

The Play that Yielded Reality

Zechariah

Sermon 12

Zechariah 11:1 – 17

Nutshell: God just gave a good *long-term* prognostication, Zech 10. But did His people's spirits align with that coming brighter day? Zechariah 11 gives the *short-term* picture in a 2-part play Zechariah acts out. Even with all that God did to restore worship and supply His Spirit (ch 3-4), the people would not fully receive it. As with the flying scroll and the Shinar woman (ch 5), God will sniff out the unfaithful among His people in Zech 11. The findings are discouraging.

Where is the generation with a robust representation of those who fully turn *to* God *from* what they were? A measured bit of God is a damning amount.

Review: God told them to turn, 1:3. They turned, 1:6b. It was enough for God to lay out the coming New Covenant to be established by the Christ.

Jesus (the "Man") **reconnoitered** the world, 1:8-11, asking the Father for pity on Jerusalem, 1:12.

God laid out His dual *jealousy* for His people and *anger* towards those who hurt them, 1:14-15. *This dual theme is continually repeated.*

God's FIRST **Undo** was pictured in the four builders (ch 1); His first **Redo** in Jesus measuring for an expanded Jerusalem (ch 2). God's **Prerequisite Redo** was cleansing the presently unclean priesthood, chap 3. Tied to it was the **Prerequisite Redo** of the Spirit's empowerment, 4:6. His SECOND **Undo** was ridding His land of liars, chap 5.

The **reconnoitering** was completed, 6:1-8. The real answer would be Jesus Himself, 6:12-13.

* **Chaps 7-8** are **Street-level Redo #1**: How to avoid what led their fathers into Babylon.

Chap 9 is the THIRD **Undo**: recompense on lands on Israel's borders. Herein, Christ's offered peace terms are prophesied.

Chap 10 is God's second **Redo**. Judah and Israel are to be reunited and victorious against oppressors.

Chap 11 will be a FOURTH **Undo**. Like the SECOND **Undo**, this one exposes the false spirit in the people, ch 5. Chap 11 answers the questions posed in chaps 7-8.

Kid-speak: What book are we looking at today? Is God speaking in this book?

Vision Outline: Chaps. 1 – 6. 8 Visions.

A chiastic outline: Initial points (Vis. 1-3) leading to a Focal point (Vis. 4 & 5), then mirroring the initial points in the latter half (Vis. 6-8) of the outline. Link Vision 1&8, 2&7, 3&6, 4&5.

Vision 1, 1:7-17. Vis 2, 1:18-21. Vis 3, 2:1-13. Vis 4, 3:1-10. Vis 5, 4:1-14. Vis 6, 5:1-4. Vis 7, 5:5-11. Vis 8, 6:1-8.

Vis 2 & 3, God to judge the pagans; Vis 6 & 7, now His people. Vis 8 brings real rest from wrong rest (Vis 1).

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Vision 1: The Son's HORSEMEN: the pagans **rest** smugly. God: I'll be with Israel and judge/convert the pagans.

Vision 2: God sends 4 builders to **BRING DOWN** the 4 **PAGAN** horns that scatter God's people.

Vision 3: The Son **goes out to measure** Jerusalem for her coming expansion. Pagans to be judged.

Vision 4: Priest Joshua clothed: justification. Satan rebuked. Zechariah appointed; Messiah promised.

Vision 5: Olive-fed Menorah: sanctification. Spirit-filled Zerubbabel to overcome pagan 'mountains'.

Vision 6: A flying scroll **goes out** as a '**measure**' of the ungodly in Israel.

Vision 7: **COUNTERFEIT BRIDE** measured (ephah), **THROWN DOWN**, sealed over, bridesmaid-flown to native Shinar.

Vision 8: The Son's HORSEMEN go forth to give God's Spirit **rest** (judge or convert (2:11) the pagans).

Note God's equal judging activity between the pagans and His people: Vis 2 & 7, Vis 3 & 6. 1 Peter 1:17.

Review (cont.):

Chap 6:9-15, Make crowns for the High Priest, since Messiah (Shoot) will be the original Priest-King.

* **Chap 7**, Q & A: "Has your fasting been for Me? Or, as your fathers, *have you ignored justice & mercy?*"

* **Chap 8**, "The Big Shift- I'll dwell with you → pleasantness. Many will join. *But are you neighborly?*"

Chap 9, "I'll send Alexander as a type of Messiah, who will come humbly, His victory in the Cross."

Chap 9 is a large version of the "Then you'll know" prophecies of 2:9, 4:9, and 6:15.

Chap 10, As surely as Alexander will come, God will reunite Judah and Ephraim against their oppressors.

I. The Pathway for the Later Invaders, 10:1-3

A. Alexander's coming path of conquest was mapped out, beginning north of Israel, 9:1-7

B. But he laid favored status on Jerusalem, 9:8

C. Lebanon was just designated an overflow region for the Jews God would bring back from lands they had been transplanted in, 10:10

1. But *now* Lebanon is a starting point on the map for the later Greek invaders, 10:1

2. Her cedars are literal, but also symbolic of all the dignitaries, religious and political, that Antiochus Epiphanes would trample down

3. If the biggest, best trees will fall...

a. And we begin a graded trail of destroyed vegetation, livestock, and wild animals

i. Fir trees, 10:2

ii. Oaks

iii. Pasture land, 10:3

iv. The Jordan's undergrowth, its lions 'evicted',

b. because Antiochus would be satisfied with nothing short of conversion to a Greek spirit. As the geography moves into Israel, the invader's attention to smaller detail is evident.

i. Lebanon, north of Israel, 10:1

ii. Bashan, in Israel's north, 10:2

iii. The Jordan, centered in Israel, 10:3

c. During the Maccabean period, Israel would be divided between those who succumbed to the Greek spirit and those who resisted. But the resistance eventually ran out of steam (Spirit).

4. And why this upsetting reality, despite from the previous positive prognostications?

Kid-speak: Was God able to send armies against His people when they started doing bad things? Yes. Would God even send armies of bad guys? Yes.

II. The Backstory: Israel Resisting God, 10:4-14

A. Picture 1: Zechariah playing shepherd of a flock ready for slaughter, 10:4

1. As they'd *been* slaughtered and *would be* again, 10:5
2. Including Israelites oppressing Israelites
3. Those in charge of them, Gentile or Jew, cared only for the Jews' usefulness to them
4. This fate, because God Himself had stopped caring for them, 10:6
 - a. Contention was in the people's spirits
 - b. So God 'gave them over' to it, without remorse, Rom 1:24, 26, 28

B. Zechariah played his role, 10:7

1. He took two shepherd's staves for the work
 - a. Calling one PLEASANTNESS and one **Cords**
 - b. Because God provided for GOOD THINGS and **unity** (respectively) in His covenant with them

Kid-speak: God told Zechariah to pretend he was something- something God was to His people. What was that? A shepherd. What's a shepherd? Someone who takes care of sheep. Who are God's sheep? Us!

2. Zechariah's job included firing three leading shepherds (he was top shepherd), 10:8
 - a. He did this in one month (not necessarily the first month)
 - i. Perhaps tied to a woman of captivity's one-month mourning for her parents, after which her Israelite captor could marry her, Deut 21:13
 - ii. Israel had been captive, yet she had not fully mourned for what killed her parents. She was therefore not fit to reunite with her God.
 - b. Apparently, the three shepherds embodied the divisive spirit in the people, perhaps a kind of mirror image of "these three men" who might have saved Israel, Ezek 14:14-18
 - c. Mutual hatred made Zechariah's shepherding untenable, Prov 29:27
3. Zechariah quit his job- the only place the job could have gone, 10:9
 - a. Meaning that whatever needed looking after just wouldn't get fixed or helped
 - b. Leaving them to the full-scale 'cannibalism' they'd already shown a basic taste for, Gal 5:15

Kid-speak: Did the people Zechariah tried to shepherd like him? No. Did he like them? No. Were *God's people* like that towards *God*? Yes, they didn't like Him.

C. Zechariah chopped up his staff representing the agreeable things of the Covenant, 10:10

1. Zechariah's agreement (covenant) as shepherd was concluded, 10:11
 - a. Just as God's, when the people broke it beyond mending
 - b. The New Covenant is unbreakable, Jer 31:31-34, which is why *getting into it at all* is such a big deal! Thus also, reading the signs for the new birth, 1 John.
2. The bottom-of-the-barrel people were those whom Zechariah had a special eye to when he started the job, 10:7a
 - a. They got the picture- what God was saying
 - b. The question was, *did it matter* to them?
3. Zechariah tested their spirits. What value would they place on his service? 10:12
 - a. 30 shekels' weight of silver
 - b. The message this sent was that Zechariah was only worth the reparation payment for a slave killed by a goring ox, Exod 21:32
 - i. Indicating that he had probably served at least a year, since 30-shekel-weight was otherwise about 4 months pay for a common laborer
 - ii. Payment meant they didn't want to be beholden to him. "Bye. We'll get along OK on our own."
4. God hinted at the slight, sarcastically referring to the amount as "the ample honorarium whereby I was honored," 10:13
 - a. But God *returned* the slight, redirecting the money to the Temple's artisan
 - b. Suggested that the artisan might employ it for one of their favorite pastimes, idolatry
5. Union with God being gone, the disfellowship of Judah and Israel would naturally follow, 10:14

Kid-speak: How much did somebody have to pay if their mean bull killed somebody's servant? 30 pieces of silver. How much did the Israelites pay Zechariah for being their shepherd? 30 pieces of silver. Were they making fun of Zechariah? Yes, they didn't like him.

D. How did Matthew apply this to Christ's betrayal? Matt 27:5-10

1. After Judas threw his betrayal price of thirty pieces of silver into the Temple, the chief priests redirected the money to purchasing a field that had belonged to a potter
 - a. Perhaps because there was no more Temple artisan, outright idolatry having been successfully purged from Israel
 - b. But the chief priests apparently overlooked the irony and the connection to Zechariah, that a potter still ended up with the money
2. This represented Israel's valuation of Christ: a death price
 - a. Originally to cover payment of a slave killed by a goring ox, Ex 21:32
 - b. But now extended to becoming a burial ground and receiving the name Field of Blood
3. Matthew makes it sound like Jeremiah gave the prophecy instead of Zechariah
 - a. But Jeremiah might simply be a heading type name, like Psalms was for the whole body of work usually called The Writings, Lk 24:44

- b. Jeremiah wasn't first, but Matthew may have been grouping the books that fed off of Jeremiah's captivity prophecies

Kid-speak: How much did the priests pay Judas to tell them where they could catch Jesus? 30 pieces of silver. Where did the money end up both times? Somebody who made pots. What did it mean both times? The price of death.

III. Picture 2, Zechariah as a Bad Shepherd, 10:15-17

A. Now Zechariah was going to play the part of a bad shepherd, since that's all Israel was worth now,

1. All Zechariah had to do this time was acquire the gear. That was the whole picture.
2. Simply denoting that God had bad shepherd's 'waiting in the wings'

B. God takes responsibility for the judgment of this new overlord, 10:16a

C. The bad shepherd would **fail to:** 10:16

1. Look in on the underserved (widows in particular?)
2. Seek out the youth (orphans, then?)
3. Remedy broken stuff: government systems or human relations
4. Do proper maintenance, allowing everything to deteriorate

D. But the bad shepherd would expend energy! 10:16f

1. To gobble up anything of value
2. To make sure the flock was hobbled and thus no threat

Kid-speak: Since the Israelites were bad to a *good* shepherd, what kind of shepherd did God say He'd make sure they had next? A *bad* one! One that would be bad to them. Is that fair? Yup.

E. In consequence, the bad shepherd would call God's judgment on himself as well, since he'd only be doing exactly what *he* wanted, 10:17

1. The violence of his neglect and theft would come back on him
2. His ability to act would be diminished or removed (sword on arm)
3. His ability to see and inspect would be severely downgraded (sword to right eye)
 - a. Perhaps returning some measure of relief to the flock
 - b. But also possibly exposing them to other greedy overlords

IV. A Right Gloomy Portrait!

A. Revealing exactly the need for the New Covenant

B. There must be a mechanism for an inner change

1. And that change must be experienced, Jn 3:7
2. The mechanism is the Cross and Resurrection
3. Applied by the Holy Spirit

Kid-speak: This is a sad story today, isn't it! What is it those people needed that we need too? We need God to make us new! How can He do that? By Jesus dying on the cross to take away our sin and give us a new heart.

Wrap-up: The distance between what God promises and where we presently are is, in one way, not that far- **IF** we are sealed by the Spirit. For the same Spirit who plants the new heart in us is the one who will bring us to fruition.

However, the distance between the two is infinite without the new birth. That's what Zechariah 11 teaches us. As Jesus taught Nicodemus, "The wind/Spirit blows where it/He wills... That's the way it is with everyone *who is* born of the Spirit," Jn 3:8.

But Jesus also taught the stubborn crowd in John 6, "All the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me, I will by no means cast out," Jn 6:37.

The Jews thought that they had come to God. Zechariah's roles as shepherds shows that they had not.

God's Word is likewise revealing our hearts today, as it by nature does, Heb 4:12-13. All who are convicted of their natural stubbornness need not remain in it. But what we have to give up is like losing an arm or an eye ("pluck it out," Matt 18:8-9). Most people aren't up for that.