



**Bad Leaders And Stupid Sheep  
The Leadership Problem  
Zechariah 10:1-11:3**

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We are in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah ministered from 520 BC to 480 BC in Jerusalem. When he began his ministry, the remnant had been back from Babylon for around 16 years and had just been encouraged to rebuild the Temple by Haggai. Zerubbabel was the governor who brought the people back to Jerusalem and Joshua was the High Priest. Leadership is not a new issue for Zechariah.

These were both noted by the Lord for being great leaders of His people. They were both promised to see the Temple rebuilt to its finish. But they are no longer young men.

We are not told in the text just when they went home to be with the Lord, but the change in tone we see in chapter 10 leads one to believe that there has been a leadership change civilly and spiritually and it wasn't for the better.

Something we need to also remember; Zechariah will be murdered in the Temple area in 480 BC. With the passing of Zerubbabel and Joshua, that would also mean that many of those who were born in



Babylon and made the journey to Jerusalem, had also begun to die. The next generation is now growing up. Ezra and Nehemiah have yet to show up.

There is a significant change in tone as we come to chapter 10. We have seen the glorious future yet to come for the people at the end of the age. A few years have gone by and now, due to death and aging, there appears to be some new leadership in place. There are no walls around Jerusalem yet, so the surrounding cities have free reign to pass through and this influences what is going on in Jerusalem.

The changes are not for the better and a course correction is called for. Zechariah begins with a discussion about prayer, rain, and agriculture.

Zechariah 10:1

“Ask for rain from the LORD at the time of the spring rain— The LORD who makes the storm winds; And He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to each person.” (NASB 2020)

Earlier, Haggai pointed out to the people that there was a reason why the crops were failing, because the people were drifting away from the Lord. He called them back and they responded by repenting. So now with good spiritual and civil leadership gone, once again, there is no guidance. The new Persian governor may not even be Jewish. Zechariah speaks to them and us directly about prayer.

When you pray, don't beat around the bush. It's springtime and you need rain for the crops to grow. Pray and ask for rain for the crops to grow.

But wouldn't the natural rain patterns just make this happen? True, but it is “the Lord who makes the storm winds.” “Ask for rain” is not a good suggestion either. In the Hebrew, it is in the imperative. It is a command. We are to rest on and trust the Lord for everything.

Jesus also taught about being specific when praying.

Matthew 7:7–11

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (NET 2nd ed.)

“So that we don't miss His point, our Lord uses the word “ask” five times in this passage. “Ask,” says the Lord. He doesn't say beg. He merely says, ask.” (Jeremiah 1997, 21) And there is this, it is in the imperative in the Greek.

If we ask and there is no answer, then seek. God wants a personal relationship, and we think of Him sometimes as the master order taker in heaven. Jesus tells us that we ask, then we seek, then we knock.

Persistence, but not begging.

I am reminded of a story about a Bible School student short of cash.

He had learned to be specific in praying and his rent and tuition were due by the end of the month. So, he prayed that the Lord would allow him to win the lottery so he could pay those bills. Not something I would personally endorse as a means of paying the bills, but it is my story. There were two drawings each week and after two weeks, he had not won and had moved to fasting and prayer. That evening, after



falling asleep, the Lord came to Him in a dream and let him know that he needed to act in faith by buying a lottery ticket. Oh.

Whatever we need, ask.

What Does Jesus Say to Do?

**ASK  
SEEK  
KNOCK**

When we pray, are we specific about what we are praying for? Do we act in faith on what He has shown us?

We meet outdoors for church on Sundays and yes, we have prayed that we have no rain until we get everything picked up and put away.

We prayed for a place in Hobe Sound to meet, and the Lord gave us a place in Hobe Sound to meet.

We are praying for a building in Hobe Sound to meet in. Please join with us in praying for that as we trust he will do that for us too.

Other things, if you are looking for a list of things to pray for.

We are still needing for a few more to help set up and take down each week. We are also praying that the Lord meet our needs financially too. Oh, and we want to see the church grow so we can do even more ministry.

Zechariah tells us here that as we pray, and as the people pray, God stands ready to answer. Jesus commands us simply to Ask.

God is the right One to entreat for this temporal benefit, for He makes the thunderbolts and can answer. "He will give them [who ask] showers of rain, vegetation ... to [each] man." (Rosscup 2008, 1436)

The people and us too, are to trust in the Lord for all things, even the rain to grow the crops and sufficient sunshine for them to grow as well.

