

ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

XIX: God's Sending The Antichrist For Rejecting Christ

(Zechariah 11:15-17)

I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. Zechariah chapters 9-14 present two "burdens" or oracles, with Zechariah 9-11 predicting Messiah's first advent and rejection by Israel and Zechariah 12-14 foretelling His second advent and acceptance by Israel.
- C. Zechariah 11:15-17 predicts God's sending of the antichrist to punish Israel (and the world) for having rejected the true Messiah, so we study this passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. God's Sending The Antichrist For Rejecting Christ, Zechariah 11:15-17.

- A. Just as the prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 11:7 had taken unto himself the tools of a shepherd to typify Christ's initial effort to shepherd Israel, God directed His prophet Zechariah once again to take up tools of a shepherd, but this time, a "foolish" shepherd, the Hebrew term being '*ewil* that implies "a person who is a coarse, hardened fool." (Zechariah 11:15; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1566)
- B. This "foolish" shepherd will be raised up by God Himself, the pronoun "I" being emphatic (*'anoki*) to emphasize God's work to judge Israel for her rejection of Christ, the true Messiah Who was predicted back in Zechariah 11:1-14. (Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 968; Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 203)
- C. The participle "raise up" in Zechariah 11:16 is used in the causative Hebrew stem, suggesting "the outworking of concurring circumstances under the divine government, as a result of which certain events are brought about by responsible human agency," Ibid., Unger. In other words, God will oversee events to allow them to promote the rise of the antichrist without His actually performing the sinful work of elevating the man of sin.
- D. The "land" in verse 16 is Israel, but this "does not rule out the foolish shepherd's sway far beyond this limited sphere," that sphere we know from Revelation 13:1-18 to be the whole world! This sphere is fitting, for the whole world will then have rejected Christ in the former dispensation of the Church! (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)
- E. The antichrist's shepherding is described in Zechariah 11:16, and it greatly contrasts with Christ's ministry:
 1. First, unlike Christ, the antichrist will greatly neglect the needs of the flock, Zechariah 11:16b,c,d,e:
 - a. He will not look after those who are perishing or being destroyed by their (figurative) isolation from the flock, by the cold, by wild animals, etc., Zechariah 11:16b; Ibid.
 - b. The antichrist will not (figuratively) seek the young that stray from the flock to their harm, v. 16c; Ibid.
 - c. The antichrist will not (figuratively) heal the helpless sheep with broken bones when they especially need the shepherd's help to set and to bind up their injured body members, Zechariah 11:16d; Ibid.
 - d. The antichrist will not even (figuratively) support or nourish (*yekalkel*, Ibid.) the well and strong sheep, the ones that stand firm with no apparent illness or injury, Zechariah 11:16e; Ibid.
 2. Second, unlike Christ, the antichrist will criminally attack and harm the flock, Zechariah 11:16f,g:
 - a. In aggressive wickedness, the antichrist will act like a wolf from which a shepherd is to guard the sheep, for he himself will (figuratively) devour the meat of the fat sheep, Zechariah 11:16f; Ibid.
 - b. In violent viciousness, the antichrist will (figuratively) "tear off [the very] hoofs of the poor sheep in avaricious search for the last edible morsel," Zechariah 11:16g. (Ibid., p. 203-204)
- F. Accordingly, God pronounced a "Woe!" of judgment against the antichrist (Zechariah 11:17a, and called for a sword against the antichrist's (figurative) "right arm" and (figurative) "right eye," Ibid.; Zechariah 11:17b.
- G. The right arm signifies one's strength and the right eye one's intelligence, so the "foolish plottings of the worthless shepherd will be annulled when the True Shepherd returns (cf. 12:10; Rev. 19:19-20)" in the Second Coming of Christ; Ibid., Bible Know. Com. O. T.

Lesson: God will cause the antichrist to come to power to punish Israel's (and by then, the world's) rejection of Jesus Christ, God's True Shepherd and Messiah for the world. The antichrist will do the opposite of Christ's earthly ministry of grace and truth when he not only neglects the needs of people, but voraciously, cruelly attacks them so that God will punish him severely at the Second Coming of Christ, the True Shepherd and Messiah.

Application: (1) If we have not done so, may we trust in Christ as our Savior from sin to be taken to heaven in the pretribulation rapture and avoid the antichrist's reign. (2) As believers who are in leadership over God's people, may we follow Christ's lead not neglecting the spiritual needs of God's people, but graciously ministering to them.