

PROPHECY IN THE LATTER PROPHETS

The chronological order followed here is approximately that of Unger in his *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*.

Obadiah (ca. 840 BC)

Joel (ca. 800 BC)

Jonah (ca. 763 BC [or 800 BC])

Amos (ca. 760 BC)

Hosea (ca. 750-715 BC)

Micah (ca. 740-700 BC)

Isaiah (ca. 740-695 BC)

Nahum (ca. 660-650 BC)

Habakkuk (ca. 609-605 BC)

Zephaniah ca. 640-612 BC

Jeremiah (ca. 626-585 BC)

Ezekiel (ca. 593-571 BC)

Daniel (ca. 603-538 BC)

Haggai (ca. 520 BC)

Today: **Zechariah, cont'd.**

The Post-Exilic Prophets

- Haggai** Both Haggai and Zechariah have an immediate concern: the rebuilding of the temple
- Zechariah** rebuilding of the temple
- Malachi** Malachi has a spiritual concern: the rebuilding of the people

I. Zechariah 11.1-17

The chapter presents a dark picture of confusing and troubling images. One aspect of it clearly finds fulfilment in the Messiah's first coming. Other aspects are more obscure, but all represents God's displeasure with unbelieving Israel.

- A. The opening verses present a tale of woe for Israel (1-6)
 1. Identifying some terms
 - a. Lebanon, famous for cedars, much used in building the temple
 - b. Bashan, noted for its oaks, likewise a prized commodity in the temple
 2. The announcement of doom
 - a. Lebanon and Bashan (*i.e.* the temple) suffer fire and destruction (1-2)
 - b. The shepherds (leaders) wail, the lions (enemies) roar (3)
 3. The call to the shepherd (with low expectations) (4-6)
 - a. The flock is doomed to slaughter (4)

- b. The flock suffers devastation from its purchasers and its shepherds (5)
- c. The Lord declares he will no longer have pity on them (6)

The call seems directed to Zechariah, but he could be a stand-in for the Messiah as we will see in subsequent verses.

B. The good shepherd renounces the flock (7-11)

- 1. The shepherd (Messiah) takes up his service with two hopeful staves (7)
 - a. One is "Favor" (NAU, Beauty, KJV)
 - b. The other is "Union" (NAU, Bands, KJV)

These items of the Shepherd's equipment sound hopeful of God's blessing on the flock.

- 2. The actions against the shepherds and flock (8-9)
 - a. Three shepherds are "annihilated" (8)
 - 1) Their identity much debated
 - 2) Seem to represent the faithless existing leaders of Israel, whoever they are
 - b. The shepherds lose their influence, the good shepherd leaves the flock to its fate (9)

3. The staff of Favor broken (10-13)

- a. The broken staff represents a breach of the covenant with “all the peoples” (10)

“The covenant in view is none of the biblical covenants since God never breaks His promises. It must refer to the security that He had been providing and the restraint that He had been exercising in relation to Israel thus far.”¹

- b. The “afflicted” [remnant] see the broken staff and know it is the word of the Lord (11)
- c. The shepherd demands his wages, they pay him thirty pieces of silver (12)
- 1) Paying him off represents rejecting his services (Favor and Union)
 - 2) Thirty pieces of silver represents the price of a slave, not an insignificant amount, but less than the worth of the Shepherd
- d. The Lord tells him to cast the money to the potter, which the Shepherd does “in the house of the Lord” (13)
- 1) “Throwing something to the potter” seems to be a proverbial expression: potters were not wealthy men
 - 2) The significant part of the prophecy is the amount and the location: the courtyard of the temple
 - 3) Of course, this is exactly the amount and place where Judas casts the blood money, the price of his betrayal of the Good Shepherd (Mt 27.5-10)

¹ Constable, *Expository Notes*, zech 11.10.

4. The staff of Union broken (14)

- a. The breach of Union means the Jews would turn on one another
- b. History records that among the Jews, various quarrelling and disputing factions arose around AD 70, when the Romans besieged and took the city, destroying the temple

A tenuous interpretation

There are few allusions to these images in other passages, so we struggle to understand (the thirty pieces of silver is very clear).

- When Israel rejected and crucified the Messiah, God's protection of the people and their place in the land disappeared.
- Ultimately, their city and temple fell to destruction by the Romans, and the people scattered for centuries.

The picture seems to anticipate the desolation of land and nation after Messiah's first coming and the Jewish rejection.

C. Taking up the role of the foolish shepherd (15-17)

1. This is not the good shepherd, but the foolish one (15)
2. The image predicts the rise of a shepherd who will not care for the sheep but devour them: Feinberg, Baron, Pusey all think this refers to Antichrist
 - a. His character is foolish (15)
 - b. His work is destructive (16)
 - c. His punishment is sure (17)

Again, the references aren't clear, but the antichrist will make an arrangement with Israel that the nation will come to regret. He will betray them, but ultimately will suffer destruction.

II. Zechariah 12.1-14 “In That Day”

- A. The prophet sees the city of Jerusalem besieged, but also the Lord’s strong protection: this is the battle of Armageddon (1-9)
1. The Lord will make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all peoples (2)
 - a. This is the final siege at Armageddon
 - b. The nations will rise, confident to destroy, but the image of the cup speaks of bewilderment and confusion
 - c. One should not confuse this event with AD 70, because the Lord didn’t deliver Judah in AD 70
 2. The Lord gives another image: Jerusalem will be a burdensome stone (3)
 - a. The attempt to overthrow it will only bring injury
 - b. All the nations will nonetheless gather against it
 3. The Lord will rise to protect Judah and Jerusalem (4-5)
 - a. The Lord’s intervention bewilders the nations
 - b. The Lord preserves Judah during his intervention (as Israel was under his protection during the plagues of Exodus)
 - c. The people of Judah recognize the miraculous intervention of God (5)
 4. The Lord’s protection extends beyond the walls of Jerusalem to the clans of Judah, protecting the nation, the city, and David, making the feeblest as brave and effective as David of old (6-8)
 5. The Lord seeks to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem (9)
- B. The Lord’s intervention brings about a heart change among the people of Judah (10-14)
1. The Lord will pour on the house of David the Spirit of grace and supplication (10)
 - a. They will turn to see the one who intervenes to protect them

- b. When they see “Me whom they have pierced” they will mourn for their previous rejection
 - c. Dr. Custer notes that amillennialists want to confuse this event with Pentecost, but there was no deep mourning after Pentecost
2. Looking on “Me whom they have pierced” refers directly to the crucifixion of Messiah

Rev 1.7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

3. The response of Judah is deep mourning (11-14)
- a. They will mourn as if for the death of an only son
 - b. They will mourn as individuals and in all their family groups
 - c. Their mourning presupposes true repentance and conversion (prophesied in Rm 11.25-29)

Rm 11.25-29 ¶ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”²⁷ “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of *God’s* choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.