

The Good Shepherd

Zechariah: Behold Your King Is Coming

Zechariah 11:1-17

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We have no king but Caesar!

This morning we continue in our study of the book of Zechariah. Zechariah announces the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. Behold, your king is coming! During Advent, we celebrate the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy. Our king has come. Over 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ, the Son of God came as King. Jesus is the gift of Christmas. But the question before us this morning is the same question that has been before all people for over 2,000 years. Will you receive this gift? Will you receive Jesus as King? "Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in."

When Jesus came the first time to his own people the Jews, did they receive him? No, they rejected him. As Jesus stood before Pilate, the Jews cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" When Pilate then asked, "Shall I crucify your *King*?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So Pilate delivered Jesus over to them to be crucified (Jn. 19:15-16). They rejected Jesus as king and said, "We have no king but Caesar."

Caesar represents all worldly kingdoms. Caesar represents the kingdom of man that opposes the kingdom of God. It's interesting. So much of what the world spends its time with at Christmas is from Caesar's kingdom. It's from the kingdom of man. The world celebrates materialism and consumerism and pleasure. And it celebrates the individualism and self-sufficiency that has enabled us to consume so much. Instead of "come and worship, come and worship," it's go, go, go!

What are you celebrating this Christmas? As you look at your calendar, who do you call king? Which shepherd are you following? The Good Shepherd, King Jesus? Or are you following Caesar and the kingdom of man?

This morning, in Zechariah 11, we learn that those who reject the Good Shepherd are heading for destruction. But those who receive Jesus as their Shepherd-King will be saved.

Zechariah 11:1-17¹

¹*Open your doors, O Lebanon,
that the fire may devour your cedars!*

²*Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
for the glorious trees are ruined!*

*Wail, oaks of Bashan,
for the thick forest has been felled!*

³*The sound of the wail of the shepherds,
for their glory is ruined!*

*The sound of the roar of the lions,
for the thicket of the Jordan is ruined!*

⁴*Thus said the LORD my God: "Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. ⁵Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the LORD, I have become rich,' and their own*

¹ Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® unless otherwise noted.

shepherds have no pity on them. ⁶For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of this land, declares the LORD. Behold, I will cause each of them to fall into the hand of his neighbor, and each into the hand of his king, and they shall crush the land, and I will deliver none from their hand.”

⁷So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slaughtered by the sheep traders. And I took two staffs, one I named Favor, the other I named Union. And I tended the sheep. ⁸In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. ⁹So I said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. And let those who are left devour the flesh of one another.” ¹⁰And I took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. ¹¹So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep traders, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the LORD. ¹²Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. ¹³Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter. ¹⁴Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

¹⁵Then the LORD said to me, “Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd. ¹⁶For behold, I am raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for those being destroyed, or seek the young or heal the maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs.

*¹⁷“Woe to my worthless shepherd,
who deserts the flock!
May the sword strike his arm
and his right eye!
Let his arm be wholly withered,
his right eye utterly blinded!”*

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

A Two-Act Play

Zechariah 11 is a prophecy. But it comes to us in the form of a theatrical play. Zechariah the prophet takes on the role of an actor. To help you understand the structure of Zechariah 11, I want you to imagine you’re at a theatrical play.

You walk into the auditorium and you’re handed a program. The title of the play is *The Good Shepherd*. You go to your seat and sit down. The orchestra is playing in the pit. They’re playing the score. It’s the prelude to the play. And as you listen to the prelude you begin to understand the tone of this play. While the play is called *The Good Shepherd*, the score is dark. It’s fearful, like a storm. It’s full of wind and thunder and lightning. Judgment is coming!

Then the curtain opens. And you see the setting of the play. You see a sheep market. People are buying and selling sheep. But the sheep being sold are being led straight to the slaughter house.

As you look at your program, you notice it’s a two-act play. And Zechariah the prophet is playing the lead role in both acts. In the first act, he plays the role of the Good Shepherd who is rejected by the sheep. In the second act, he plays the role of the worthless shepherd who comes after the Good Shepherd is rejected.

So that’s how we’ll divide Zechariah 11 this morning. First, we’ll look at the prelude in verses 1-3. Then, we’ll consider the setting in verses 4-6. Then, we’ll look at Act One in verses 7-14. Finally, we’ll look at Act Two in verses 15-17.

