Kings and Prophets 17-11-24

This is Friday, the 24th of November, 2017. We continue our study of Kings and Prophets. We're in the book of Zechariah, just one more prophet to go after Zach, and that'll be Mal, Malachi.

Thank you. We're resuming tonight in chapter 11. This is an interesting chapter.

If you have any interest at all in the Lord Jesus, you're going to be intrigued by this chapter. Let's take a moment to focus our attention, dedicate our time and our fellowship to the glory of the Lord Jesus, and then we'll begin.

Father, what an adventure it is to live this life sustained by Your grace, indwelt by Your Spirit, motivated by Your Son, the Lord Jesus, and called to a heavenly calling to an eternity in Your presence.

We thank You for all of the opportunities that we have day by day to learn and prepare ourselves for that coming future. We thank You for Your forgiveness and Your patience with us as we endeavor to improve and to avail ourselves of all of the wonderful things that are ours in the Lord Jesus. And we pray that, as we study this part of Your Word tonight, that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our souls, that it will benefit us both in our inlook and our outlook as we seek first and foremost to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus and be pleasing in Your sight. We pray these things in His name, amen.

Let's take a look at this chapter. I want to just read it, and as we read, you're going to recognize some things. We saw in the last couple of chapters—we looked at chapters 9 and 10 last time—and you remember there were some pretty familiar things, such as chapter 9, verse 9: “Rejoice, O daughter of Zion, your King is coming to you lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt.”

And this rings a bell with most of us, right? And then moves directly to what we know will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. It does not separate or distinguish the first and second comings of the Lord Jesus. He came the first time riding on the donkey on the triumphal entry, or the procession down to the temple, and it says He will speak peace to the nations, His dominion will be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

And so the rejection of the King and the intervening time that we occupy is not in view. It's the two hills as you see them at some distance, and you don't see the valley in between.

Then in chapter 10, you look at verse 1: “Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds. He will give them showers of rain, grass in the fields for everyone.”

Well, the former and the latter rain prophetically speak of the first and second advent. And here, for those observing carefully, there is something of a distinction, because the first coming was foreshadowed by the spring feasts in the feast schedule of Israel. Remember, there was Passover on the 14th, followed by—giving you a chance to fill in the blanks before I do—what comes right immediately after Passover? Unleavened bread, which begins with—what the eight days of unleavened bread begin with? It's a compound word, both of them start with an F. Firstfruits, very good.

A little pop quiz here. Pentecost, 14th Nisan, right? Then first day of the week, feast of Firstfruits. What was the designation of the day on which the Lord Jesus arose from the dead? The firstfruits of them that sleep. Feast of Firstfruits.

Go forward, your seven weeks plus one, 50 days, Pentecost, right? And that's where the first advent prophetic overview ends. What kind of rain would be falling in the spring? The former rain.

Then you have the fall feasts, which all foreshadow the second coming of the Lord Jesus. So what's the first one? Rosh Hashanah, also known as the Feast of Ram's Horns, trumpets, right? Ten days after that you have what? Ten days after that, most important feast in the entire calendar, high priest is gonna tremblingly head behind the veil and splash some blood in the Holy of Holies. What's it called? The Day of Atonement, the Day of Atonement, atonement.

Did you know that the word “atone” was literally manufactured from those two words: at-one, at-one-ment, atonement? To atone, to draw together God and man in behind the veil, which eventually was rent in twain, right? By the way, how do they know that the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom? Somebody had to look, right? Somebody had to see it. We'll know more about that shortly.

So then, four days after that, what comes? Branches, booths, boughs. You make a bower of boughs and dwell, remembering back to the time of tabernacling, the Feast of Tabernacles, right? Or booths.

And all of these, this is what's going to happen when the Lord Jesus comes back. He is going to redeem Israel. The day is coming when those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake. Remember that at the end of Daniel? Jesus said the time is coming when they will hear the voice of the Son of Man, and as many as hear shall live. That's Israel's judgment.

