Zechariah 11:1-6

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 11:1–6***  
**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 YHWH my God: “Become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter. **5** Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be YHWH, I have become rich,’ and their own shepherds have no pity on them. **6** For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of this land, declares YHWH. 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.

Chapter 11 may be connected to the oracle of Chapter 10, or it may begin a new, but related oracle. Since Chapter 10 ended with the phrase, “declares YHWH”, it seems that there may be break of some sort between the two chapters.

Chapter 11 is a hard chapter to understand. There is a lot of symbolism in this poetic passage, and it is not always clear what the symbols actually represent, or sometimes even whether or not they are symbols.

1. Zech 11:1 starts out with a pronouncement of doom upon Lebanon and its cedars. Where is Lebanon? What were the two major cities of Lebanon often referred to in Scripture? What do you know of the spiritual beliefs of the people living there?
2. Why mention cedars? List other Scriptures that you can find which talk about cedars as well as Lebanon. What do you conclude from this?
3. In Zech 11:2 the cypress is told to “wail, for the cedar has fallen.” What does “the cedar” here refer to? See if you can find any Scriptures which talk about cypress trees together cedar trees. Where does it seem the cypresses are located?
4. Zech 11:2 talks about the “oaks of Bashan”. Where is Bashan? Who lived there? Can you guess how this place might have been viewed by the Hebrews? See Joshua 13:12, Deuteronomy 3:8-11, and Deuteronomy 3:13.
5. Look at Isaiah 2:11-17 where the “oaks of Bashan” and the “cedars of Lebanon” are also referred to together. In the context of this Isaiah passage, what do these trees that “shall be brought low” symbolically refer to”?
6. The oaks of Bashan are told to “wail, for the thick forest has been felled.” What does “the thick forest” refer to?
7. Zech 11:3 speaks of shepherds and lions. What are these both symbolic of? With this understanding, what do we now suppose the cedars, cypresses, and oaks as symbolic of?
8. Do you think these verses (Zech 11:1-3) are referring to those within Israel, or to foreigners? Why?
9. Who is God telling to become a shepherd in Zech 11:4?
10. Zech 11:5 speaks of **those who buy** the sheep and **those who sell** the sheep. Remember this all symbolic. Who are the sheep? Who are those who sell the sheep? Who are those who buy the sheep?
11. Notice that Zech 11:5 speaks of those that “slaughter them [the sheep] and go unpunished.” The Hebrew word “them” is actually feminine plural, so it refers to female sheep. What might you guess was the purpose of raising female sheep in contrast with the purpose of raising male sheep? What does this tell you about those that were slaughtering female sheep?
12. Zechariah says their own shepherds have become rich at the expense of their flock, and have no pity on them. Compare to Ezekiel 34:1-10. What were the shepherds doing wrong?
13. In Zechariah 11:4-6, what is God’s response to this situation? Why does he call them “a flock doomed to be slaughtered?”
14. This passage really speaks to God’s expectation of leaders. What does it say to us, personally?