

ZECHARIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Zechariah chapter 9 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In this portion of Zechariah, from chapters 9 through 14, we will see that it is packed with prophecy and it speaks of not only the First Coming of Jesus Christ but also His Second Coming and the focus will be the destruction of the Gentile nations and the restoration of Israel.

As you will see as we move into the last 6 chapters of this book they are broken down into two messages which open up with the phrase, “**The burden of the word of the LORD . . .**” And we will see this in chapter 9 this evening and again in chapter 12 next week as we finish up this book.

Also, keep in mind that Zechariah was a post exilic prophet who came on the scene to encourage the people, to give them a future and a hope in the Lord even though things may not look good at this point. You see, the name Zechariah means, “***YAHWEH remembers***” and that was an encouragement to the people, that God would fulfill the promises He made to His people.

We are also told that he is the son of Berechiah, and his name means, “***YAHWEH will bless.***”

Not only that but we are told that Berechiah is the son of Iddo, and his name means, “***At the appointed time.***”

Now think about this for a minute. The people are discouraged and the Lord sends Zechariah to them to encourage them, to get them back on track. And thus, “***YAHWEH remembers and YAHWEH will bless at the appointed time!***” God is calling for them not to give up and the encouragement is seen here, God is with them and He will bless them, hang in there and see what God is going to do in His time! And that is what we will see this evening in our study of Zechariah.

Also keep in mind that many feel that these last two messages given to Zechariah occurred much latter in his life, towards the end of his ministry after the Temple was rebuilt. They place the date somewhere between 480 B. C. and 470 B. C. while the prior messages were around 520 B. C. to 518 B. C.

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Zechariah chapter 9 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ZECHARIAH 9

VERSES 1-4

1. Notice again how this opens up, “**The burden of the word of the LORD . . .**” This is speaking of the judgment of God and He used Alexander the Great as His instrument of judgment against these nations.

We are also told in verse 1 of Zechariah chapter 9 that, “**. . . the eyes of men And all the tribes of Israel Are on the LORD.**” I think the idea here is that God is not only watching over His people, the Jews, but all of mankind. The Amplified Bible makes this point much clearer as it says, “**. . . for the Lord has an eye upon mankind as upon all the tribes of Israel.**”

And as we can see, God is speaking of His judgment upon those nations that are surrounding Jerusalem. And thus, we see the partial fulfillment of this prophecy when Alexander the Great came through Syria, capturing this nation in 337 B. C. But, as we have said so often, the complete fulfillment of God's judgment upon the nations that surround Israel will be seen when the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom to rule and reign on this earth.

2. Not only did Alexander the Great conquer Syria, with its capital being Damascus, but also Phoenicia, the areas of Tyre and Sidon. Now Tyre was a very prosperous sea faring city, they had much wealth and were secure. The Assyrians laid siege against Tyre for five years, but never conquered the city.

That was until the Babylonians came on the scene and laid siege upon Tyre for 13 years. Then, when they finally broke through the walls of the city, the city of Tyre had moved to an island about ½ mile off shore. Just as God said in Ezekiel 26:7-11 we see has come to pass. The Babylonians came into this ghost town and received nothing, no spoil for their work.

Then came Alexander the Great who built a causeway out to the island using the rubble and ruins from the old city of Tyre that was on the mainland.

And thus, his soldiers walked out to the island, as well as attacking in ships, taking the city just as Ezekiel 26:12-21 says. In fact, Ezekiel 26:5, 14 says, **“It shall be a place for spreading nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,’ says the Lord GOD; ‘it shall become plunder for the nations.’ . . . ‘I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,’ says the Lord GOD.”** And that is all it is today, just as God said!

VERSES 5-8

1. Here we see the Lord speak of the destruction of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod. These cities were located south of Tyre and Sidon and they were the next ones that Alexander the Great conquered and he did this in 332 to 331 B. C. Boice summarizes it like this, that this passage “accurately foretells the conquest of the eastern Mediterranean coastlands by Greek armies under the command of Alexander the Great.”