We will have been judged seven years prior at the judgment seat of Christ. Then Christ rise first, alive and remain, caught up together ever with the Lord. Then comes the judgment seat. The wedding supper follows after the tribulation, because who gets invited to the wedding supper of the groom and his bride? The wise virgins that oil in their lamp. The foolish ones are outside, darkness which is outside, weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, etc.

All right? Quick review here. So, as we see in chapter 10, ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. So, it's looking forward to the ultimate fulfillment of many things that could have been fulfilled at the first advent, were not, because He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to be called sons of God.

Ask for rain in the time of the latter rain. Remember how Daniel prepared himself in prayer, asking God, petitioning God, confessing the sins of the nation and his own sins, and asking God. Daniel was looking all the way forward to the time of the latter rain. He had visionary evidence. I'm sure he didn't understand everything that he saw, but he knew that God would ultimately fulfill His promises and that that latter rain would fall.

And toward the end of that chapter, God says, “I will bring them back from the land of Egypt,” verse 10, “gather them from Assyria, bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon until there's no more room for them. They'll pass through the sea and strike the waves. The depths of the river will dry up. Pride of Assyria will be brought down. Scepter of Egypt will depart.” Verse 12: “I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in His name,” says the Lord.

That's all in the time of the latter rain. This is the Millennial Kingdom. Now chapter 11.

Follow along with me if you like, and see how many things you can identify as significant that we're going to try to talk about here in about the next 20 to 25 minutes.

“Open your doors, O Lebanon, that fire may devour your cedars. Wail, O Cyprus, for the cedar has fallen, because the mighty trees are ruined. Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has come down. There is the sound of wailing shepherds, for their glory is in ruins. There is the sound of roaring lions, for the pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

“Thus says the Lord my God, ‘Feed the flock for slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt. Those who sell them say, “Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich,” and their shepherds do not pity them. For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land,’ says the Lord, ‘but indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land. I will not deliver them from their hand.’

“So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: one I called Beauty, the other I called Bonds. And I fed the flock. I dismissed three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul loathed me right back.

“I said, ‘I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh.’ And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. It was broken on that day. The poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord.

“Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages, and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. I'm guessing this is probably about the first thing that you latch on to as identifiably and recognizably prophetic in the life of the Lord later on. It was for me.

“So, thirty pieces of silver. The Lord said, ‘Throw it to the potter, that princely price they set on me.’ So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.

“Then I cut my other staff, Bonds, in two, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And the Lord said to me, ‘Next take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

“‘Woe to that worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword will be against his arm and against his right eye. His arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded.’”

Okay, are we ready for chapter 12 now? Or should we spend a little time figuring out what all of that means? I was going to try to do, you know, two chapters out of whack, and I thought, well, 11 is going to pretty well occupy all of my hamster's energy as he runs in the wheel.

So let's go back here and take this a chunk at a time and see if we can discern what is being said. Because if you're like me, the initial run-through is pretty cryptic. I get that there's foolish shepherds and bad shepherds and they are abusing the flock, and that's a bad thing. But why is Zechariah told to feed these sheep that are going to be slaughtered? And why has he got these two sticks, and why does he break them? And there's the price and the potter, and what is all of that?

We know that this is vaguely anticipating the Lord Jesus because we know about the 30 pieces and the potter, right? And that's our clue, that's our key in this day and time for the entire thing. We know that this is anticipating the Lord Jesus Christ and His first coming, right? Thirty pieces of silver, that tells us where we are.

So, open your doors, O Lebanon. What's Lebanon most famous for in terms of the ancient world? Cedars. They've still got it on their flag. Cedars.

What were the doors of the temple made of? Cedars of Lebanon. In fact, most of the wood in the temple itself was cedar from Lebanon. So, what made of cedar of Lebanon has doors? The temple.

