

Zechariah 11:12-17—Shepherds are punished for abusing the True Shepherd

Delitzsch, TSK, HebrewLexicon, JFB, Clarke, Handfuls, Geneva, Poole, Vincent, Henry, Trapp, Phillips, Calvin, Barnes, Beloved in Christ: **God pronounced harsh judgments on his spiritual shepherds for abusing his sheep.** He cursed those spiritual shepherds with **fire, foil, and famine.** But those false shepherds did not stop. Like the parable (比喻) of Jesus, **the wicked men killed the workers the owner of the vineyard sent and then killed the Son. They hoped to claim the whole vineyard (葡萄园) for their advantage.**

Today, see how they killed the Son of the owner of the vineyard and how the Son rose from the dead and returned the favor.

Our headings are:

The False Shepherds betrayed the True Shepherd

The True Shepherd broke the False Shepherds

Our goals are: **That you will remember that Jesus is undefeatable 不可战胜的 and he is beside you as you conquer the world.**

The False Shepherds Betrayed the True Shepherd

12 Then I said to them, "**If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages;** and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for **my wages thirty pieces of silver.**

1. This was a prophecy (预言) about Jesus. The things you read about here may have happened to Zechariah, but it was a picture of what would happen to Jesus, the Suffering Servant.

Philippians 2:7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant (奴仆), and coming in the likeness of men.

2. Jesus challenged the hypocrites (伪君子) of Israel, the false shepherds, to weigh out his payment for his work for them.

3. The shepherds then paid 30 pieces of silver – but this silver was not for Christ’s work (like a servant is paid) but for his death. And it was not paid to Jesus, **but to Judas for his work.**

Matthew 26:15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" **And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.**

What these false shepherds did not know was that when Jesus took their payment of punishment, he was paying for the sins of the world. Their betrayal (背叛) and rejection of Jesus ensured that millions lived! It seemed like Jesus death was useless...but it wasn't. Those 30 pieces of silver **went far...very far.** Jesus work is never wasted!

Isaiah 49:4 Then I said, '**I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;** Yet **surely my just reward is with the LORD,** And my work with my God.'" 5 "And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him..."

Isaiah taught that **Jesus committed his way to (托付给) his Father after he was robbed of his payment,** just like Jacob committed his way to the Lord when Laban robbed him of his due payment. **Jesus will be handsomely repaid!**

4. These 30 pieces of silver had rich spiritual symbolism (象征意义).

Exodus 21:32 "If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master **thirty shekels of silver,** and the ox shall be stoned.

The life of the servant was redeemed with 30 pieces of silver...just as the **lives of Christ’s servants** were redeemed through 30 pieces of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, "**Throw it to the potter**" — that princely price they set on me. So I took the **thirty pieces of silver** and threw them into the **house of the LORD for the potter.**

5. Judas, realizing his great guilt in trying to sell Jesus’ death for money, then rejected the 30 pieces of silver, which were consequently thrown into the temple, and then used to purchase a potter’s field. Jeremiah spoke of this Jeremiah 18-19.

Matthew 27:6 But the chief priests **took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood."** 7 And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. **[10]** "and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me."

6. Lessons:

a. False shepherds who plague带来祸患the church of Jesus today will themselves be plagued with eternal judgment.

b. Don't fear false shepherds. The Lord will always protect his sheep. He said he was the Good Shepherd who would care for his sheep. Jesus had a rod and a staff! Isaiah prophesied exactly the same.

Isaiah 40:11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd; **He will gather the lambs with His arm,** And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

c. Rejoice. God used the wickedness of man (the Jews and the Romans) to kill Jesus and secure your eternal salvation.

The True Shepherd broke the False Shepherds

14 Then I **cut in two my other staff, Bonds (连锁)**, that I might break the **brotherhood between Judah and Israel.**

1. In response to Jesus' betrayal (So this had to be after Jesus was killed.) God permanently destroyed the unity between Judah (the 1 ½ tribes in the south), and Israel, (the 10 ½ tribes in the north). (Zechariah now pictures God.) The 2 nations were never reunited after captivity (被掳). **With no weapons in his hand any longer, it showed that God would not protect Israel from danger – from within (3 Jewish sects were killing each other) and from without - Rome.** This was **completed in AD70.** The Jews said they had no king but Caesar, so Jesus gave them to their king. Titus, the Roman general who became Caesar, made sure this unity in Israel was never restored. (The breaking of the 1st rod, Beauty (荣美), symbolized the **giving up of the ruling office.** The breaking of the 2nd rod, Bond, **symbolized God's judgment.**)

15 And the LORD said to me, "Next, **take for yourself the implements (器具) of a foolish shepherd.**

16 "For indeed I will raise up **a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand.** But he will **eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves (蹄子) in pieces.**

2. How does God destroy the shepherds of Judah and Israel? God did this through an awful shepherd he put over them.

Daniel describes this awful shepherd.