For us, we tend, at times, to get wrapped up in the worlds way of doing things.

We think that maybe there are some special words we must use to get God's attention when we pray. Nope. It is a heart attitude and issue.

Is there anything in the way? Sin, anger, bitterness, idolatry, unforgiveness. "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23–24, ESV)

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (ESV)



The simple solution is to take it to the Lord. They are not told to take it to the Priest and have him pray for it; they are told to pray for it themselves. The issue is the faithfulness of the people to YAHWEH and their reliance upon Him and no one else to meet their needs.

It appears that they have begun to go back to the old ways that the nations used. Their leadership has apparently once again proved to be faithless, including the new high priest and a governor who may not even be Jewish at all.

A leadership vacuum results and others begin speaking up and leading. Zechariah is now one of those voices.

Something we need to remember; this is a situation which will not get better until Ezra and Nehemiah show up. And they will only make a dent in bad behavior until they are gone.

Nehemiah 5:14–15

“I was governor of Judah from the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was king until the thirty-second year. And during these entire twelve years, my relatives and I refused to accept the food that I was allowed. Each governor before me had been a burden to the people by making them pay for his food and wine and by demanding forty silver coins a day. Even their officials had been a burden to the people. But I respected God, and I didn’t think it was right to be so hard on them.” (CEV)

Jesus tells us what His opinion of the shepherds of His people and the job they did.

John 10:7–10

“So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (NRSVue)

With very few exceptions, Jesus considered them to be thieves and bandits. He is the example for us.

Zechariah 10:2

“For the household idols speak deception, And the diviners see an illusion And tell deceitful dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, They are wretched because there is no shepherd.” (NASB 2020)

No true spiritual leadership, where it should be, is a problem. Some of the folks are now going back to their old household gods to try and solve the crop problem. But there is still no rain. No one from the Temple is speaking out against this practice until Zechariah speaks up.

Rather than reform their ways, Israel was always tempted to blame Yahweh for this lack of rain and to turn to pagan gods of fertility or else to penetrate the hidden reasons of Yahweh (when the obvious one was already declared to them, their own sinfulness) by means of diviners and dreamers. (Stuhlmüller 1988, 128-129)

They began to turn back to divination for answers. And of course, they were all deceivers like their boss.

The diviners floating in and out of town, were in it for the buck, false teachers usually are. “They led them into deceit and error, giving them hardly a glimpse of the giver and source of spiritual gifts, urging them to seek contentment rather from the false gods—hence his remark, They dried up because of having no rain, and were abused like sheep.” (Cyril of Alexandria 2012, 200)



As a Pastor, I cannot stop you from seeking alternative spiritual sources for answers or solutions, but I can warn you. In our culture today, per George Barna, only 50% of people who say they are born again believe that success is best described by consistent obedience to God. This means 50% are listening to other voices which is consistent with only 46% now believing you have a God given calling or purpose for your life.

Even worse, only 13% of those who say they are born again, even have a Biblical worldview. Here in this nation, 56% of those who say they are born again, look like the world when it comes to world view.

In other words, we are in the same place today, that the citizens of Jerusalem were in, as Zechariah pens chapter 10. Spiritual leadership is hard to find in our culture today as it was then.

Many of the Pastors in our nation have abdicated being spiritual leaders. “Among all Christian pastors in the United States, slightly more than one out of every three (37%) possesses a biblical worldview.”

“The proportion varies by the pastoral position held. Among Senior Pastors, four out of 10 (41%) have a biblical worldview—the highest incidence among any of the five pastoral positions studied. Next highest was the 28% among Associate Pastors. Less than half as many Teaching Pastors (13%) and Children’s and Youth Pastors (12%) have a biblical worldview. The lowest level of biblical worldview was among Executive Pastors—only 4% have consistently biblical beliefs and behaviors.” (Barna 2022) That tends to lead towards more non-Biblical business practices showing up in churches these days.

Satan is a deceiver. He is always on the attack, always. He will use anyone, even a misguided believer, to get us off track. He wants to make each of us as ineffective for the Kingdom as possible.

If we buy the lie he feeds us, be ready, because another one is coming. If you have determined what he is feeding you is a lie, be ready for the redirect which will sound much more reasonable than the first lie, but it still is a lie.

He is looking for a door so he can establish a stronghold. This is why we must be abiding in Christ (John 15:5).