THE PRELUDE (w. 1-3)

Let's look first at the prelude. There are three pictures in the prelude. The first picture is of a great storm blowing through the great forest of Lebanon.² Thunder crashes and lightning strikes. And the trees wail. The forest that once stood in glory is burned to the ground (v. 1). The second picture is of the great forest of Bashan. It's being chopped down (v. 2). Great forests may stand in glory for a long time. But they can be brought down by fire or axe.

In the same way, the worthless shepherds of Israel may stand in glory for a time. But they won't last. The wicked leaders will be brought down by God. That's the picture.³

But why do I say these shepherds are worthless and wicked? Because they're supposed to be feeding the flock, but instead, they're feeding *on* the flock. They're supposed to be caring for the flock. But instead, they care only for themselves. Notice the play on words, in verse 3. In this picture, the leaders are described as shepherds; shepherds wailing, because they're glory has been ruined. But they're not shepherds at all. They're more like lions. Shepherds care for sheep. Lions devour sheep. Any shepherd who devours their sheep is worthless and wicked! **But the glory of worthless shepherds won't last.** Like a lion that has lost his habitat, these beasts will lose their turf.⁴ Their days are numbered.

Let this prelude be a warning to any of us who lead God's people. Any shepherd or leader who *uses* those he leads for his own purposes will be brought down. Teachers will be judged strictly (Jas. 3:1). And it would be better for someone to have a millstone hung around their neck and thrown into the sea, than to lead one of God's little ones astray (Mt. 18:6).

Worthless shepherds use God's people for their own glory. But the glory of worthless shepherds won't last. God will bring them down. So in this prelude we hear the *tone* of this prophecy. It is in a minor key. It's a tone of judgment on worthless and wicked leaders. Let's look now at the setting of this play.

THE SETTING (w. 4-6)

Zechariah 11 is predictive prophecy. It looks 500 years into the future. It looks to the coming of Christ, Israel's promised Savior-King, the Good Shepherd. In verse 4, Zechariah is called to play the role of the Good Shepherd. He's playing the role of Christ at his first coming. But before Zechariah steps onto the stage, we're given a description of the setting, in verses 5-6. What's going on before the Good Shepherd comes?

As the curtain is pulled back, we see the shepherds of Israel at the sheep market. These are the worthless and wicked shepherds. And they're selling the sheep to people who immediately send the sheep to the slaughter house. And as the sheep are led off to the slaughter house, the wicked shepherds greedily count their money. They even have the audacity to thank God for becoming rich. They have exploited God's people. And then they thank God for it!

The picture is one of doom and gloom. This is the setting of Israel at Jesus' first coming. **Worthless shepherds don't care for the sheep; therefore, the sheep are doomed for destruction.**

² Stuart Olyott, "Rejection of Christ."

³ Thomas McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*.

⁴ Stuart Olyott, "Rejection of Christ."

If we want to understand the significance of what the Good Shepherd did, we need to understand the setting of his first coming. Right before the coming of Christ, the leadership in Israel is corrupt. As a result, the people are being oppressed by a foreign power. As verse 6 says, “each of them...fall into the hand of his neighbor, and each into the hand of his king.” This is most likely referring to the Jews falling into the hands of the Roman Empire at the coming of Christ.⁵ During that time we know that around 1.5 million Jews were put to death by the Romans.⁶

This is the stage the Good Shepherd walked onto 2,000 years ago. And the condition of Israel before the first coming of Christ is representative of our condition before we receive Christ. In our sin, we’re all doomed to destruction. Remember what we learned in Ephesians 2. “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...we...were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Eph. 2:1-3).

Apart from Christ, we are all doomed to destruction—we face the wrath of God. That is the stage Christ walks onto.

What will the Good Shepherd do when he steps onto this stage? And how will the sheep respond to the Good Shepherd? Will they receive him and be saved or will they reject him and be led to the slaughter? This is the question that is before us this morning as well. The Good Shepherd has come. The king has come. Will you receive him or will you reject him?

Let’s look at Act One and see what happened when the Good Shepherd stepped onto the stage of slaughter.

ACT ONE (vv. 7-14)

In verse 7, Zechariah takes on the role of “the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slaughtered.” And as he plays his role, we come to see that he is playing the role of the Good Shepherd who cares for the flock. There are three reasons we know he cares for the flock.

The Good Shepherd cares for the sheep.

