Zechariah 11:7-17

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 11:7–17***  
**7** So 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. **8** In one month I destroyed the three shepherds. But I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. **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.” **10** And I took my staff Favor, and I broke it, annulling the covenant that I had made with all the peoples. **11** So it was annulled on that day, and the sheep traders, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of YHWH. **12** Then 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. **13** Then YHWH 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 YHWH, to the potter. **14** Then I broke my second staff Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

**15** Then YHWH said to me, “Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd. **16** For 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!”

1. Summarize the first part of the chapter, Zech 11:1-6.
2. In Zech 11:7, who becomes the shepherd?
3. The shepherd tends his sheep, kills three shepherds, and then becomes impatient and says he won’t be shepherd any more? Do you think he truly a shepherd watching real sheep, or is this passage just using wording which talks of people as sheep? In other words, do you think he is a ruler of people or is he a shepherd of real sheep? Why?
4. It is not uncommon for prophets to symbolically “act out” certain prophesies by doing things physically that have symbolic meaning. Can you think of some examples of this from other parts of Scripture?
5. In one month the shepherd “destroys” three other shepherds. Are these actual shepherds that Zechariah has destroyed as a symbolic act? Are these symbolic of kings or leaders that God has destroyed, or will destroy? Interestingly, the word which the ESV translates as “destroy” is Hebrew **kachad** which can mean “hide, get rid of, or destroy”. So this phrase could also be translated “I **got rid of** three shepherds in one month.” What do you think is the symbolism here? How should we interpret this?
6. Why did he get rid of the three shepherds? Note that the “but” in the ESV of Zech 11:8 is really the Hebrew **wa** connector which literally means “and”. What is the symbolism here?
7. In Zech 11:9, he says “I will not be your shepherd.” Who is he talking to here?
8. Explain what the shepherd does with his two staffs in Zech 11:4-13, and what this symbolized.
9. Zech 11:10 says he “annulled” the covenant. The Hebrew word is **parar.**  See if you can find the meaning of **parar**. How does this differ from the meaning of the English word “annul”? In most general terms, the covenant of YHWH with His people can be summarized by the phrase “You will be my people and I will be your God.” What does it mean that he will **parar** this covenant?
10. If we had only Zechariah 11 to read, we might conclude that God abandoned His people, and broke all his covenant promises with them. Did God break his promises to his people?
11. If Zechariah is the shepherd who is breaking his staff, how do we understand the last part of Zech 11:10? Who is breaking the covenant “I had made with all the peoples”? How are we to understand this?
12. In Zech 11:12 Zechariah stops his work as shepherd for the sheep traders, and they pay him 30 pieces of silver. What does that remind you of (Matt 26:14-16)? Also look at Exodus 21:32. What is the value of 30 pieces of silver?
13. What was done with the 30 pieces of silver? What is a potter? Look at Matt 27:3-10. What are some of the ways in which this Zechariah passage parallels or foreshadows the events of the Matthew passage?
14. It is interesting that Zech 11:12 says, sarcastically, that the 30 pieces of silver is “the lordly (glorious) price at which I was priced by them.” Zechariah is being paid a wage, yet he equates it as the amount that “he was priced at,” as if this was the value of him as a person. Why? Who is really being rejected as worthless?
15. What events are prophesied of symbolized by the breaking of each of the staffs, Favor and Union? As you answer remember that Zechariah takes place about 520 BC.
16. Read Ezekiel 37:15-28. How does this relate to the two broken staffs (Favor and Union) of Zechariah?
17. In Zech 11:15, he is told to once again be shepherd, but this time what kind of a shepherd is he to be?
18. What is the character of this second type of shepherd?
19. Contrast the bad shepherd with the qualities of the good shepherd. Consider both Ezek 34:1-24 and John 10:11-18.
20. If we see in the first shepherd a representation of YHWH and His Messiah, what might this second shepherd represent?
21. What is the prophetic destiny of this worthless shepherd, according to Zechariah? Why do you think he wounded in this way? Why wasn’t he killed?
22. This passage speaks to us about real events in the latter days, as well as God’s expectation of leaders. What does it say to you, personally?