

The Prophecy of the Good Shepherd (Zech. 11)

I. The Good Shepherd Will Be Rejected (1-14)

A. God Has Pronounced Judgment on His Land (1-3) (this is a poem)

1. God's Protection of the Land is Ruined (1-2)

a. Prepare yourself for judgment (1)

i. "open your doors...that fire may devour"

b. The Great strength of the land is fallen

i. The cedar (אַרְזִי, 'erez), celebrated for its size and shapeliness, occurs as a metaphor for a king in Judges 9, also (cf. 2 Kings 14:9; Isa. 14:8; Ezek. 17:3; Amos 2:9).

iii. The idea here is that it is pointless to resist because God's judgment is coming against the land

iv. The cedar, the fir, the oaks, from Lebanon to Bashan judgment is coming.

2. The Leaders' Glory is Ruined (3a)

a. Those who are supposed to shepherd the flock

b. Their status and responsibilities are spoiled in judgment

3. The Excellency of the Land is Ruined (3b)

a. Lions once roamed the foliage of the land (Jer. 49:19)

b. The land will be so ravaged in judgment the lions will no longer survive there. NOTE: They are extinct there today

B. God Has Provided A Good Shepherd (4-8a)

1. The Good Shepherd is Given to the Judged Flock (4-6)

a. The People are Given a Shepherd (4)

i. Zechariah is told to take the mantle of shepherd of the people

ii. Zechariah does this foretelling the coming of Jesus the true good shepherd.

iii. Notice: the flock is doomed to slaughter yet God still gives them grace and mercy by giving them a shepherd

b. The People have No Other True Shepherd (5)

i. The Shepherds are Pictured as Merchants

- They buy and sell the sheep for slaughter instead of shepherding them

- They send them to the slaughter and are not punished

- The people are pictured as slaughtered sheep because there is no one to protect them and give them the true word of God

- The "shepherds" are only out for themselves

ii. The Shepherds are Greedy

- They sell them out for profit

- They thank the Lord for their activities

- They have no pity on the flock

- they do not fulfill their role of shepherd
- c. The People Have Been Turned Over in Judgment (6)
 - i. God will no longer have pity on the people of the land
 - For their sin, God will allow them to be conquered
 - They have repeatedly broken God's commandment
 - ii. God will cause them to fall into the hands of their neighbor
 - They will be taken by foreign people
 - God is removing his protection from them
 - iii. God will allow the land to be crushed and He will not deliver them
- 2. The Good Shepherd Cares For the Flock (7-8a)
 - a. Zechariah Takes the Role of the Shepherd (7a)
 - i. Zechariah obeys God and becomes the shepherd
 - ii. Zechariah does this knowing the flock is doomed in judgment
 - Jesus came into a world already doomed
 - Jesus came to save the world not to condemn (John 3) – the world is already condemned
 - b. Zechariah Tends the Flock By God's Covenant (7b)
 - i. He uses two staffs – Favor (grace) and Union
 - ii. Favor (pleasantness, grace) speaks of God's covenant relationship with His people
 - iii. Union (binders) speaks of the relationship between Israel and Judah.
 - iv. Zechariah mediates between God and his people as well as between God's people (i.e. like Jesus)
 - c. Zechariah Removes the three False Shepherds (8a)
 - i. The identity of Zechariah's three shepherds is speculated by many people – no one knows exactly
 - ii. My Opinion is that this foretells Jesus' annulment of the leadership offices of God's people (priest, prophet, and king)
 - iii. Jesus fulfilled these offices once and for all. After Christ's life, death, and resurrection – there are no more priests, prophets, and kings. He is our priest, prophet, and our king.
- C. The Good Shepherd Displays God's Judgment (8b-14)
 - 1. The Good Shepherd Pronounces God's Judgment (8b-11)
 - a. The Shepherd is Rejected by the People (8b)
 - i. He becomes impatient with the people
 - perhaps they refused to honor God
 - perhaps they refused to turn to Him
 - ii. He is detested by the people

- God's messenger often is
- God's message of healing often leads through conviction and repentance.

b. The Shepherd Rejects the People (9)

- i. Zechariah relinquishes the responsibility of shepherd
- the people would not listen or follow
 - Zech. Says, "I will not be your shepherd"
 - A picture of Christ turning people over to their unbelief (Rom. 1)

- ii. Zechariah sees no salvation from their judgment
- What is to die let it die etc.
 - The only option is to follow the shepherd
 - They have rejected that option, therefore there remains nothing left but condemnation and judgment

c. The Shepherd Annuls the Covenant with the People (10-11)

- i. Zechariah breaks the staff called Favor (grace)
- "annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples"
 - no longer will He be "their God" and they "his People"

- ii. Zechariah effectively pronounces certain judgment on them

- iii. The false shepherds and those who led the people astray knew that Zechariahs' action was the word of God

- They understood what it meant
- they understood what the result would be

2. The Good Shepherd is Dishonored (12)

a. The Shepherd Asks for His Wage (12a)

- i. Zechariah, as the shepherd of the flock, asks for his wage but does not demand it

- Christ as the good shepherd desires his wage
- Christ seeks those who believe in Him
- Christ seeks those who submit to Him

- ii. Zechariah deserves a wage for his work

- Although he does not demand it, he is owed
- The shepherd works to protect the sheep

b. The Shepherd is Valued as a Slave (12b)

- i. Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave
- the amount of compensation to be paid a slave owner were his slave to be gored to death (Ex. 21:32)
 - the people value the work of the shepherd very lowly. They do not consider it valuable at all.

- ii. Thirty pieces of silver was the price Judas placed on Jesus – the true Good Shepherd (Matt. 26:15)
- 3. The Good Shepherd Terminates His Role (13-14)
 - a. The Shepherd Throws His wage to the potter (13)
 - i. The potters' shops were usually located near refuse pits where the shards and other unusable or broken materials could be cast (Jer. 18:2; 19:1–2). The place of the potter, then, was not only a place of creation and beauty but one of rejection and ruin. It became a metaphor for a scrap heap.⁴³
 - ii. By tossing them to the potter, God is symbolizing his being rejected by the people and refusing their undervalue of the shepherd's role.
 - iii. This prefigures the 30 pieces of silver being used to buy the "potter's field" (Matt. 27:7-10) which is a place for strangers to be buried.
 - b. The Shepherd Breaks the Union of the People (14)
 - i. The Brotherhood of the people is Broken
 - ii. The union of God's people which is attended by the shepherd is forsaken

II. The Acceptance of the Evil Shepherd (15-17)

A. Zechariah is Told to Symbolize an Evil Shepherd (15)

B. The Evil Shepherd is Raised to Exploit the Sheep (16)

- 1. He will not care for them
- 2. He will not seek the young
- 3. He will not heal the maimed
- 4. He will not nourish the healthy
- 5. He will only devour their flesh

C. The Evil Shepherd will be Judged Harshly (17)

- 1. He deserts the flock
- 2. A curse is pronounced upon him
- 3. His right arm (strength) and his right eye (wisdom) will be destroyed

Could this be the religious leadership in Jerusalem at the time of Titus in 70 A.D.

⁴³ 43. James L. Kelso, *The Ceramic Vocabulary of the Old Testament*, BASOR Supp. 5–6 (New Haven: Conn.: Haven, Conn.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1948), 7–11.