This is obviously a partial fulfillment of what God is saying for in the Kingdom Age, after the seven-year Tribulation Period and the destruction of the wicked, we will see that the Gentile nations turn to the Lord! Obviously not every Gentile because many will fight against the Lord, they will refuse to come to Him, but there will be Jew and Gentile in the Kingdom Age!

2. Now in verse 8 we see God encouraging His people that He is watching over them, caring for them, protecting them. And you may be thinking, “How in the world did that work out since Alexander the Great was conquering all the nations around Jerusalem?”

Interestingly enough, as Alexander the Great was conquering the world, when he came to Jerusalem he was met by priests and people, including the high priest. And the high priest showed him the scroll of Daniel and how God spoke of him and what he was to do.

And Alexander the Great was so impressed, he was so moved by this that he worshiped the true and living God. The Lord protected His people and He will continue to do so! And obviously the complete fulfillment is seen in the Kingdom Age, when we will see the enemies of the Jews never invade the city again.

3. Now let me share with you what Josephus wrote regarding this period of time, the events we have been talking about. In Antiquities of the Jews we are told,

Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifice to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest should appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced, and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.

And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. It reached to a place called Sapha, which name, translated into Greek, signifies a prospect, for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the temple. And when the Phoenicians and the Chaldeans that followed him thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, having the golden plate

whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest. The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about; whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, "I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is that, having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the Divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind." And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city. And when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended. And as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present; but the next day he called them to him, and bid them ask what favors they pleased of him; whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired. And when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon

and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired. And when he said to the multitude, that if any of them would enlist themselves in his army, on this condition, that they should continue under the laws of their forefathers, and live according to them, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars.

- Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.8.4-5

God not only worked with the High Priest but also in Alexander the Great and God did protect His people just like we are told here in Zechariah!

VERSE 9

1. This is an interesting contrast. We have been talking about this man named Alexander the Great and he rode a white stallion not a donkey, no victor, no King would ride in on a donkey and yet we see that this Messiah-King is doing exactly that!

Now we may also be thinking, “Why place this prophetic word about the Lord’s coming here? It just doesn’t seem to fit. It seems out of place.”

The reason is simple. It is because it is speaking of another deliverance that is coming and this deliverance is coming by the hand of the Lord Himself as He was coming and has come to deliver us from our sins!

This is obviously speaking of His First Coming, and as he rode in on this donkey it symbolized Him coming in peace, to bring to us the forgiveness of sins. When He comes again He will be riding a white horse which speaks of Him coming in victory, victorious over our enemies! He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world and He is coming again as the Lion from the tribe of Judah to restore this world to the way God intended it to be.

Now in Matthew chapter 21 we see the triumphal entry of Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem as Messiah the King and we read in Matthew 21:9, **“Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Hosanna in the highest!’”**

They were crying out, ***“Save now! Save now!”*** They were quoting from Psalm 118, a Messianic Psalm. They were looking for outward salvation in His First Coming, freedom from Rome, and the Lord came to give inward salvation, a cleansing from sin! This was not a political salvation but an eternal one and they missed it!

And please understand that the exact day that Daniel said the Messiah would come as King, He did! It was 173,880 days from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, which was March 14, 445 B. C., until He came, which was April 6, 32 A. D., we call it Palm Sunday!

Now in saying that, don’t forget that He is coming again to bring peace to this world, to pour out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world and set up His Kingdom where He will rule and reign for 1,000 years as righteousness fills this land.

But that day has not yet come and yet, listen to what He tells us next.

VERSE 10

1. As we have seen, verse 9 dealt with the First Coming of Jesus Christ and now, here in verse 10 we move to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The first time He brought that inward peace through the forgiveness of our sins. The second time He comes He will bring that external peace to the land as He sets up His Kingdom on this earth. It is a peace to all nations as the knowledge of the Lord fills the land!

Remember what Isaiah 2:4 says, **“He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”** We long for that day when there will be no more wars and righteousness will fill this land!

2. Also notice that it speaks of Ephraim or the Northern Kingdom of Israel who went into captivity by the hands of the Assyrians. And then it speaks of Jerusalem or the Southern Kingdom of Judah who went into captivity by the hands of the Babylonians.