Once Satan convinces us to follow a lie of his, other lies start to become harder to detect making it even more imperative for us to live a crucified life for Him.

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (ESV)

Satan has always attacked the church. What better way to do so, than to have leaders in it, who no longer believe the Bible. Martin Luther was upset by what he saw happening in the church over 500 years ago.

What began in Europe with a questioning of God’s word in the 1800’s is now epidemic. What we do here at Calvary, teaching the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse, is becoming very rare indeed.

Here is the bottom line, today, it has never been more important to exercise spiritual discernment. Acts 17:11 “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (ESV) is a key verse to be aware of and make use of. Listen to what others say and be aware that the enemy uses deception and lies to sneak in his agenda. Check out what the scripture teaches and remember, the enemy will lie to you



and make it even sound reasonable. He will use anyone to do that, yes even pastors of megachurches in Atlanta GA.

2 Peter 2:17–20

“These people are like dried-up springs, like clouds blown along by a storm; God has reserved a place for them in the deepest darkness. They make proud and stupid statements, and use immoral bodily lusts to trap those who are just beginning to escape from among people who live in error. They promise them freedom while they themselves are slaves of destructive habits—for a person is a slave of anything that has conquered him. If people have escaped from the corrupting forces of the world through their knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and then are again caught and conquered by them, such people are in a worse state at the end than they were at the beginning.” (GNB)

For YAHWEH’s people, it is as if they no longer have a shepherd watching over them. The shepherds they do have are not interested in their spiritual well-being, so instead they are wandering around like stupid sheep in constant peril.

Did you know that when a sheep with a full fleece falls over onto their back, they cannot get up on their own without help. They will stay on their back until they die. When finding a cast sheep in that condition, immediate action is required. The same for us as believers, since we are also referred to as sheep.

Once a shepherd gets a cast sheep back on their feet, they must stay with that sheep until they look steady enough to stand on their own and exhibit normal behavior. Sheep get up and down all the time, but when they make a mistake in how they lay down, then that is a problem. They may choose the wrong place to lie down unless the shepherd makes certain it is a safe place. They do not like being by themselves either, when they are, they are usually in trouble.

Any of this sound familiar? Discipleship is crucial and being with other believers, key. “As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” (Proverbs 27:17, NLT)

1 John 4:1–3

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now it is already in the world.” (NASB 2020)

This applies to everything we see these days. Demonic power and activity is increasing all around us. Something about being in the last days.

This means deception is becoming the rule, not the exception and we need to be discerning Christians. “A great many folk are judging individuals and judging organizations by the apparent success they are having. It never occurs to them that we are to test the spirits...The need of the hour is not for more youth programs or more new methods in our churches. What we need today are true shepherds who will feed the sheep the Word of God.” (McGee 1997, 961)

They take the word of household idols (“teraphim,” which cannot speak) and garner false hopes from fortune-tellers, who purposely lie. (Fee and Hubbard Jr. 2011, 483)

The Lord’s attitude towards these false or inadequate shepherds has never changed. Being a leader of any kind is a responsibility. Not just to those you are leading, but to the Lord as well. Ultimately, He is the one we are accountable to. Servant leadership is what is being required.



Zechariah 10:3

“My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the male goats; For the LORD of armies has visited His flock, the house of Judah, And will make them like His majestic horse in battle.” (NASB 2020)

Most of the Persian governors were self-serving, as were the Greek governors who followed. Oppressive and hostile leadership became the norm for Judah. The Temple saw some good, and some bad leadership as well.

God plans to punish those shepherds who were less than what He required them to be. Yes, this applies today too.

Ezekiel 34:10

“Thus says the Lord GOD: I am against the shepherds, and I will hold them accountable for my sheep and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them.” (NRSVue)

The Lord has plans for the remnant. During the Tribulation, they will be beat on and horribly oppressed, but when Messiah returns, He intends to turn them into war horses. They will become, as we read elsewhere in Zechariah, mighty warriors.

Zechariah 12:8

“On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them on that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them.” (NASB 2020)

Not only will the Lord restore Judah so that they are like a ‘proud horse in battle’, he will also raise up a new set of leaders from Judah to replace the bad shepherds. (Stead 2015, 160)

Zechariah 10:4

“From them will come the cornerstone, From them the tent peg, From them the bow of battle, From them every tyrant, all of them together.” (NASB 2020)

New leadership is coming, and the reorganization will be total, from top to bottom. When Messiah returns, He will be the leadership that they need. He is the leadership we need as well. The remedy for deception today is an unceasing reliance on the Holy Spirit and the Word of God for direction. Jesus Christ promised this for us.

