

- **In Chapters 9 and 10 of Lesson 6** we saw the destruction that will come upon the land of Hadrach (Syria) and the enemies of Israel that border on Palestine, by the armies of Greece. When the Lord Jesus returns he will make Judah as mighty men and he will "hiss" for his people! The Lord Jesus will call them to him and he will strengthen them and lead them to victory.
- **Now, in Chapters 11 and 12 of Lesson 7**, Zechariah proclaims the coming destruction upon Israel by Greece and the Romans and even greater sorrow greater sorrow and he touches upon the time of the 7 year tribulation when Jerusalem will be a cup of trembling. Zechariah speaks against the false shepherds. Zechariah, as a shepherd, used two staves (rods or sticks): "Beauty" and "Bonds" to show the people how one day the LORD will withdraw his grace. We saw that God always keeps a remnant of true believers who obey God and believe in his Word. They are "...the poor of the flock who waited on me..." (Zechariah 11:11). Jesus Christ is Israel's true and Good Shepherd.
- **The people were ungrateful for Zechariah's work as a shepherd of sheep and his service** for the people. They paid him the legal price required for a slave. This Messianic prophecy foreshadows the treatment Messiah will receive at his 1st Coming. At the end of Chapter 11, Zechariah prophesied about the Antichrist who is both the foolish shepherd and idol shepherd. The Antichrist will rise up during the Seven year Tribulation period and will persecute Israel.

"Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled" (Zechariah 11:1-3).

1. Armies from Greece first, and Rome next, will bring sorrow and destruction to Israel.

- A.** The most widely held interpretation of this passage of Scripture is that judgment is coming upon the land through a future invasion of conquerors and the subsequent destruction in Jerusalem. The areas that had the beautiful cedar trees and oak trees described the lands north of Jerusalem. Destruction by fire in those areas meant destruction was coming to Jerusalem: a conquering force is coming upon Jerusalem from the north. The roaring of young lions refers to the protest of the young princes against the conquering invaders. Those who hold to this view agree that the conquering invaders are the Romans.

2. As a shepherd of sheep Zechariah acts out his prophecy with two staves

"Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter; Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock" (Zechariah 11:4-7). (Note: a stave is a rod or a stick, thin narrow wood)

- A. The LORD instructed Zechariah to feed the "flock of the slaughter", which were the returning exiles from Babylon; God's people. Now some sheep are raised for their wool and are shorn year after year. Other sheep are raised for meat. This is a prophecy of how God's people are destined to be killed by those who possess them: their "possessors" will have no pity on them. However, God has reserved a remnant, "the poor of the flock". In their future, destruction will come upon them by the Greeks and the Romans. Then the LORD will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land. God allows this to happen; because, they turned from him and later rejected their Messiah when he came.**
- B. Zechariah was directed to act out the part of the shepherd. He fed "the flock of the slaughter".**
- Not every commentator agrees that Zechariah actually became a shepherd during this time. However, let's remember how other prophets have acted out roles. Ezekiel on two occasions acted out roles as the LORD directed: (1) Ezekiel removed his belongings from his house as the people watched and took them to another place: to act out the role of being taken captive and having to take his belonging with him. (2) Ezekiel dug a hole through the wall as the people watched: to act out being captive in a city and desperately trying to escape. (Ezekiel 12: 3-6). With this in mind we will take the view that Zechariah actually did live out the role of a shepherd. I believe that he did but you can decide for yourself as you study Chapter 11.
- C. The two staves are Beauty (grace) and Bands (covenant). Zechariah used the shepherd's crook to represent Beauty. (The shepherd's crook was used to keep the sheep in line). Zechariah used the shepherd's heavy stick to represent Bands. (The heavy stick was used to fight off wild animals and people who attempted to steal the sheep).**
- D. One day God will withdraw his grace from the people. God has dealt the people's continued disobedience with mercy. But one day he will withdraw his grace and he will break his *conditional covenant* with Israel because of their sin. However, God in mercy will always keep a remnant of true believers and he will deal with them in grace and God will always keep his *unconditional covenant*. An unconditional covenant does not rely upon Israel's obedience so it is never broken. However, a conditional covenant is just that; it has conditions. Both parties; God and Israel, must keep their part in the covenant. If Israel failed to keep the conditional covenant (God never fails) then the covenant was broken.**
- E. Zechariah cut to pieces the staff Beauty to show that God will one day withdraw his grace.**
- F. Zechariah made decisions about the shepherds or false prophets.**

"Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD" (Zechariah 11:8-11).

Those who wait on the LORD are the "poor of the flock"...they understood that the actions and the words of Zechariah were the word of the LORD.

"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? Saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 1:7-8).

"And if his offering be of the flocks, namely, of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish" (Leviticus 1:10).

G. Zechariah removed three shepherds within one month. They were exploiting and mistreating the sheep and were sacrificing old, sick sheep or goats. God demands for a sacrifice a sheep or goat that is without blemish, the best of the flock. These shepherds were keeping the best for themselves and offering the worst of their flock to the LORD.



In your service to the LORD do you give him your very best? Your best effort? Your best attitude? Or do you save your best effort and attitude for the other parts of your life?

