



river west church

The Sovereign Grace of God in Christ

Zechariah 11

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The Good Shepherd Rejected

If you look at everything that is happening in Zechariah 11, it is basically a giant mess – at least from a human perspective. The first three verses are a prophetic word of judgment to come. I imagine the Israelites were getting tired of this theme. For them it wasn't just a theme to ponder in literature or theology, judgment was a very real experience for them. They knew what it was to go into exile as a result of God's judgment for their sins. The bad news is that they are going to fail yet again. It's brutal. It's also quite true and all of it came to pass in real history just as the prophet said it would.

Zechariah's prophetic word in this chapter is very intense. He is told to take on the role of a "good shepherd". He does this as a symbolic act. It demonstrates that Israel is going to rebel and reject the good shepherd. The good shepherd is going to be treated as worthless; valued at just 30 pieces of silver, the value given for a wounded slave (Exodus 21:32). This is amazing, as it was the exact price paid to Judas for his betrayal of Christ (Matthew 26:15).

As you read Zechariah 11, it becomes apparent that Jesus is the key to understanding the passage. This is a prophetic word that is to be fulfilled in the New Testament through the life, death and ultimately the resurrection of Jesus. Zechariah 11 is, in fact, the Gospel previewed through the prophetic words and actions of Zechariah. God's people are going to reject the good shepherd, Jesus Christ, their King and Messiah. But most importantly, this is not going to be the end of the story.

God's Judgment, Victory and Grace

The bible is more than a collection of spiritual thoughts about God. The Bible is history. From Genesis to Revelation the time line of history moves forward. And in the history there is a story: HIS story. The history in the bible is not just a record of "what happened". It is, rather, the record of "what God did". This is a crucial distinction. God sent His people into exile in Babylon for their sins for 70 years. This actually happened. God did this. God intervened and brought them back into their land. God did this. God sent His Son Jesus, the King of Israel, the Messiah. This actually happened in history and your New Testament gives the record. Israel rejected the Messiah, the good shepherd, the King. This is just what Zechariah said would happen. Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver and He was crucified. But all along God was working His own plan. The Gospel is the story of God's sovereign grace being victorious over human sin, folly and rebellion. Israel was to be judged for its rejection of the Messiah (which happened in the destruction by the Roman army in 70 AD). God did this. But God was working His sovereign redemptive plan through all these things. The rejection of Christ was not a surprise to God. The death of Christ was not something that "happened to" Jesus. This is what God did. And this is why it is so important to see it written in Zechariah some 500 years before the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ. This is God's work and it is marvelous in our eyes! In the bible we are given front row seats to see the greatest story of all time unfold before our eyes.

The Gospel is News, Not Advice!

We are coming into the season Christ's passion, death and resurrection. As we do, this study is a fantastic reminder that the Gospel is news, not advice. There are loads of religious people who are trying to figure out what they need to do to be more spiritual or to "make it to God". But we are invited to take up a front row seat and marvel. His grace has triumphed over sin. Even His judgments have furthered His perfect redemptive plan. Our best response is not to try to impress God with our spirituality and our efforts. Our best response is to put our faith in what He has done. We should love,

worship and follow Jesus. He is the good shepherd. Death could not hold Him. Hebrews 13:20-21 puts all the focus on Christ, the risen and victorious shepherd of the sheep. That's the point.

"Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20-21)