

BAD SHEPHERDS, HARD HEARTS, CANNIBAL CONDITIONS

Sunday February 2, 2025 -- ZECHARIAH series -- msg 16 -- Pastor Andrew Coleman

REMEMBER THE CONTEXT & MESSAGE of ZECHARIAH:

- 1) The Prophet Zechariah lived and preached in Judah after Jews return to Jerusalem from Babylon.
- 2) Initially, the nation of Israel was discouraged because **Jerusalem** and **the Temple** were not rebuilt.
- 3) Zechariah preached God's message to them -- "*Return to Me and I will return to you.*"
- 4) Israel had repeatedly been faithless and disobedient, but God kept presenting to them His salvation if they would obey. God gave Zechariah multiple dreams to preach this theme to them.
- 5) In Chapter 7 we saw that the people persist with '**diamond-hard**' hearts against God.
- 6) In Chapter 8 God reveals that He is going to **save His remnant** and cause them to live in obedience.
- 7) In Chapter 9 we saw: '*The Return of the King*':
God's coming will claim His land through His King for His people.
- 8) In **Chapter 10** we saw: '*Wanted: A GOOD Shepherd*':
 - Over and over fraudulent leaders had misled God's people.
 - They were weak and dysfunctional -- kept wandering far from God.
 - But God promised a CHIEF SHEPHERD who would be both GREAT and GOOD.
 - In fact, He would be the PERFECT Shepherd -- our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - God promised to give them a home of great blessings, prosperity and peace. (see 10:9-11)
 - God promised to give them a heart of faith and obedience. (see 10:12)

BIG PICTURE PRINCIPLES for Chapter 11:

- 1) God rules supreme over the wicked and the righteous of every age.
- 2) God reveals His will and fulfills His purpose to His true people.
- 3) Everyone is responsible for their own actions in response to God's Word.
- 4) Whenever people persist in rebellion they pay a very heavy price.
- 5) Generally speaking, a nation's leaders reflect a nation's people.
- 6) For sure, this is a passage of multi-layered prophecy.
 - some interpretive of their past
 - some immediate for their present
 - some relating to Messiah's first coming
 - some relating to Messiah's second coming

We MUST keep in mind God's GRAND PLAN of salvation for His people.

1 *Open your doors, O Lebanon,
that the fire may devour your cedars!*
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!*
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!*

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

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. 8 In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. 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." 10 And I took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. 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.*

OBSERVATIONS of the PROPHECY:

vs 1-3 The destruction of evil shepherds.
(kings, prophets, priests)

The destruction of the rebellious nation.
-- the temple
-- the land
-- the river

vs 4-14 THE FIRST SIGN-ACT:

- Zechariah acts as God's shepherd-agent.
- God has great intentions for them.
 - Favor
 - Union
- The people detest him.
- The shepherd allows their destruction.

vs 4 They are rebellious.

vs 5 Their wicked leaders mock God.

vs 6 Rebellion has great consequences.

vs 7 Zechariah acts to protect & guide.

vs 8 The wicked leaders are wiped out.

(kings, prophets, priests?)
(Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians?)

Nevertheless the people hate God.

vs 9 The people are turned over to destruction.

Sieges led to cannibalism.
(Lam. 2:20; 4:10; Deut. 28:53; Jer 19:9)

vs 10-11 God does not break but annuls the covenant.

(Ex. 32:19; Jer 31:32; Ezek44:7)
(Not replacement theology proof text)

Remember -- Conditional covenants
(ie Deuteronomic covenants)

Unconditional covenants
(Genesis 15; 2 Samuel 7)

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**. **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. **14** Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 Then the Lord said to me, "Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd. **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.

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!"

OBSERVATIONS of the PROPHECY:

vs 12-14 This great symbolic rejection of **God's saving intention, message and messiah.**

- Solomon's kingdom divided each other.
Israel -- Jeroboam
Judah -- Rehoboam
- God's people separated from Him.

vs 15-17 THE SECOND SIGN-ACT

A wicked shepherd comes to devour the flock.

Perhaps a reference to the antichrist.
Revelation 13:1-15

MATTHEW 26:14-16

14 Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests **15** and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" **And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.** **16** And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

MATTHEW 26:47-50

47 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. **48** Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." **49** And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. **50** Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

MATTHEW 27:1-10

1 When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. **2** And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. **3** Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, **4** saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." **5** And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. **6** But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money." **7** So they took counsel and bought with them **the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.** **8** Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. **9** Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the **thirty pieces of silver**, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, **10** and they gave them for **the potter's field**, as the Lord directed me."

ONE RESPONSE: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost"