

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes
3-20-19

Zechariah 10

The Lord Will Care for Judah - Verses 1-6

¹Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime; it is the Lord who sends the thunderstorms. He gives showers of rain to all people, and plants of the field to everyone. ²The idols speak deceitfully, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. ³"My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the people of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle. ⁴From Judah will come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler. ⁵Together they will be like warriors in battle trampling their enemy into the mud of the streets. They will fight because the LORD is with them, and they will put the enemy horsemen to shame. ⁶"I will strengthen Judah and save the tribes of Joseph. I will restore them because I have compassion on them. They will be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.

10:2 We often create idols of money, power, fame, or success, and then we expect them to give us happiness and security. But these idols can't supply what we need any more than a stone image can make it rain. How foolish it is to trust in idols. Instead, trust God's promises for your future.

10:4 Zechariah's prophecy, more than 500 years before Christ's first coming, called Christ the "cornerstone" (see also Isaiah 28:16), the "tent peg" (Isaiah 22:23), and the "battle bow," here implying that he will crush God's enemies (see also Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2). This Messiah would be strong, stable, victorious, and trustworthy—in all ways, the answer to Israel's problems. Only in the Messiah will all the promises to God's people be fulfilled.

10:6 "Judah" refers to the southern kingdom, and the "tribes of Joseph" refers to the northern kingdom. Ephraim, the leading tribe of the northern kingdom, was the son of Joseph. One day God will unite all his people. This verse tells about God's reuniting of the Jews (see also Jeremiah 31:10). This was a startling idea. The people of the northern kingdom of Israel were so completely absorbed into other cultures after their captivity in 722 B.C. that a regathering could not be accomplished by human means, but only by God.

The LORD Will Care for Judah - Verses 7-12

⁷ The Ephraimites will become like warriors, and their hearts will be glad as with wine. Their children will see it and be joyful; their hearts will rejoice in the LORD. ⁸ I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. ⁹ Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return. ¹⁰ I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them. ¹¹ They will pass through the sea of trouble; the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria's pride will be brought down and Egypt's scepter will pass away. ¹² I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will live securely," declares the LORD.

10:7 God promises to strengthen his people. When we stay closely connected to God, his Spirit will enable us to do his will, despite the obstacles. When we stray away from God, we will be cut off from our power source.

10:10 This pictured return from Egypt and Assyria was a symbolic way of saying that the people would be returned from all the countries where they had been dispersed. Egypt and Assyria evoked memories of slavery and separation. "And there will not be room enough for them" could also be translated, "there will scarcely be room for all of them."

10:11 The "sea of trouble" refers to the Red Sea, through which the Israelites were miraculously delivered from Egypt. As the Israelites returned once again from Egypt and other lands, they would continue to be protected by God's miraculous power.

Zechariah 11

The Fall of the Tyrants - Verses 1-3

Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedars! ² Wail, you juniper, for the cedar has fallen; the stately trees are ruined! Wail, oaks of Bashan; the dense forest has been cut down! ³ Listen to the wail of the shepherds; their rich pastures are destroyed! Listen to the roar of the lions; the lush thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

11:1-3 The prophet graphically portrays the punishment that is to fall upon the people. The sin that occasions this chastisement, is the rejection of their Shepherd and King, is denounced later.

Two Shepherds - Verses 4-11

⁴ This is what the LORD my God says: "Shepherd the flock marked for slaughter.⁵ Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who sell them say, 'Praise the LORD, I am rich!' Their own shepherds do not spare them. ⁶ For I will no longer have pity on the people of the land," declares the LORD. "I will give everyone into the hands of their neighbors and their king. They will devastate the land, and I will not rescue anyone from their hands." ⁷ So I shepherded the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took two staffs and called one Favor and the other Union, and I shepherded the flock. ⁸ In one month I got rid of the three shepherds. The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them ⁹ and said, "I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another's flesh." ¹⁰ Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. ¹¹ It was revoked on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the LORD.

11:4 In this message, God told Zechariah to act out the roles of two different kinds of shepherds. The first type of shepherd demonstrated how God would reject his people (the sheep) because they rejected him (11:4-14). The second type of shepherd demonstrated how God would allow his people to fall into the clutches of evil shepherds (11:15-17). (See Ezekiel 34 for a detailed portrayal of the evil shepherds of Israel.)

11:4 God told Zechariah to take the job as shepherd of a flock of sheep being fattened for slaughter. The Messiah would shepherd God's people during a time of spiritual and political confusion. The flock represented the people feeding on their own greed and evil desires until they were ripe for God's judgment.

11:7 Zechariah took two shepherd's staffs and named them Favor and Union. He broke the first one ("Favor") to show that God's special favor toward his people was broken. He broke the second one ("Union") to show that "the family bond between Judah and Israel" was broken (11:14).

11:8 The identity of the three evil shepherds is not known. But God knew they were unfit to shepherd his people, and so he removed them.

Two Shepherds - Verses 12-17

¹² I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. ¹³ And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to

the potter”—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the LORD. ¹⁴ Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the family bond between Judah and Israel. ¹⁵ Then the LORD said to me, “Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd.” ¹⁶ For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hooves. ¹⁷ “Woe to the worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! May his arm be completely withered, his right eye totally blinded!”

11:12 To pay this shepherd 30 pieces of silver was an insult—this was the price paid to an owner for a slave gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32). This is also the amount Judas received for betraying Jesus (Matthew 27:3-10). The priceless Messiah was sold for the price of a slave.

11:13 Potters were in the lowest social class. The “handsome price” (a sarcastic comment) was so little that it could be thrown to the potters. It is significant that the 30 pieces of silver paid to Judas for betraying Jesus were returned to the temple and used to buy a potter’s field (Matthew 27:3-10).

11:14 Because the people had rejected the Messiah, God would reject them—symbolized by Zechariah breaking the staff called Union Not long after Zechariah’s time, the Jews began to divide into numerous factions—Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Herodians, and Zealots. The discord among these groups was a key factor leading to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

11:15-17 Israel would not only reject the true shepherd; it would accept instead a foolish, worthless shepherd. This shepherd would serve his own concerns rather than the concerns of his flock and would destroy rather than defend them. Condemnation is his rightful fate because he trusted his arm (military might) and his right eye (intellect). God would destroy both.

11:17 It is a great tragedy for God’s people when their leaders fail to care for them adequately. God holds leaders particularly accountable for the condition of his people. The New Testament tells church leaders, “Not many of you should become teachers, . . . because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1). If God puts you in a position of leadership, remember that it is also a place of great responsibility.