So, when it says, “Open your doors, O Lebanon, that fire may devour your cedars,” what are we beginning to realize this is talking about? Destruction of the temple. Now, what is going on—this is one of the benefits of our whole Kings and Prophets study—what is going on at the time that Zechariah is delivering this prophecy? Haggai and Zechariah are firing the people up, if I can use that word, to build the temple. And here's Zechariah saying, “Open your doors so that you can be burned down.” Well, this is ominous, right?

“Open your doors, O Lebanon, that fire may devour you. Wail, O Cyprus, for the cedar has fallen. Because the mighty trees are ruined, wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the thick forest has come down.”

Now, how many different kinds of wood are in this couple of verses? We got cedar, we've got cypress, or fir, some people think it is, and we've got oak, right? Three different kinds of wood. Let me just say, three different kinds of wood.

What kind of wood characterizes the temple? Cedar. So the cypress and the oak would tie into something else. So just sticky that thought, because further down in the chapter we've got something else that comes in three.

“There is a sound of roaring lions, for the pride of the Jordan is in ruins. Thus says the Lord my God, feed the flock for slaughter, whose owners slaughter them and feel no guilt, who sell them and say, ‘Bless the Lord, I am rich,’ and their shepherds do not pity them.”

So this flock—and you could say “of slaughter” would actually make it a little bit clearer in English—he's not saying, feed them so that they can be slaughtered. This is not the prepositional use of the word for: feed them for slaughter. This is, feed the flock. Feed the flock that is destined for slaughter. This flock is not going to survive, but God says, feed them.

Even though they're going to be slaughtered, feed them. Feed the flock destined for slaughter, or feed the flock of slaughter. And there are three things that happen to this flock.

Number one, the owners slaughter them without shame, without guilt. They are slaughtered by their owners, and the owners have no compunctions about it at all. That's first of all.

They sell them, is the second thing. Some of them are slaughtered. They may be slaughtered and sold, or they may be sold for somebody else to slaughter, but they are sold, and money is returned for them, and they say, “Praise God, I'm rich.” Okay, so they're doing this in the name of the Lord, and they're giving credit to God for their getting rich at the expense of the flock.

And thirdly, they're shepherds. Now notice that there are owners and shepherds. The owners do two things: they slaughter them and they sell them. And then there are shepherds who do not pity them, do not care for them. So there are three crimes perpetrated against the sheep of the flock.

God says, feed them. He doesn't say steal them away from these bad owners. He doesn't say, you know, stop the transactions where they're being sold. He says, you feed them. You help them. You do what a good shepherd is supposed to do for these sheep. You feed the flock.

But God says, “I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land, but indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king. They shall attack the land, and I will not deliver them from their hand.”

Now, since we've already read this, and you know what's coming, and our time is limited, I'm just going to give you the interpretation as we go. You remember how Jesus would tell a parable, and the disciples would come back later and say, “Lord, what was going on in that parable?” And He would say, well, this is this and that is that. The seed is the word, the soil is the heart, you know, the birds is Satan taking away the word, etc., right?

So we're going to do that. So let me begin by saying that Zechariah here is fulfilling the function of the Lord Jesus, and the flock is currently in the hands of merciless owners and pitiless shepherds. These fall into three categories, and if you look further down at verse 8, “I dismissed three shepherds in one month.”

The three shepherds represent three kinds of oversight for the flock. Think about your New Testament times. Some people have said, well, this is the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, or this is the scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests, and the Herodians, or, you know, trying to find three things like that.

But there is a key that we already were given in Zechariah earlier on. There are three types of oversight for Israel. What three hats, if I can remind you of some hat wearing earlier in Zechariah, what three kinds of hats, or what three functions, is the Lord Jesus ultimately going to fulfill for Israel? Moses said, “There is coming after me another what? Like unto me.” Starts with P and ends with offit. There is coming after me another prophet, right?

The Lord Jesus is prophet. What else is He after the order of Melchizedek? Priest. And what else is He? Because He is the son of David. So those three would be—say it out loud—prophet, priest, and king.