But now we see that their implements of war will not be needed because the Prince of Peace is ruling and as we saw in Isaiah 2:4, there will be war no more! And it is not just for the Jewish people, but also for the Gentiles as we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ, **“... shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from River to the ends of the earth.’”**

VERSES 11-17

1. Here in verse 11 it speaks of this **“blood of your covenant”** and it is this that will set them free. In saying that I don’t believe this is speaking of the Mosaic covenant which was based upon man’s faithfulness. There is no salvation in the things that we do, our good works. Our salvation is only based upon God’s faithfulness and the good work He completed on the cross of Calvary, paying in full the penalty for our sins. That is how we are set free!

Thus, I believe this is speaking of the Abrahamic covenant spoken of in Genesis 15:18-21. This was a unilateral covenant that was based upon God's faithfulness. And thus, God will deliver His people!

2. There is this call to return to the stronghold and I believe that stronghold is the Lord. He is the One who will deliver them and thus, these prisoners of hope are the Jews who are resting in their Messiah!

Another point to take note on is that God will restore not only the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but also the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And in the Kingdom Age God's blessings upon them will far outshine anything they have ever seen! They will not be a divided Kingdom but one nation with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Throne in Jerusalem. And yes, the Jews today are a united kingdom but Jesus is not ruling, not yet!

3. Another point we need to bring out is that these verses are dealing with this raising up of God's people against Greece in verse 13. This is probably referring to the uprising of the Maccabees against Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who slaughtered a pig on the altar and set up an image in the Temple demanding to be worshiped as god.

And the Maccabees revolted and cleansed the Temple. And in the long run, this is a foreshadowing of what the Antichrist will do and how God will give them victory over him and bring them into the Kingdom Age.

4. And as you can see in verses 14 through 17 of Zechariah chapter 9, this is a picture of God's coming judgment against a Christ rejecting world, a world that will be anti-Semitic. And the picture of a roaring thunderstorm coming across the land is a picture of this judgment.

It is as Matthew 24:27, 30 says, **“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be . . . Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”**

God will restore the nation of Israel; they will be like Jewels in His crown. Goodness towards His people is so rich, so deep, so great that His people will reflect that in the Kingdom age. And keep in mind that the **“grain”** and **“new wine”** are pictures of prosperity and blessing!

ZECHARIAH 10

VERSE 1

1. I wonder how often we miss out on the blessings of God because we don't ask! Jesus tells us in Luke 11:9-13, **“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”** God wants to bless us just as He wanted to bless the children of Israel and all He wants us to do is **“Ask the LORD for . . .”**

2. He we see that God wants to bless them with rain that will cause the land to flourish, but they must come to Him and ask. It is as Deuteronomy 11:13-17 says, **“And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.’ Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the LORD’S anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.”**

Regarding this rain in Israel that was needed for the crops to grow, one writer put it like this,

In Israel, there were historically two rainy seasons. The first was from October through December and was called the former rain. The latter rains fell in April and May. These rainy seasons caused Israel to be a land of lush vegetation. After the Jews were dispersed by the Romans in A. D. 70, the Turks gained control of the region and began to tax the people there according to the number of trees on their property.

It didn't take people long to figure out that it was in their best interests to chop their trees down. As a result, the ecology changed. The soil eroded. There was no more evaporation. The latter rains stopped altogether and the former rains were so drastically diminished that the land became arid and dry. That is why, when they became a nation again, the first project of the Israeli government was reforestation. They still plant millions of trees every year. The ecology is beginning to change and the latter rains have returned.

- Jon Courson, Jon Couron's Application
Commentary Old Testament Volume 2,
pp. 902-903

3. We can also apply this to our spiritual lives as we can see that there are times when we are spiritually dry and God wants us to ask to have Him pour out those refreshing rains upon our life, His Spirit, and make our lives fruitful again.

It is as Isaiah 32:12-15 says, **“People shall mourn upon their breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. On the land of my people will come up thorns and briers, yes, on all the happy homes in the joyous city; Because the palaces will be forsaken, the bustling city will be deserted. The forts and towers will become lairs forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks - Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.”** I believe that is also what Jesus is speaking of in Luke chapter 11, those verses we read a few minutes ago, those refreshing waters of God's Spirit in our lives - just ask!