First, he became a shepherd to the afflicted of the flock. Verse 7 is a difficult verse to translate. In the ESV it reads, “So I became the shepherd of the flock doomed to be slaughtered *by the sheep traders*.” But I think the NIV gives us a better translation. It reads, “So I pastured the flock marked for slaughter, *particularly the oppressed of the flock.*”⁷ The Good Shepherd came to the whole flock of Israel, but he particularly cared for the oppressed and afflicted of the flock. He came for those who knew they were sick and needed a doctor. That’s the first reason we know the Good Shepherd cares for the sheep.

Second, he protects and brings peace. As Zechariah plays the role of the Good Shepherd, he has two props, two shepherd staffs, the staff of Favor and the staff of Union (v. 7b). The staff of Favor represents protection from the nations surrounding Israel (cf. v. 10). The staff of Union represents peace within Israel (cf. v. 14). We know the good shepherd cares for the sheep because he protects them and brings them peace.

⁵ Thomas McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*.

⁶ Stuart Olyott, “Rejection of Christ.”

⁷ NIV 1984

Third, he is the perfect and final prophet, priest, and king. The next thing Zechariah does in his role as the Good Shepherd is to destroy the three shepherds (v. 8). Now, if you want a difficult verse to interpret, here it is! Can you believe there are 40 different interpretations of the three shepherds Christ destroyed? So I offer my interpretation humbly.

In Israel, there were three main leadership roles: prophet, priest, and king. All three are referred to as shepherds. When Christ came, all three of these roles came to an end. There are no longer prophets, priests, or kings over God's people, except for one. Christ fulfilled the role of all three perfectly. He became *the* prophet, priest, and king.⁸

The Good Shepherd cares for the sheep. And we know this because he cares for the afflicted, he protects and brings peace, and he's the perfect and final prophet, priest, and king.

Those who reject him are doomed for destruction.

How do the sheep respond to this Good Shepherd who cares for the sheep? This is main question for us today and the main question in our text this morning. How will you respond to the Good Shepherd? How do the sheep in this play respond to the Good Shepherd?

They reject him. Look at verse 8. "But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me." They reject him. And so the Good Shepherd resigns. Look at verse 9. "So I said, 'I will not be your shepherd.'" Then in verse 12, he asks the people if they want to give him severance pay.⁹ In response, they give him thirty pieces of silver. This was a slap in the face. This is the price paid for a dead slave! If a slave was gored to death by an ox, the owner of that ox would have to pay the owner of the slave 30 pieces of silver.¹⁰

These wages were basically worthless. So, Zechariah throws the pieces of silver into the temple, to the potter (v. 13). The potter was on the low end of the totem pole.¹¹ He lived next to the garbage pile near the temple.¹² When Zechariah throws the money to the potter, he's saying, this money is worthless.¹³

The sheep thought the Good Shepherd was worthless. The one who came to save them from slaughter—they thought he was worthless. They detested him. He was despised and rejected (Isa. 53:3).

And so, the Good Shepherd rejected them. They don't want his leadership. So he turns them over to the leadership they want,¹⁴ which leads to destruction. They don't want to follow him, so he abandons them to follow the course they choose,¹⁵ a course that leads to destruction. Look at verse 9. "So I said, 'I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. And let those who are left devour the flesh of one another.'"

They don't want his protection and peace and so he breaks the staff of Favor (v. 10). And he breaks the staff of Union (v. 14). In other words he removes the promised protection from the outside nations. And he removes the promised peace within the nation of Israel.

⁸ Stuart Olyott, "Rejection of Christ."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Thomas McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*.

¹² Stuart Olyott, "Rejection of Christ."

¹³ Walter Kaiser, *Mastering the Old Testament*.

¹⁴ Timothy Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart*.

¹⁵ D.A. Carson, *For the Love of God, vol. 2*.

They reject the Good Shepherd and they're doomed to destruction. That's what we learn here. The Good Shepherd cares for the sheep. But if you reject the Good Shepherd, you are doomed to destruction.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

We must remember that Act One of this play is predictive prophecy. It looks forward to the coming of Christ. And we see all that is predicted here is fulfilled in Christ's first coming.

Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10). He came to seek and save the lost. He came to bring back the stray. He came to bind up the injured. He came to shepherd the afflicted. He came to protect his people from slaughter. He came to bring peace. He came as the promised king to save his people from their sins (cf. Mt. 1:21).

He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him (Jn. 1:11). Instead, they rejected him. The Jewish leaders paid Judas 30 pieces of silver to betray him (Mt. 6:15). And when Judas realized that Jesus was condemned, he threw the 30 pieces of silver into the temple. The Jewish leaders then used that money to buy a field. A field they called the potter's field (Mt. 27:3-10).

