

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"30 Pieces and a Broken Staff"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Zech. 11:1-17; Is. 2:12-13; Jer. 22:15, 23; 1 Sam. 8:7-22; Matt. 23:31-39; Matt. 26:14-16; Matt. 27:3-10; John 10:1-18

We place value on things every day. Sometimes that value is expressed by what we are willing to pay, but often it is revealed by what we are willing to give up. We say something matters to us, but our decisions eventually reveal how much it really matters. Zechariah 11 brings us into a disturbing picture in which God's people are forced to reveal what the shepherd is worth to them. And their answer is devastating: **thirty pieces of silver**. It is the value associated with a slave, a trifling amount placed upon the one who had been called to shepherd them. Then the staff called Favor is shattered. What had been offered to them was treated as though it were worth almost nothing.

That is what makes this chapter so difficult, but also so important. Zechariah 9-10 has given us these magnificent promises of a coming King, restoration, gathering, and flourishing. Then chapter 11 suddenly snaps us back into the reality of a people who can still reject the shepherd God sends them. The problem is not simply that there are bad shepherds in the world. The deeper problem is that people can reject the Good Shepherd and choose something else. Zechariah 11 asks us to consider not only **who is shepherding us**, but also **what value we have placed upon the Shepherd who has come to lead us**.

1. WHEN WE REJECT GOD AS OUR SECURITY, EVERYTHING ELSE EVENTUALLY FALLS. Zechariah opens with devastation: *"Open your gates, Lebanon—fire will devour your cedars! Wail, cypress tree! For the cedar has fallen"* (Zech. 11:1-2). Lebanon's cedars, Bashan's oaks, and the thickets of the Jordan all pictured strength and security, yet each is brought down. Isaiah uses the same imagery for everything proud and exalted (Is. 2:12-13). The message is clear: things that appear unshakable are not always secure.

Then the focus turns toward the shepherds, and we begin to understand the real tragedy. The shepherds are wailing because their glory has been destroyed, yet these are the very shepherds who have failed to care for the flock. The buyers slaughter the sheep, the sellers profit from them, and *"their own shepherds do not spare them"* (Zech. 11:5). God's people had placed themselves under leadership that did not truly care for them, while at the same time resisting the Shepherd who did. This is the danger of looking for security in the wrong place. We can trust structures, influence, wealth, political power, personalities, or religious systems and convince ourselves that they will protect us. But if those things replace ADONAI as our security, eventually He may allow us to discover just how fragile they are. The cedars fall, the shepherds wail, and what seemed untouchable is suddenly gone.

2. THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER REVEAL WHAT THE SHEPHERD WAS WORTH TO THEM. Zechariah shepherds the flock with two staffs. One is called **Favor—No'am**, carrying the idea of kindness, grace, and delight. The other is called **Union—Chovlim**, carrying the idea of bonds and covenantal relationship. Yet the people reject the shepherd. Zechariah breaks the staff called Favor and then says, *"If it seems good to you, pay me my wages, but if not, don't bother!"* They respond by weighing out *"30 pieces of silver"* (Zech. 11:12)—the price associated with a slave. In effect, the shepherd says, "If you are finished with me, then tell me what my shepherding has been worth to you." Their answer reveals how little they valued what they were rejecting.

ADONAI responds with biting irony: *"Throw it to the potter—that exorbitant price at which they valued Me!"* (Zech. 11:13). Thirty pieces of silver—the price connected with a slave—becomes the value placed upon the shepherd. And centuries later, that same amount appears again. Judah of Kriot approaches the ruling *kohanim* and asks what they will give him to hand Yeshua over, *"And they weighed out thirty shekels of silver for him"* (Matt. 26:15). After Yeshua is condemned, those coins are thrown back into the Temple and eventually used to purchase the potter's field (Matt. 27:3–10). Zechariah's sign-act points toward the rejection of the Good Shepherd Himself. The tragedy is not only that Yeshua was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, but what those thirty pieces revealed about how little He was valued.

3. REJECTING THE GOOD SHEPHERD LEAVES US WITH THE SHEPHERDS WE CHOOSE. After the thirty pieces of silver are thrown into the House of ADONAI, Zechariah breaks the second staff, Union. Favor has been shattered, and now the bonds of brotherhood are broken as well. Then ADONAI tells Zechariah to take up the equipment of a foolish shepherd. This new shepherd is everything the good shepherd is not. *"He will not care for the dying, seek out the young or heal the injured or nourish the healthy. Instead he will eat the meat of the choice sheep, even tearing off their hoofs"* (Zech. 11:16). The good shepherd seeks, heals, carries, feeds, and protects. The foolish shepherd consumes. He does not feed the sheep; he feeds **on** the sheep.

There is a sobering principle here that runs throughout Scripture: sometimes judgment takes the form of God allowing people to have what they insist upon choosing. Israel once demanded a king *"like all the nations"* (1 Sam. 8:20). ADONAI warned them exactly what such a king would do—take their sons, daughters, fields, vineyards, servants, and flocks. Yet they still demanded one. Finally the Lord told Samuel, *"Listen to their voice and appoint a king to reign for them"* (1 Sam. 8:22). Zechariah 11 carries that same weight: **You do not want the shepherd I have given you? Then you will discover what the shepherd you chose will do to you.** Yet the chapter does not end by declaring the worthless shepherd victorious. *"Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock!"* (Zech. 11:17). His strength will fail and his sight will be taken. False shepherds may appear powerful for a season, but ADONAI will ultimately deal with them.

CONCLUSION

Yeshua's words in John 10 sound like the answer to Zechariah 11. Zechariah describes shepherds who abandon and consume the flock. Yeshua says, *"The thief comes only to steal, slaughter, and destroy. I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly!"* (John 10:10). Then He declares, *"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep"* (John 10:11). False shepherds ask what they can get from the sheep. The Good Shepherd gives Himself for them.

So the question becomes personal: **What is the Shepherd worth to us?** We may never say that Yeshua is worth only thirty pieces of silver, but our choices can reveal that other things carry more weight than His voice. We can trade obedience for comfort, truth for acceptance, or trust in Him for human security. Today, let's examine our lives. Have we been trusting another shepherd? Have we been looking to something else to give us what only He can provide? Have we resisted where He has been trying to lead us? Bring those things before Him. The Shepherd who was rejected, betrayed, and valued at thirty pieces of silver is the very Shepherd who willingly laid down His life for us. **Listen again for His voice. Trust His leading. Follow the Shepherd who gave everything for the sheep.**

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Zechariah 11 begin with the fall of the cedars, oaks, and other symbols of strength?
2. What do the staffs called **Favor** and **Union** reveal about what was being lost when the shepherd was rejected?
3. Why are the thirty pieces of silver in Zech. 11:12–13 so significant in light of Matt. 26–27?
4. What can quietly begin to compete with ADONAI as your source of security or direction?
5. If your daily choices revealed how much you value the voice of Yeshua, what would they say?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, forgive us for the times we have placed greater value on other voices, other securities, or our own desires than on Your shepherding. Search our hearts and show us where we have trusted what cannot save us or followed voices that do not lead us toward You. Thank You for Yeshua, the Good Shepherd, who was rejected and valued at thirty pieces of silver, yet willingly laid down His life for us. Teach us to know His voice, trust His leading, and follow Him faithfully. Help us also to reflect His heart by seeking the wandering, caring for the hurting, strengthening the weary, and never using people for our own gain. Keep our hearts humble, our ears attentive, and our lives firmly under the care of the Good Shepherd.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.