

Message #14**Zechariah 11:1-17**

At the end of December in 2016, there were ten predictions that were made about what would happen in 2017. These predictions were made by a group that carefully studies world events and bases their predictions on what they see happening in the future:

10. Italy's banking system will collapse - did not happen.
9. U.S. and China will have a major trade war - did not happen.
8. Taliban will take over Afghanistan - did not happen - just opposite - routed out of Afghanistan.
7. Marine Le Pen will be elected President of France - did not happen - Emmanuel Macron.
6. North Korea will go totally nuclear - did not happen.
5. Isis will cause insurmountable carnage in Europe - did not happen.
4. There will be a worldwide crippling cyber-attack - did not happen.
3. There will be a terrible genocide in Africa and Asia - did not happen.
2. There will be a major World War 3 - did not happen.
1. There will be a violent civil war insurgency in US - did not happen.

They were all wrong. The best forecasters in the world guessed wrong about the future. This is one of the many things that makes the Bible so unique. It never guesses wrong and what it predicts will happen really and literally does happen.

Zechariah is a minor prophet book and it is filled with all kinds of predictions. When you come to this text in Zechariah, you come to one of the most amazing and most accurate predictions ever made in this world. It is one of the most amazing predictions in the entire Bible.

Almost 500 years before Christ was born, Zechariah predicted that He would come to Israel and be rejected and betrayed and would be sold for 30 pieces of silver. Now what Israel needs to know is that in the same prophetic passage that Zechariah predicted this, he also predicted what God would do to Israel for rejecting Him. We may assume that since the 30 pieces of silver was literally fulfilled, everything else in this chapter will also be literally fulfilled. What Zechariah predicts is this:

ISRAEL WILL REJECT HER MESSIAH/SHEPHERD WHEN HE COMES THE FIRST TIME SO GOD WILL ALLOW HORRIBLE JUDGMENTS AND A HORRIBLE MAN TO RISE UP TO PUNISH BOTH ISRAEL'S LAND AND PEOPLE.

There have been some horrible decisions made in history. Let me cite three:

- 1) In April of 1912, an untested ship called the Titanic attempted to sail from England to New York. It had no safety regulations or equipment; it had no binoculars for the crew members; it did not have proper lighting. The ship sunk.
- 2) In June of 1941, Adolph Hitler decided to invade Russia and break his agreement with Stalin. When the Germans got to Moscow, they were defeated. It was the beginning of the end.

3) In 1962, Dick Rowe of Decca Records declined to sign a music group called the Beatles. He didn't think the group would amount to anything. That turned out to be a bad business decision because in 1964, record sales alone totaled 50 million dollars.

Those were bad decisions. Those were costly decisions. Those were life-changing decisions.

But there is one decision that is the worst of all. It is the worst decision a nation can make and it is the worst decision an individual can make. It will turn out to be eternally costly. **The most costly decision any person of any time period can ever make is to reject Jesus Christ.** If ever you want to see a chapter that communicates that point, it is this one in Zechariah 11. Zechariah 11 communicates four simple points:

POINT #1 – The Messiah/Shepherd will come to Israel and be rejected so there will be devastating judgment results for Israel's land. **11:1-3**

Now **verses 1-2** begin somewhat oddly by discussing trees. There were three kinds mentioned: cedar trees, cypress trees and oak trees. **The cedar and cypress trees were located in Lebanon to the north and the oak trees were located in Bashan to the east.** Now the Jordan River basin, which is mentioned in **verse 3**, was also known for its lush vegetation and tree growth.

What is described here is a total physical devastation of the Promised Land, north to south and east to west. According to **verse 3**, this land devastation will be so complete that the shepherds will wail because there is no pasture land and the young lions will roar because there is no place for them to live. The trees are gone, the brush is gone.

God is going to cause land devastation to hit Israel that will affect the land, the people and the animals. He is going to bring major devastations to the land of Israel that will leave it desolate. The "glory" of the shepherds is the pasture land and the "pride of the Jordan" are the trees and thickets that grew along the Jordan. These were the places where the lions and animals lived. They are all gone.

You cannot hunt in Israel today because there is no big game to hunt. There are only 2000 permits given to Israelis and the game is scarce. The only lion that exists in Israel today is the Arabian Leopard and there are not many of them in existence. What has happened is that something has gone wrong with a land that is supposed to be teeming with game and be like the garden of Eden. What has gone wrong is that God has judged Israel.

This prophecy of Zechariah has literally come true and it gets worse. There will come one more devastating judgment against this land and it will happen during the Tribulation. At that time Israel's land will be totally destroyed.

This is all due to a judgment of God on the nation that rejected the Messiah. During the Tribulation, God is going to demolish land all over the world (Rev. 8:7). Why will this happen?

Because this is a God-mocking and Christ-rejecting world. Reject Jesus Christ and your life will not only be dry, but it will turn out a disaster.

POINT #2 – The Messiah/Shepherd will come to Israel and be rejected so false shepherds will slaughter Israel's people. **11:4-6**

What is described here is scary. God says concerning His own people, Israel, pasture them for slaughter. Israel rejected her Messiah so God says what I will do is permit My people to be slaughtered in their land.

In **verse 4**, God tells Zechariah to act as a shepherd and pasture the flock that is doomed to slaughter. Now people don't want to hear stuff like this about God. They don't want to know that if I reject Jesus Christ, God is going to slaughter me. But that is exactly what He will do. He will not only slaughter a Christ-rejecter, He will burn them in everlasting fire.

What Zechariah was to do was to present himself to the people as a representative Shepherd responsible for pasturing the flock. According to **verse 11**, the people realized that he was bringing them a message from God as somewhat of a shepherd/prophet.