The rejection of the Good Shepherd in Zechariah 11 was fulfilled in the rejection of Jesus Christ 500 years later. But ironically, through the Jews' rejection of the Good Shepherd, God has made a way for *us* to be saved.

When the Jews rejected Jesus, they crucified him. But when they crucified him he proved he was the Good Shepherd. We know Jesus is the Good Shepherd *because* he lays down his life for his sheep (Jn. 10:11). The Good Shepherd became the lamb that was slaughtered *for us!* As the prophet Isaiah said, 800 years before Christ came, "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter..." (Isa. 53:5-7).

The Good Shepherd came the first Christmas. The Good Shepherd cares for the sheep. And the main way he cares for the sheep is by laying down his life for the sheep. The Good Shepherd was slaughtered for our sins so that we wouldn't be doomed for slaughter. This is the good news of the gospel!

And although he was rejected by the Jews, we don't have to reject him. "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him, but to all who *did* receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..." (Jn. 1:11-12) "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish (be led to slaughter) but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16).

The response of the Jews is clear in Zechariah 11 and in the New Testament. They rejected their coming king. But what about you? What will you do with the Good Shepherd? He came upon the stage of slaughter. He came while we were dead in our sins. He came to seek and save the lost by laying down his life for the sheep.

How will you respond to the Good Shepherd? Will you despise and reject him. Or will you receive him?

If you reject the Good Shepherd, you are doomed to destruction. You will die in your sins. You will be destroyed by God's wrath. You will be devoured.

But if you receive the Good Shepherd, you have eternal life and the forgiveness of your sins. The Good Shepherd did not come to kill and steal and destroy, but to give eternal life (Jn. 10:10).

Will you receive him and be saved? Or will you reject him and face the doom of destruction?

That's the question facing the audience at the end of Act One of our play in Zechariah 11. Let's turn now to Act Two and learn what happens when people reject the Good Shepherd.

ACT TWO (v. 15-17)

In Act Two, Zechariah plays the role of a foolish shepherd or a worthless shepherd (v. 15, 17).

In Act One, the sheep reject the Good Shepherd. They reject the one who cared for those being destroyed. They rejected the one who sought the young, healed the maimed, and nourished the healthy (cf. v. 16; Ez. 34:16).¹⁶ So in Act Two, they get "a shepherd who does *not* care for those being destroyed, or seek the young or heal the maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs" (v. 16).

When the sheep rejected the Good Shepherd in Zechariah 11, Zechariah took his staff of Favor and broke it. He broke the covenant God had made with the nations. What that means is God took away his protection. Now the Jews were vulnerable to the nations. When the Jews rejected Jesus the staff of Favor was broken. And in AD 70 the Roman Emperor Titus sacked Jerusalem.¹⁷ He devoured them like a lion. And he then became the worthless shepherd spoken of in Zechariah 11.

Titus (Caesar) represents all kings and kingdoms who oppose King Jesus and the kingdom of God. Caesar represents the Antichrist.¹⁸ He represents the kingdom of Satan. When you reject God's King, you in effect say, "We have no king but Caesar!"

We all have a choice. We either receive the Good Shepherd or we reject him. There is no neutral ground. Those who reject God's king are following the king of this world. Those who reject the Good Shepherd follow the worthless shepherd.

Some of you would say, "I don't reject the Good Shepherd. I don't reject the gospel. I'm just not super religious." But if you cling to the things of this world, and not Christ, you are essentially rejecting the Good Shepherd. You cannot serve two masters. If you reject the Good Shepherd, you follow the worthless shepherd. And if you follow the worthless shepherd, you reject the Good Shepherd. There is no neutral ground.

Are you following King Jesus? Do you come and worship, come and worship Christ the King? Or are you running after the things of this world? If you're running after the things of this world, you need to know something. The kingdom of this world will come to a screeching halt. The worthless shepherd will be brought down.

In verse 17, God announces that the worthless shepherd will fall. "Woe to my worthless shepherd, who deserts the flock! May the sword strike his arm and his right eye! Let his arm be wholly

¹⁶ Carol Meyers and Eric Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*.

¹⁷ Thomas McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*.

¹⁸ Walter Kaiser, *Mastering the Old Testament*.

withered, his right eye utterly blinded.” The worthless shepherd Titus fell. And eventually the entire Roman Empire fell. And all kings and kingdoms who oppose God and his kingdom will fall.