VERSES 2-5

1. I see a two-fold problem here. First of all the people were involved with idolatry, they had these small idols in their homes that they worshiped. Then there were the fortune tellers or those who predicted the future. And in all of this we see how empty it really is. These things they are worshiping can't give them what they need and those who predict what the future holds are wrong. So they are left with no comfort no hope!

How did this happen? It was because there were no shepherds in Israel. Or I should say that the shepherds of Israel were leading the people away from God, they were supporting these abominations. A true shepherd is to represent the people before God and God before the people and they were not doing that and thus, the people were going after these other things and the false shepherds saw nothing wrong with it, they encouraged it!

And because people have turned from the true and living God, they are now wandering aimlessly through life, without direction, without hope, without comfort! Paul makes that point in Ephesians 2:1-3 when he says, **“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”**

You see, Christ brings stability to our lives, He brings direction to our lives. Outside of Christ we meander through life with no stability, no direction, being blown by the winds of false doctrine! But that is not what God desires for you!

2. Now as much as we may look at these people and see how simplistic they were; we are no different. We have not learned the lesson. Listen to how Paul warned a young pastor named Timothy in II Timothy 4:1-5, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

I am sorry to say but we are seeing an increase in false shepherds today and Paul warned us that in the last day’s people will not want to hear the truth and thus, they will find teachers who will teach them fairy tales and in the end, they will be lost!

I look at the church today and I see so much false teaching going on and endorsed by solid Christians. We see Christians getting into the environmental movement and trying to save mother earth! We see yoga, TM, New Age teachings, Eastern mysticism being promoted in the church. We see all kinds of wild predictions of what is going on in the world that are contrary to the Word of God. We see immorality accepted as normal in the church, even homosexuality and abortion! We see this union with the Roman Catholic Church and its teachings with the Protestant Church and other false religions.

God will deal with these false shepherds in Zechariah chapter 11 and He has a woe for them and that is not a good thing. But when you negate the Word of God, then you come to your own conclusion on what you want to believe. Sorry, God’s Word is not negotiable!

3. Now in contrast to these false shepherds we see starting in verse 3 that God is going to fight for His people, He will deliver them from the false shepherds, the foreign overlords who sought to destroy them!

And look at verse 4 again, where it says, “**from him comes . . .**” and I believe that this is speaking of “**The house of Judah**” as verse 3 says. Thus, from the tribe of Judah will come “**the cornerstone,**” which is a reference to Christ.

Isaiah 28:16 says, “**Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’**”

And in the New Testament we read, “**Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’**” I Peter 2:6. *HE IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR FAITH!*

The second point is that from Judah will come a, “**tent peg,**” which is another reference to Christ. In Isaiah 22:22-23 we are told, “**The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open. I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father’s house.’**” *HE IS OUR SECURITY IN WHICH WE CAN CAST ALL OUR CARES UPON HIM FOR HE CARES FOR US!*

The third point is that from Judah will come **“the battle bow,”** and again it speaks of Christ. In Isaiah 63:2-4 we read, **“Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.”** *HE IS OUR VICTORY!*

And lastly, from Judah **“every ruler”** shall proceed from Him, which speaks of His rule and reign, that Israel’s victory is in Christ as the Jewish and Gentile nations come to Jesus. It is as Micah 5:2 says, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”** *HE IS THE RULER OF THE KINGDOM THAT IS TO COME!*

Jesus is the foundation of our faith. He is our security. In Him we find our victory. And He is the One who will rule and reign from the throne in Jerusalem and both Jews and Gentiles will worship before Him. That day is coming!

VERSES 6-8

1. Once again we see the Lord speaking of the restoration of both the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. God is in the business of restoration! And their rejoicing, their joy is based upon the cleansing of their sin, God’s great mercy upon their lives.

And we talked about the false shepherds and how they were worthless but here the picture is of the true Shepherd, the Messiah, Jesus Christ and we see that this Shepherd is whistling for his sheep, and as they hear his call, they come to his side. That is what God is going to do with the nation of Israel, and they too will come to Him! The sheep hear their Master's voice!