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (ESV)

This also involves us listening to what others are saying or teaching, and doing so objectively applying the standard of God’s word against knowing that the enemy’s tactic is to deceive us with almost but not quite the truth. As we engage these days, specific prayer for wisdom, promised to us if we ask in James 1:5, is seriously needed.

He will keep us from being deceived as we engage the culture.

The remedy for the nation’s deception focuses on the coming of the Messiah who is described in a fourfold way as the Cornerstone (cf. Isa. 28:16), the Tent Peg ... the Battle Bow (cf. Ps. 45:5), and the Ruler (cf. Gen. 49:10; Micah 5:2). These terms emphasize the strong, stable, victorious, and trustworthy





nature of Messiah's rule. The Lord will not do all the fighting but will empower His people to conquer like mighty men. His presence (He will be with them) will enable them to be victorious. (Lindsey 1985, 1564)

Zechariah 10:5

"And they will be like warriors, Trampling down the enemy in the mud of the streets in battle; And they will fight, because the LORD will be with them; And the riders on horses will be put to shame." (NASB 2020)

Here we have it again, when Jesus Christ returns, yes, He will be the turning point for the final battle of Armageddon, but He is also empowering His people to be mighty warriors and to move out as such fighting on His behalf.

Zechariah 10:6

"And I will strengthen the house of Judah, And I will save the house of Joseph, And I will bring them back, Because I have had compassion on them; And they will be as though I had not rejected them, For I am the LORD their God and I will answer them." (NASB 2020)

No more division when Christ returns, the nation will be one. The nation, including the northern kingdom, will be saved. When Christ returns and the remnant is renewed by Him and filled with the Holy Spirit, it will be as though they had never been rejected by the Lord in the first place. Zechariah provides a picture for us.

There is also a picture here of the Lord caring for His own now that they have returned from the exile. Yes, there are going to be some pitiful leaders. Some will even try to destroy the people, but here we see God strengthening Judah to deal with it.

The Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes required strength not only from the remnant of the southern kingdom who had returned from exile, but the remnant from the northern kingdom as well. Which we see referenced in verse 7.

At the end of the age, the picture will be much darker.

But the picture being given to us in verses 6 – 12 is all about what God will do in Israel when Messiah is on the throne and leading His people.

It all begins when the remnant asks for Messiah to save them.

Zechariah 13:9

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (NASB 2020)

When the remnant calls out to the Lord, it is as the armies of the Beast begin what they believe to be their final assault to destroy what is left of the Jews.

To assure success, the Lord will "be with them (cf. Ps. 110:2–3, 5–7)," will "strengthen" Judah to win, and will "save the house of Israel." In this sweep of things, He says, "I will bring them back," apparently to their land (cf. 8:7–8; Jer. 32–33; Ezek. 36; 37:1–14). So blessed will be their estate that in this great reversal in restoration "they will be as though I had not rejected them" (Zech. 10:6). All of this is traceable to the Lord's attitude as One faithful to His gracious covenant since Abram (Gen. 12:1–3). (Rosscup 2008, 1437)





#### Zechariah 10:7

“Ephraim will be like a warrior, And their heart will be joyful as if from wine; Indeed, their children will see it and be joyful, Their heart will rejoice in the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

We are witnessing the impact of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Messiah has returned. Everything promised in the scriptures is now visibly being fulfilled. The remnant is seeing it and experiencing it all firsthand.

All of Israel is to be regathered back into the land by Messiah, both the north and the south as one.

#### Zechariah 10:8–9

“I will whistle for them and gather them together, For I have redeemed them; And they will be as numerous as they were before. “When I scatter them among the peoples, They will remember Me in distant countries, And they with their children will live and come back.” (NASB 2020)

Earlier, the Lord told us how displeased He was with the leadership of His people who refused to lead. Shepherds who refused to take care of the sheep but instead took care of themselves.

The language here brings back that shepherd motif God is the shepherd.