At Christ’s first coming, he came to save his people from sin. At his second coming he will throw down the Antichrist, Satan, and all the kingdoms of this world. He will throw down all who reject him.

Who are you following? Are you following the Good Shepherd who was slaughtered for you? Or are you following the worthless shepherd who is leading you to the slaughter?

Those who reject the Good Shepherd are following the worthless shepherd. There is no neutral ground. The worthless shepherd is doomed to destruction. And those who follow the worthless shepherd are doomed to destruction.

But those who receive the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, they will be called children of God.

Sermon in a sentence: **If you receive the Good Shepherd you have the gift of eternal life!**

At Christ’s second coming it will be too late to receive him. But between his first coming and his second coming we can receive him. “Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in!”

What will you do with the Good Shepherd this Christmas? Will you reject him or receive him as the greatest gift ever given. He came to give his life for your sins. You can receive him by believing this truth.

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The Good Shepherd is a 2006 American spy film produced and directed by Robert De Niro and starring Matt Damon, Angelina Jolie, and De Niro, with an extensive supporting cast. Although it is a fictional film loosely based on real events, it is advertised as telling the untold story of the birth of counter-intelligence in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). "The Good Shepherd" is the fifth episode of Season 2 of Grimm and the twenty-seventh episode overall. It first aired on September 28, 2012 on NBC . MONROE GOES UNDERCOVER TO HELP NICK EXPOSE THE TRUTH ABOUT A LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS UNUSUAL FLOCK -- When a local Reverend reports that his church has been robbed, Nick (David Giuntoli) quickly learns that it's a Wesen church, and enlists Monroe (Silas Weir Mitchell) to check for any suspicious activity regarding the shepherd's flock. Audience Reviews for The Good Shepherd. Mar 29, 2013. I kind of wish that the audience isn't reminded every 15 minutes of everything Damon's character loses by becoming a spy (we get it, he's dead inside).Â The Good Shepherd Quotes. Bill Sullivan: I don't want your answer now, just think about it. The Good Shepherd was released on December 22, 2006 in 2,215 theaters, grossing \$9.9 million on its opening weekend. It went on to make \$59.9 million in North America and \$39.5 million in the rest of the world for a worldwide total of \$99.4 million.[3]. Critical response.Â Nicholas Dujmovic said: A film can take a strictly documentary approach .. If that's the standard, then anyone with historical sense is going to dislike the liberties The Good Shepherd takes. The Good Shepherd " ist der Originaltitel folgender Filme: Der gute Hirte aus dem Jahr 2006 mit Matt Damon, Robert De Niro und Angelina Jolie The Good Shepherd (2004) aus dem Jahr 2004 mit Christian Slater und Molly Parker " Deutsch Wikipedia. the Good Shepherd " Jesus Christ (from Bible, John 10.11) " Main Entry: "shepherd * * * a name for Jesus Origin: with biblical allusion to John 10: 1 16 " Useful english dictionary. the Good Shepherd " " the Good Shepherd a name for Jesus. Main Entry: "good "

The Good Shepherd is a 2006 film about the tumultuous early history of the Central Intelligence Agency, as viewed through the prism of one man's life. Directed by Robert De Niro. Written by Eric Roth. Edward Wilson believed in America, and he would sacrifice everything he loved to protect it. It isn't about dedication and loyalty, it's about belief in what we do. Bill Sullivan: I'm sorry for not standing, my fucking feet are killing me. Clover Wilson: Agency first, God second. "The Good Shepherd" is the fifth episode of Season 2 of Grimm and the twenty-seventh episode overall. It first aired on September 28, 2012 on NBC. MONROE GOES UNDERCOVER TO HELP NICK EXPOSE THE TRUTH ABOUT A LOCAL CHURCH AND ITS UNUSUAL FLOCK -- When a local Reverend reports that his church has been robbed, Nick (David Giuntoli) quickly learns that it's a Wesen church, and enlists Monroe (Silas Weir Mitchell) to check for any suspicious activity regarding the shepherd's flock. Welcome to THE GOOD SHEPHERD's Page. This page is dedicated to God. I am a born again Christian See More. CommunitySee All. 661,850 people like this. 664,300 people follow this. 1 check-in. AboutSee All. The Good Shepherd. Book Details. Please enter a suggested description. Limit the size to 1000 characters. He began the series with Hornblower fairly high in rank in the first novel, published in 1937. The last completed novel was published in 1962.