VERSES 9-12

1. Again I see this as a future time of restoration, speaking of the Kingdom Age when God brings back His people into the land. From all over the world Jews will come and return to Israel. In fact, the numbers will be so great that the land will overflow with people!

And in the Kingdom Age the times of Gentile persecution upon the Jews that we see continuing on today and will reach its climax during the Tribulation Period, will be done away with. You see, there is coming a day when the Lord will step in and put down this Gentile oppression against His people and they will live in peace. But, again, that day is future, it is speaking of the Kingdom Age.

2. And listen again to how this chapter closes out, in verse 12 we are told, **“So I will strengthen them in the Lord, And they shall walk up and down in His name,’ Says the Lord.”**

What God has promised to Israel He has also promised us in the New Testament. Listen to how Paul put it in Ephesians 6:10, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”**

We are not to be weak or fearful but we are to be strong, not in our strength but in the Lord. May we not forget that and may we go forth in the power of God's Spirit serving Him!

ZECHARIAH 11

VERSES 1-3

1. This seems to be speaking of the destruction of Israel, from north to south. It began in Lebanon to the north with cedars that were burning and then going down to Bashan, the area of the Golan Heights and on into the Jordan valley, this fire is going to rage on and destroy all that is in its path!

What is this all about? It seems to be speaking of the devastation and destruction brought on by the Roman's in 70 A. D., and as Josephus tells us that around 1½ million Jews were killed during this time.

Think about this for a minute. Jesus warned them that this was going to happen and within forty years of their rejection of the Messiah, of Jesus the Romans marched down and destroyed Jerusalem!

Boice picks up on this as he wrote, "These verses might have described the Babylonian invasion if they had been written earlier; but that was past history by Zechariah's time. There is nothing in the history of the people that a comprehensive destruction of the land can refer to prior to the terrible destruction ordered by Vespasian and his successor Titus."

I think that is what Zechariah is speaking of here, this Roman invasion upon Jerusalem for their rejection of their Messiah, of Jesus! And it was the false shepherds, the Jewish religious leaders who were leading the people away from the One the prophets spoke of, Jesus!

VERSES 4-7

1. The false shepherds were preparing their flock, the Jews, for slaughter. All the injustices that were going on during the time of Christ's First Coming, the false worship of God, and yet judgment was at the door, only less than 40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In John 11:47-50 we are told **“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’”**

The Jewish leaders sold their nation for their own prosperity! And in the end they lost everything! And things were so bad in the nation, the hypocrisy so rampant, that Jesus said in Matthew 15:14 **“Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”**

And because they had no mercy upon the people, God was not going to show them mercy any longer. Judgment is coming and what they have sown, they will reap!

2. Now in verse 7 we see that God is going to bring this judgment upon His people because they rejected Him and remained in their sins! And He speaks of two staffs here that were used to care for the sheep, the one called *Beauty* which refers to the blessings, the grace that God has bestowed upon His people. The other was called *Bonds* or *Unity* which speaks of God's desire to unite Israel and Judah into one nation. This is what God wanted for His people but they rejected it, at least for now. But one day they will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior for that is where unity is found, in Jesus!

3. God does the same with us today. He uses two staffs to watch over us and protect us. God uses Beauty or Blessings that He will pour out upon our lives. He uses Bonds or Unity as He desires us to be one body in Christ and not fighting over non-essential issues.

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 4:1-6, where we read **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”**

VERSES 8-11

1. These three false shepherds that the Lord cut off may be speaking of the primary offices known to Israel; the prophets, the priests and the King! That is the way that Boice sees it as he wrote, “The best explanation is probably the oldest, which sees the three shepherds not as three individuals but as three classes of individuals, namely: the prophets, priests, and kings of Israel.”

And the idea here is that when Jesus came the first time He fulfilled all three of these offices, but He was rejected by His people, the Jews. And thus, as Jerusalem fell in 70 A. D., all three of these offices were abolished, but Jesus is still our Prophet, Priest and King! And in the Kingdom Age, the Jews will receive Jesus in this manner.

2. Now in verse 9 we read these words, “**I will not feed you.**” That is not something you want to hear from the Lord. But since they rejected the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, the True Shepherd was no longer going to feed them.