Think about the nation of Israel. There are three kinds of leadership. Prophet is spiritual teaching leadership. This is feeding the souls of the individuals, right? Priest is the ritual worship, the mediation between God and man, the administration of sacrifices, and the formal worship, right? King is civil leadership.

Now the temple had been knocked down, and they'd never really gotten a legitimate priesthood. By the time of the Lord Jesus, you remember, you had the Maccabees, and you had Antiochus Epiphanes, and all the rest of it. So there were still the 24 courses of Levites serving in the temple, but remember Caiaphas, the high priest, and that whole thing was kind of corrupt. But that's the priesthood.

Who is fulfilling the prophetic role, the teaching role, the forth-telling of the Word of God in Jesus' day? That's your scribes and Pharisees. Scribes, students of the law; Pharisees, the arbiters of the law; Sadducees, an alternate view on some of that, right?

And who is fulfilling the civil leadership role? There is no king in Israel, right? Because the Davidic tent has fallen, and it's the opportunity for the Lord Jesus for that fallen tent to be raised. That's a prophetic deal elsewhere, right? So who's fulfilling that role?

Well, it's split. It has devolved in the local arena back to the elders. Remember this chief priests and elders of the people? So local government is back on the elders in terms of civil government, adjudication, and so on. And there's some commingling, you know, there's scribes and guys dabbling in that, Pharisees, but it's primarily the elders of the people.

And then who is formally providing civil government in the time of Christ? The Romans. So, three types of shepherding going on.

And in terms of Israel itself, you've got the priests under the behest of the chief priest, you've got the prophets, or the prophetic function in the scribes and Pharisees. Remember Jesus said to Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, "Are you a teacher in Israel and you don't know these things about being born again?" and so on, in John 3. And then you've got the civil side, adjudication of cases. Somebody's ox gets out and injures someone. If there's a land dispute, give me my brother's farm, or whatever it might be. That's your elders. All right, three kinds.

Now, let's go back to the beginning here. How many kinds of wood, how many kinds of trees did we see at the beginning? Three kinds. So, the cedars represent—stick with me now—the temple. Who functions in the temple? The priests. So, the other two kinds of wood would line up with the prophets and the elders. Your spiritual leadership, your civil leadership, and then you've got that priestly reconciliation and mediation function going, right?

So, the forest is going to get burned up, meaning all three of those are going to be taken out of the way. Where is God's people, nation of Israel, for the last 2,000 years? Scattered among the nations. No formal priesthood, no formal prophetic teaching function. You've got rabbis and midrash and all of that, but that's a bonfire waiting to happen. And same thing with the civil government. It's Mazel Tov and Laila Tov and that's about it. There's not an entity that could have a government.

Now, some of that is starting to rebuild. They're thinking about rebuilding the temple. They can figure out where and how. They've got the priestly garments. They've got the land back. They've got some preparations underway for those things to be restored.

But it all caught fire, and you can see the footnote in your New King James in verse 3. The pride of the Jordan, or the floodplain, the thicket, the whole forest in the Jordan plain has gone up in smoke. And that's the destruction of the nation of Israel in all three of its emphases, all three of its structural. You take these woods and you build with them. Those are your building wood, right?

So now Zechariah, beginning in verse 4, is going to symbolize and anticipate Jesus. So what did the Lord Jesus do? He came and taught. He ministered. He bound up wounds. He healed. And primarily, who was it that listened to Him? If you take a look at verse 7, "I fed the flock of slaughter," or the flock destined for slaughter. In particular, who? The poor.

Keep your place here and turn over to Mark 12:37. And I would suggest, if you don't already have a good cross-reference Bible, you should write that in the margin next to verse 7. When they were trying to confound the Lord, trying to ask Him questions that He couldn't answer, remember that? And so then He says, "Let me ask you a question."

And so in Mark chapter 12, David is called His son. "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at Your right hand." And so if he's calling his son his Lord, how can that be? Remember that? Well, what does it say at the end of the verse? The crowd heard Him gladly. The leaders were ticked off because they couldn't answer Him, and He embarrassed them. But the crowd heard Him gladly. This is the hoi polloi. These are the poor of the land. The crowd listened to Him with delight.