He is the one whistling for them to come. The whistle was a sharp, clear signal shepherds would use in calling sheep. “Even though God’s people were scattered in distant places, they would return as He called (v. 9).” (Fries, Rummage and Gallaty 2015, 164)

What we are seeing is how God intends to regather and restore His people from wherever they are on the planet when Messiah returns at the end of the Tribulation. This is a yet future regathering, not from Babylon, but one which possibly began in 1948.

This means this is partially fulfilled, they are still in unbelief. When it is completed though, at the end of the Tribulation, they will all be in belief and redeemed.

God intends to bring His people back into one place again. He whistles for them to return in order to restore them.

Regathering, redemption, and repopulation are all promised here. Our position that the prophet is foretelling more than a return from Assyrian or Babylonian exile, is definitely confirmed by the declaration of verse 9. Zechariah predicts that the Lord will sow His people among the nations, and in those far-off lands they will remember the Lord. (Feinberg 1990, 323)

His people will return. In large numbers. As they return today, the major challenge for the nation has been housing.

#### Zechariah 10:10

“I will bring them back from the land of Egypt And gather them from Assyria; And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon Until no room can be found for them.” (NASB 2020)

They are not returning only from Egypt and Assyria, but from around the globe. The places that they are returning to include the east bank of the Jordan river, Gilead which was part of the Northern Kingdom, today it is in Jordan. They will also return to Lebanon. That is new, Israel never really took that area under control as they were supposed to. But in the future, Lebanon will also be where His people go. In the Kingdom under the rule of Messiah, His people will be blessed to the point that there will difficulty staying ahead of the housing needs for them. “God’s restoration and resettlement of the Hebrews will be



so complete that even the fringe areas of Israelite territory will teem with people.” (Patterson and Hill 2008, 580)

Zechariah 10:11–12

““And they will pass through the sea of distress And He will strike the waves in the sea, So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up; And the pride of Assyria will be brought down, And the scepter of Egypt will depart. “And I will strengthen them in the LORD, And in His name they will walk,” declares the LORD.” (NASB 2020)

This return is like a new exodus from Egypt. We are not talking about what is going on in this present day. This is a yet future event, most likely taking place after the return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. All barriers to return are removed. And the nations lose self-governance. Jesus takes over.

As the Kingdom is established, as we have already seen, His people are strengthened. They will be walking all over the earth in the service of the King. This is a prediction of the future dominion Israel will have the planet because of the rule of Jesus from Jerusalem.

The future looks incredible based on what we have seen here in chapter 9 and chapter 10. But there is a problem.

When Messiah comes the first time, He will be rejected by His own people.

Zechariah 11:1–3

“Open your doors, Lebanon, So that a fire may feed on your cedars. Wail, juniper, because the cedar has fallen, For the magnificent trees have been destroyed; Wail, oaks of Bashan, Because the impenetrable forest has come down. There is a sound of the shepherds’ wail, For their splendor is ruined; There is a sound of the young lions’ roar, For the pride of the Jordan is ruined.” (NASB 2020)

Part of telling God’s people of the glorious future they have in store also means being honest with them about their sin. He has already talked about a coming conqueror, Alexander the Great.

The remnant that returned is passing away and the next generation is taking over. Some of the same problems in the past are still hanging around and this new generation is beginning to repeat old mistakes. Time for some truth about the near future, and it will not be happy news either.

The phrases used here are descriptive of a future army moving through. That would be the Roman army as well as a future force under the command of the antichrist.

These verses portray “the impending devastation that will result from the people rejecting the Messiah as the True and Good Shepherd (vv. 4–14). The language obviously involves personification, but the references to the cedars of Lebanon ... oaks of Bashan, and lush thicket of the Jordan suggest devastation of the entire land of Israel from the north to the south, including of course its inhabitants.” (Lindsey 1985, 1564)

This destruction is to be taken as literal and points to the overall destruction brought by Rome as they would destroy Jerusalem. Rome would enter the land with the Fifth, Tenth, Twelfth and Fourteenth legions and a force of 80,000.

Most of the timber went to the siege wall built all the way around Jerusalem and the various siege engines built by Titus Vespasian.



In verse 1, using poetic language, Lebanon's cedars burn. The Talmud made reference of the second temple as being Lebanon due to so many cedars being used to build it. "Not only so, but Lebanon speaks of the Temple." (Neisner 2011, 242)

Yes, the Temple is going to burn, again. The oaks of Bashan wind up being used for the siege wall. The leaders of the people, the shepherds and the young lions, they took the sheep into disaster.

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