Daniel 11:36 "Then the **king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies (亵渎的话)** against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37 "**He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god;** for he shall exalt himself above them all. 38 "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

Daniel gave the time of this awful shepherd.

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And **on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation,** which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Apostle Paul confirmed the nearness of the awful shepherd's coming to destroy Israel!

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come **unless the falling away comes first,** and the **man of sin is revealed,** the son of perdition, 4 **who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God** or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 8 And then **the lawless one will be revealed,** whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 10 and **with all unrighteous deception among those who perish (灭亡)**, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Remember, Israel sold herself (she was the Scarlet Harlot) to the Beast of Rome, epitomized (成为...的缩影) in Caesar Nero. The shepherd did not care for the weak (children) or the wounded (the injured), or the weary. Instead, he abused the sheep for his own pleasure. After Nero died (and a few short reigns) Vespasian destroyed Israel in earnest in AD70.

3. How did it come to this – to a total destruction of the people?

Israel had bad shepherds before.

Ezekiel 34:... 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel **who feed themselves!** Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 "**You eat the fat and clothe yourselves** with the wool; **you slaughter the fatlings,** but you do **not feed the flock.** 4 "The weak you have **not strengthened,** nor have you healed those who were sick, **nor bound up the broken,** nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with **force and cruelty you have ruled them.**

When the Good Shepherd came Israel rejected him. (Interesting was that there is no record of people pretending to be Christ until after the Jews rejected Jesus. So there was no confusion!)

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, **because they were like sheep not having a shepherd**. So He began to teach them many things.

John 1:11 **He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

So God sent back a bad shepherd, but worse than before.

Revelation 13:5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle (帐幕), and those who dwell in heaven.

17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd (无用的牧人), Who leaves the flock! A **sword shall be against his arm** And **against his right eye**; His arm shall completely wither (枯干), And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

4. God then gave some details about the shepherds' destruction (from Israel and Rome).

a. God condemned the false shepherd to hell for abusing the flock – true believers. He used the word "woe."

b. God destroyed the source of his strength. His arm would literally wither. The arm of strength suggests that this was speaking of the political or public power – strength – of Rome. (Romans 13).

c. God would dig out his dominant eye – his right eye. He would be totally blinded. To **lose one's right eye was a picture of being totally dominated** – conquered.

1 Samuel 11:2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, **that I may put out all your right eyes**, and bring reproach on all Israel."

This was a picture of religious power, as it was the duty of the religious leaders to watch out for the souls of the people under their charge (管理). The religious leaders were called to judge, so this was likely referring to the Jews.

5. Lessons:

a. In contrast to the foolish shepherds was the Good Shepherd.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. **The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**

And while the wicked shepherds did not care for the sick sheep, Jesus gave sight to the blind.

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those **who do not see may see**, and that those who see may be made blind."

b. The Good Shepherd then gave you the authority of the foolish, abusive shepherds (prophet, priest, and king). So elders and pastors of churches need to feed and guard the flock of Jesus well.

Acts 20:28...take heed to yourselves **and to all the flock**, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers 监督, to **shepherd the church of God** which He purchased with His own blood. 29 "For I know this, that after my **departure savage (凶恶的) wolves will come** in among you, not sparing the flock.

c. This arrogance of wicked shepherds is not strange. These false shepherds were following their father, the Devil. These same wicked shepherds are in many churches today. Watch for them!

Isaiah 14:13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

They will meet their rightful end.

Conclusion:

The false shepherds of Israel betrayed the Good Shepherd, plundered his sheep, sold the Good Shepherd for 30 pieces of silver, and killed him. But he rose again from the dead triumphantly. And since you were in him when he died, you have been raised to new life!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Walk with confidence, not cowardice 胆怯 now that Jesus saved you and walks beside you.

2. Watch out for false shepherds who plague the church – who pretend to be true shepherds. Don't be afraid of them, but be aware of them. Fight against them. Rescue those who are prey to them.

2. Work with confidence for the Good Shepherd as you shepherd the flock in your home, in school, in church, or in the work place. Introduce new sheep from the Devil's fold to Jesus'. Encourage straying sheep to return home. Fight to expand his kingdom and his worship! This means you must evangelize.

Finally: Do you want the Good Shepherd to be your shepherd? The Devil only pretends to care for you, but he will leave you to die. I plead with you today to call on the Good Shepherd to make you his child. This will give you unspeakable joy and save you from eternal wrath (忿怒) in hell.