shepherds? What do you make of their boast? (v. 5)

Who’s Who and What’s What

Staff #1	Delight	God’s covenant at Sinai (v. 10)
Staff #2	Allotment	Compact between Judah and Israel (11:14)

“afflicted of the flock” = “the faithful remnant” (believers) (11:7,11)

We Three Kings

“Since 11:4-14 describes Israel’s past, the three shepherds are Judah’s last three kings—Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Each one turned his back on YHWH” (Lessing, 440).

The “one month” denotes a short amount of time. They didn’t last long! (2 Kings 23, 24)

“Because the sheep are as wicked as their shepherds, judgment will come to the entire community (11:9). The flock that detests its true shepherd (11:8) will get a predatory tyrant in its place (11:16). People receive the leaders they deserve” (Lessing, 440).

Note how covenants are ratified through external _____. Here the covenant is broken in a visual and compelling way. A fractured relationship!

Matthew 27:9-10 connects the dots for us with Judas and the price he was paid to betray Jesus. Notice how Matthew attributes the mixed quote to Jeremiah? Why not Zechariah?

Thirty pieces of silver (v. 12) was the going amount for a _____. Significance?

It is “an affront to YHWH. He will not be bought, not will he be hired or fired at will. Zechariah responds sarcastically, demeaning those responsible for the thirty pieces of silver. Yahweh commands the prophet to throw the money into Yahweh’s house, ‘to the potter’ or ‘to the treasury’. It was in the temple that the leaders of the nation had shown the most contempt for Yahweh as the true shepherd, particularly by allowing and even promoting idolatrous worship there” (Lessing 442-3).

The “I”s Have It

The “I” in 11:4-17 is multivalent. For example, in some passages, both Zechariah and Christ speak (11:4, 7-9, 13-14). In other texts, both YHWH and Jesus speak (11:6, 16-17). In 11:10, Zechariah, YHWH and Christ speak: Zechariah as he performs the sign, YHWH as he annuls the Sinai covenant, and Christ as he announces that the kingdom of God will be taken away from official Judaism and given to believers who include Gentiles (Lessing, 432-3).

Zechariah 11:7 A poetic curse against a worthless shepherd

By cursing the worthless shepherd, YHWH takes him out. “The malevolent leader’s arm withers, and his right eye is blinded, thus rendering him unfit and unable to serve as a shepherd. His ruthless rule is finished” (Lessing, 444).

It’s hard to remove a shepherd, but sometimes—for the good of the flock—they gotta go!