

Zechariah 11:1-17

1. This chapter 11 is claimed to be the most difficult to explain in the book of Zechariah
 - a. Zechariah 11:4-17 has been identified as the most unknowable passage in the OT
 - b. The problem comes between figurative and real.
 - i. Is the forest really burned and destroyed? Are the shepherds wailing for their lost fields?
 - ii. Does the forest represent the temple? Are the shepherds the leaders of the people?
 - c. Where are these events placed in history?
 - i. Is the land being cleared of trees to make room for returning exiles?
 - ii. Is the land being destroyed by the Jewish wars with Rome in 66-70 AD?
2. The opening poem may go with the end of chapter 10 or begin chapter 11. Or, it may be a hinge that connects the two chapters.
 - a. A taunt song after the destruction of the nations in chapter 10 represented by the cedar, pine and oak trees
 - b. A description of the destruction that will follow the rejection of the Messiah in 30 AD when Rome marches through in 66-70 AD.
3. Three trees – cedar, cypress (pine), oak. Three lands – Lebanon, Bashan, Jordan. Two mourners – shepherds, lions.
4. It would appear that chapters 9-10 speak of peace and blessing. Chapter 11 is sin and punishment.
 - a. Chapter 11 would occur before chapter 9-10 historically because it is the rejection of the True Shepherd, the Jewish Messiah, which is followed by God's judgment on the land for rejecting Jesus.
 - b. Chapter 9-10 are prophecies of the promised eschatological future when salvation has been attained. They were given to provide hope during the days of chapter 11.
5. This chapter includes three shepherds:
 - a. The wailing shepherds (11:1-3)
 - b. The true shepherd (11:4-14)
 - c. The false shepherd (11:15-17)

**Zechariah 11:1 – “Open your doors, O Lebanon,
that the fire may devour your cedars!**

**11:2 – “Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
for the glorious trees are ruined!**

**Wail, oaks of Bashan,
for the thick forest has been felled!**

**11:3 – “The sound of the wail of the shepherds,
for their glory is ruined!**

**The sound of the roar of the lions,
for the thicket of the Jordan is ruined!**

1. Lebanon was famous for the cedar forests.

- a. Cedars were used to build the first and second temple and the palace of David and Solomon.
 - i. The OT and the Rabbis in the Talmud say the cedars represent the temple and the royal palace
 1. 1 Kings 6:15-18
 2. 1 Kings 7:2
 3. 2 Chron. 2:8-9
 4. Jeremiah 22:23
 5. In Ezekiel 17:3-4, 12-13 cedar tree is a symbol of the royal house of Judah
2. The other trees (cypress and oak) could refer to the kings of other lands.
3. Shepherds and lions would be the rules and leaders of Judah and the Jews
 - a. Similar to Jeremiah 25:34-38
4. The flocks and animals represent the people to be cared for by the leaders.

11:4 – **“Thus said the Lord my God: “Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter.**

1. Now begins the explanation of why the land and the nation were destroyed – they rejected the Messiah.
2. Zechariah is either:
 - a. Acting out the part of the shepherd as a prophetic skit.
 - b. Speaking the words that Jesus would speak in 30 AD, particularly the last month of his ministry. So, Zechariah is speaking both for God and as the Messiah.

11:5 – **“Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be the Lord, I have become rich,’ and their own shepherds have no pity on them.**

559 [e] yō-mar,	4376 [e] ū-mō-ḵə-rē·hen	816 [e] ye'·šā·mū,	3808 [e] wə·lo	2026 [e] ya-hār·gun	7069 [e] qō·nê·hen	834 [e] 'ā·šer
יאמר	ומכריהן	—	יאשמו	ולא	יהרגו	אשר קניהן
say	and those who sell them	—	feel guilt	and no	slaughter them	owners whose
V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Conj-w V-Qal-Prtcpl-mpc	3fp	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	Conj-w Adv-NegPrt	V-Qal-Imperf-3mp	3fp
feminine pronouns - the sheep are ewes for breeding, not butchering						
5921 [e] 'ā·lê·hen.	2550 [e] yah·mō·wl	3808 [e] lō	7462 [e] wə·rō·'é·hem,	6238 [e] wa·'šir;	3068 [e] Yah·weh	1288 [e] bā·rūḵ
עליהן	יחמול	לא	—	ואעשר	—	יהיה
them	do pity	not	and their shepherds	for I am rich	Yahweh	Blessed be
Prep	3fp	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Conj-w V-Qal-Prtcpl-mpc	3mp	Conj-w V-Hifil-ConjImperf-1cs
					N-proper-ms	V-Qal-QalPassPrtcpl-ms

1. The butchers were foreign powers and the sellers where the Jewish leadership.

11:6 – **“For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of this land, declares the Lord. Behold, I will cause each of them to fall into the hand of his neighbor, and each into the hand of his king, and they shall crush the land, and I will deliver none from their hand.”**

1. This was Roman destruction by the hand of the Lord.
2. This was the Word of the Lord to Zechariah

11:7 – **“So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slaughtered by the sheep traders. And I took two staffs, one I named Favor, the other I named Union. And I tended the sheep.**

1. So, Zechariah now acts this out.
2. Two staffs:

- a. Favor – *no'am* = “pleasantness” and “Graciousness”
 - b. Union – *hobhelim* = “Binders” and “unifiers”
3. Shepherds carried a rod/club to beat away wild beasts and a crooked staff for retrieving sheep.

11:8 – “In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me.

1. It may be that Zechariah was actually working as a shepherd, but it prefigured what the Messiah would do in 30 AD in one month

11:9 – “So I said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. And let those who are left devour the flesh of one another.”

11:10 – “And I took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples.

11:11 – “So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep traders, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord.

11:12 – “Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver.

11:13 – “Then the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter.

11:14 – “Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

11:15 – “Then the Lord said to me, “Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.

11:16 – “For behold, I am raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for those being destroyed, or seek the young or heal the maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs.

**11:17 – “Woe to my worthless shepherd,
who deserts the flock!**

**May the sword strike his arm
and his right eye!**

**Let his arm be wholly withered,
his right eye utterly blinded!”**