Not only that but He tells them, “**Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other’s flesh.**” If God was no longer going to feed them and protect them then they will die! And in 70 A. D., as the Romans laid siege upon Jerusalem, starvation got so bad that the Jews resorted to cannibalism just to survive! That is what God said and that is exactly what happened!

3. Now why did God break this covenant with them, cut the staff called *Beauty* in half? Because they broke the covenant that God had made with them, they rejected the Messiah who came to set them free because He did not fit into their plans, their ideas. And because of that God’s protection would be removed from them.

4. Now as bad as things were, and they were bad, God always has His faithful remnant and we see that here, the “**poor of the flock**” and they understood what was going on. They listened and obeyed the prophets of God. They received Jesus as their Messiah.

But, for the nation as a whole, Jesus said to them, “... ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, “Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!” Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?’” Luke 23:28-31. During the Roman siege things will be so bad that people will wish they were dead or have never been born! Judgment was coming!

VERSES 12-14

1. Zechariah was acting this out before the people and he was representing the Messiah. And he asked the leaders what they would pay him for his services, what he was worth. And they offered him 30 pieces of silver, the price paid for a slave that was gored by an ox - Exodus 21:32. In other words, nothing really. He is not that important, not that worthy. They saw the Lord of heaven and earth as worthless, as well as many do today!
2. Now this should be familiar to us because it is what Judas betrayed Jesus for. In Matthew 27:9-10 we are told, “Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.’”

Notice that it speaks of Jeremiah in Matthew and not Zechariah, why? Is this an error? Some think so, but I don't. You see, the Jewish division of the Old Testament was broken down into three sections - the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets. In the rabbinical order of the prophetic books, Jeremiah was always listed first. For that reason, the entire prophetic category was sometimes referred to as Jeremiah, just as the entire section of the Writings was sometimes referred to as the Psalms, its opening book. Spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was therefore the equivalent of saying, "recorded in the prophetic books." I believe that is the correct way to understand this and it does make sense. And as we have seen, Judas betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver, and later takes the money and throws it at the feet of the religious leaders, and they purchase a potter's field with it.

3. Now in verse 14 we see Zechariah break the second staff called **Bonds** in half. And the idea here is that the discord within the nation helped lead to its destruction in 70 A. D. by the Romans. They were dispersed throughout the world!

VERSES 15-17

1. Once again we see Zechariah acting this out and now he is going to play the part of the foolish shepherd, the worthless shepherd. And we are told that the foolish shepherd will devour his sheep, he will destroy them because he doesn't care for them. In Ezekiel chapter 34 we see the same idea regarding false shepherds who are only interested in themselves. And thus, the Lord says, "**Woe to the worthless shepherd.**"

Beginning in verse 1 of Ezekiel 34 we read **“And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.’”** Ezekiel 34:1-6.

And God will judge them for their actions, or non-actions towards His people.

And that is what we see here with these false shepherds, God will judge them!

2. Now as we bring this study to a close this evening, there is one more point I would like to make regarding the ultimate false shepherd, the Antichrist, also called the man of sin, the son of perdition, the beast, and-so-on. I think that is what this text is speaking of ultimately even though there are many false shepherds out there, he is the ultimate false shepherd!

The Antichrist, this man of sin will rise up as a man of peace at the start of the Tribulation Period and will be the leader of the one world government. But, at one point in his ministry, probably around the 3½ year mark of the 7-year Tribulation Period, an assassination attempt will be made upon his life. He will be mortally wounded, his arm and right eye are destroyed, and he will be as dead. I don't really believe that he is, but the world will think that he is.

In Revelation 13:1-6 we read of this man, **“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.”**

I believe, after 3 days in this so-called lifeless condition, he is resurrected, in a sense, and the world will be drawn to him, they will worship him as god. How can this happen? How can people fall for this? Paul, in II Thessalonians 2:9-12 said, **“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”**

If you reject the love of God that is found in Jesus Christ, you will believe the lies of the devil! Thus, draw close to God and He will draw close to you! Receive Him and He will give you His truth and there will be no room for lies. But understand that there are many false prophets, false shepherds out there that are leading people down the wrong road. Seek after the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for in Him is true *LIFE!*