H. Zechariah fed and cared for the flock marked for slaughter and gave special attention to the oppressed of the flock. **However, the flock (returning exiles) despised Zechariah** and he became weary of their bad attitude toward him. His work to help and care for them was not appreciated, so he told them he would no longer be their shepherd.

Let's consider Jesus Christ...

I. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd was not appreciated by his people Israel at his 1st Coming. The nation of Israel; the religious leaders rejected him as their Messiah. Jesus Christ is Israel's true Shepherd.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:10-11).

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10: 11-14).

J. The people's lack of appreciation for Zechariah was shown by the wages they gave him. They gave him the price set by law for a slave who had been slain by an ox. It was an insulting price considering all he had done for them. The LORD told him to cast it to the potter.

"And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD" (Zechariah 11:12-13).

- a. The price of a slave was thirty shekels of silver according to Exodus 21:32: "If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant: he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned". This shows just how little they valued Zechariah as their shepherd.

K. Zechariah's wages foreshadows the treatment which Christ will receive at his 1st Coming

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they concovenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver" (**Matthew 26:14-15**). ("they concovenanted": a binding promise for a common goal)
"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet saying, AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF HIM THAT WAS VALUED, whom they of the children of Israel did value; AND GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD APPOINTED ME" (**Matthew 27: 9-10**).

- a. The chief priests gave Judas Iscariot thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus. When Judas returned the silver the chief priests used it for the potter's field for the burial of strangers.

"Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (**Zechariah 11:14**).

- L.** When Zechariah cut up the Shepherd's stick called "Bands" he showed that all unity was broken between Israel's 10 tribes and Judah's 2 tribes.

3. Zechariah's prophecy of the foolish shepherd and the idol shepherd. This is a prophecy of the Antichrist during the Seven year Tribulation period...

"And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened" (Zechariah 11:17).

- A.** The foolish shepherd does not attend to the needs of his flock. Instead he uses them for his own profit. The word "foolish" is actually someone who makes sinful decisions against the word of God. The idol shepherd actually leaves his flock completely. He is worthless to his flock. Therefore, his flock is completely vulnerable to abuse from others. Both the foolish shepherd and the idol shepherd describe the Antichrist who will persecute Israel during the seven year tribulation time. Antichrist will abuse and mistreat Israel far worse than they have experienced before. He will be destroyed along with Israel's enemies when Christ returns at his 2nd Coming.

Chapter 12 looks to a future great battle to end all battles that will happen "in that Day"

4. Chapter 12 begins by proclaiming "How Great Thou Art"

"The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1).

"Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein" (Isaiah 42:5).

- A.** Our Great and Almighty God: He stretcheth forth the heavens; He layeth the foundation of the earth; He formeth the spirit of man within him. Take a moment to praise Him in your heart.

"Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And ***in that day***, will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (Zechariah 12: 2-3).

5. God's plan's for Jerusalem *in that day*...

- A.** God will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling and a burdensome stone for all the people.
- a. In our own lifetime we have seen the growing conflict surrounding Israel. She has no peace and her enemies who surround her want her wiped off the face of the earth! People stumble over Jerusalem because they cannot ignore that against all odds she still remains, and they are jealous over her obvious superior intellect seen in her science and technology.

"***In that day***, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness" (Zechariah 12:4).

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19: 11-15).

B. "*In that day*" refers to the "Day of the Lord"

- The Day of the Lord refers to a period of time that begins at the start of the seven year tribulation period and includes the 1,000 year kingdom of heaven on earth reigned by Jesus Christ. This expression is used 18 times in the book of Zechariah.
- In that Day is a reference to the "Day of the Lord" and it is used six times in Chapter 12.

6. In that Day, Israel's enemies will face the fierce wrath of Almighty God! Warfare against Israel will be totally ineffective as they face God, who is called Faithful and True, returns to earth on a white horse to make war with Israel's enemies. In his righteous war he will have the victory!

- 7. The governors of Judah will fight for Jerusalem.** Their refuge will be in the LORD as he leads the people in battle to defend Jerusalem. The LORD will make the governors as mighty men who will defeat and consume the enemies of Jerusalem.

"And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God. ***In that day*** will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12:5-6).

- 8. The LORD fights for Jerusalem...** "In that day: the LORD will take four actions: He shall save the tents of Judah first; He will then defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; then the LORD will make the feeble inhabitants of Jerusalem as strong as David; and the LORD will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

"The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah. ***In that day*** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. And it shall come to pass ***in that day***, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12: 7-9).

- 9. How the Jews will respond after the LORD pours out the spirit of grace...**

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. ***In that day*** shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain every family apart, and their wives apart" (Zechariah 12: 10-14).

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Revelation 1:7).

They will look upon their Messiah who is the very one that they rejected and choose to crucify. They pierced him when his wrists and feet were nailed to the Cross. They will be overwhelmed with sorrow and will mourn over what they did as one mourns over the loss of their only son; their first born son. They will then appreciate the great sorrow their actions caused God the Father when he witnessed his firstborn Son, his one and only Son being nailed to the Cross. All of Jerusalem will mourn and in their great grief they will cry out and wail. They will be faced with the truth that they killed their very own Messiah!