Now the message that he was to bring them is that they are "doomed" or "marked" for slaughter. These words suggest cruel treatment that will occur at the hands of buyers and sellers and shepherds that are described in **verses 5-6**.

According to **verse 5**, God would permit ruthless foreign powers to dominate Israel in her own land. They would actually slay God's people and seem to get away with it unpunished. In fact, they would actually get rich from it. Those buyers and sellers would be saying their success is from the LORD.

What is so sad is that their own shepherds could care less. The Jewish leaders had not pity or mercy on their own people. They know this is because they have rejected the Messiah/Savior, but instead of turning the nation back to God, they watched them totally destroyed.

During the Tribulation, the revived Roman Empire and the Antichrist will wreak havoc on Israel. They will claim God is permitting them to succeed and the Jewish leaders won't speak out and even defend their own people.

God says in **verse 6** because they rejected their true Messiah, He would let Israel fall. He would allow other powers to strike the land and not deliver her.

Frankly, this is still going on today. God is not blessing Israel in the land and much of the Promised Land is controlled and dominated by foreign powers. Israel is almost a disregarded nation. There is one power yet to come and he will be the worst of all.

This is all happening because she rejected her Messiah and King. When a nation or an individual rejects Jesus Christ, it is the worst decision that can be made. That decision will always end in disaster.

POINT #3 – The Messiah/Shepherd will be betrayed and rejected by Israel and many people in the world. **11:7-14**

According to **verse 7**, in the midst of His doomed and afflicted flock, He took for Himself a Shepherd with two staffs. That word “oppressed” means the flock was afflicted, humbled and poor.

The two staffs were named “Favor” and “Union.” **The name “favor” speaks of a Messiah/Savior/King who brings the grace of God and the word “union” speaks of a Messiah/Savior/King who can unite the nation to God.**

So this Messiah would come who could bring the grace of God to Israel and He could unite Israel under the union and blessings of God.

Now according to **verse 8**, God annihilated three shepherds to bring His Messiah to the people. There have been more than 40 interpretations of what this means. Many have concluded that it refers to a shepherd prophet, shepherd priest and shepherd king that God removed in one month. It may be that these three were very known to Zechariah and these people because in one month’s time they were all removed, showing the power of God.

I think it is prophetically significant to note that before Christ came on the scene God removed three leaders in a short period of time. **The leaders who dominated Israel of Babylon, Medio-Persia and Greece had all been removed by the time Christ came on the scene.**

At the end of **verse 8**, it is clear that the Messiah who came was growing impatient with the people and the people, instead of loving Him, were growing weary of Him. He came to His own and He did wonderful things for them. He taught them, healed them and helped them and they rejected Him. They got tired of Him telling them they needed to repent. They became weary of His message that before He would give them the Kingdom, they needed to repent.

So **verse 9** says I finally said I will not Shepherd you now, I will permit you to die and be annihilated and will bring you to the point where things are so desperate for you that you will become cannibals in order to survive.

This is how desperate things will be in the Tribulation. Now some have said that this cannibalism is not literal, it is just metaphorical for lean times. However, Jeremiah 19:7-9 and Ezekiel 5:8-10 predicts a Tribulation judgment that will come against Israel that will cause this to happen literally. Israel has made a mockery of Jesus Christ. They nailed His body to a cross so God will permit their bodies to be eaten. During the Tribulation this is exactly what will happen.

Now according to **verse 10**, Christ took His staff named “favor” or “grace” and cut off the favor and blessings of God from the nation. He put a temporal stop to the covenant that He had made with Israel. Right now Israel lives with a temporal blindness. God’s grace is not being poured out on Israel these days; it is offered to the world.

God offers you His grace today. He invites you to come to Him in spite of all of your sins. But the worst decision you can make is to reject God’s grace. That decision is fatal.

Verse 11 says that when the nation becomes afflicted, it will realize that this is all due to a fulfillment of the Word of the LORD. Frankly, today, Israel is still as blind as a bat.

Verses 12-13 make one of the most amazing predictions in all of Scripture. **The Messiah, Israel’s true Shepherd who offers God’s grace that can unite one with God, would not only be rejected, but He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver and the money would be thrown down in the Temple of God.**

In other words, the payment that would be given Jesus Christ for offering God’s grace and salvation to the nation is that He would be paid 30 pieces of silver in a betrayal. Jesus Christ was sold for 30 pieces of silver and Judas took the money and returned to the Jewish leaders and threw it down in the Temple and they used the money to buy a potter’s field to bury foreigners (Matt. 26:15; 27:3-10). God says this is what I think of your money, I threw it on the floor to go to a dead potter and nation.

According to **verse 14**, Zechariah cut the second staff union. Because she rejected His grace, God says there is no union with God. God was breaking off His program with Israel and Judah and He will not pick it up again until the entire nation cries blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

POINT #4 – The Messiah/Shepherd will be replaced by a worthless shepherd who will injure the flock of God and desert the flock of God. **11:15-17**

God says “I” am going to raise up one more false shepherd who will devour Israel. He will rip My people to shreds. He will tear them to pieces. They mocked My Son, they rejected My Son so I will destroy them. I will permit an Antichrist to come to power who will scatter and devour My people. He will not care one bit for her.

God says in **verse 17**, woe to him. We know that this one will arise from three European nations and we also learn he will be blind in his right eye. God says this will be the one I will let destroy My people before I destroy him.

Now why are all of these horrible things permitted to happen? There is one reason, because Jesus Christ was rejected. The worst decision you can make is to reject Jesus Christ. Here is one prediction that will come absolutely true. If you reject Jesus Christ, you will end in disaster. That is the message of Zechariah 11.