And He says, "Beware the scribes who want to go around in long robes and greetings in the marketplace, the front seat in the synagogue, devouring widows' houses," and so on. And He goes on in that chapter to talk about the widow's mites. This woman has given more than all the people dropping big money bags in, right?

So the Lord Jesus ministered to the poor. He has compassion on them and feeds them. He sits them down in companies of 50, and He feeds the 5,000, and then later He feeds the 4,000. And He looks on them with compassion, and He says, "Look, they're like sheep without a what?" Shepherd.

Here are the people in the land, and they've got the high priest and the priesthood functioning in a standing temple in Jerusalem. They've got the scribes and the Pharisees and the elders of the people. And Jesus says, “These people are sheep without a shepherd,” right?

So He pronounces woe on these owners, slaughtering the people and feeling no guilt. And you remember the woes that He describes and prescribes for the Pharisees because of their insensitivity and their callousness and their exploitation of the people? “Blessed be the Lord because I am rich.”

And then, strangely, in verse 6, the Lord says, “I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord, “but I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king.” Now what? I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king.

Who's the king at the time Zechariah is giving out this prophecy? Think carefully now. They've come back because who let them return? Darius, Darius the Mede. But Darius never perpetrated any harm on these people. He's the guy that let them come back and gave them some autonomy and some independence, made provision for them to build their temple, right?

So who's the king? Who's the Israelite king at this point? Hasn't been a king since Zedekiah, right? So what is he talking about? “I'll give them into the hand of their king.” Keep your finger there and turn over to John chapter 19, verse 15. This will suddenly become quite evident.

John 19:15. This is during trial of the Lord Jesus. Pilate is appealing to the people. So he says to the Jews, “Behold your king,” but they cried out, “Away with Him, crucify Him.” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” What did they say? “We have no king but Caesar.”

So way back in Zechariah, prophetically the Lord says, “I will turn these people who are destined for slaughter.” Now we begin to realize why they are destined for slaughter. If they could have responded to the ministry foreshadowed by Zechariah and followed Him instead of following the bad shepherds, but they didn't. That's why they're destined for slaughter.

It's a little cryptic, but it certainly unfolds in retrospect, doesn't it? They were destined for slaughter, and He says, “I will turn them over to everyone, to his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They will attack the land, and I will not deliver them.” And what happened in 70 AD? The Romans come in, legions of Titus, I think Vespasian sent him in, and they are utterly sacked and destroyed, never to be rebuilt. Certainly the temple, and even the temple mount, there's not even the dirt there to build the temple on.

So Zechariah in verse 7 says, “I fed them, especially the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs, the one I called Beauty or graciousness.” This word means pleasant, delightful, lovely, pleasantness. It's sometimes translated grace. This is a staff. Remember when Jesus said, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, because My yoke is easy, My burden is light. Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” It's a staff, but it's a gracious staff.

There's some who think—this is extra-biblical information—but they used to have a special staff that they would dip in a crimson dye, a vermilion dye, a red dye. And as the sheep would come in, every tenth sheep they would poke with this staff, and that was the tithe. Every tenth sheep was marked as belonging to the Lord, and that red spot meant that one is the Lord's.

It wasn't a blue spot, wasn't a green spot, wasn't a black spot, it was a red spot. This is the one for the Lord. This belongs to the Lord. And that became the basis for that industry that we reviewed a few Christmases ago down around—remember the sheep tower and the place where the flocks prepared for sacrifice were, and that those were the Bethlehem shepherds. You remember that wonderful study we did?

Well, this is part of that whole ethos, is this marking of the tenth that would be separated out, and the best of those sheep would then become a part of that flock that supplied the sacrificial animals during the times of feast.

So I fed the flock, and I had these two staffs. One is called Beauty and the other is called Bonds. This also means measured portion. It means something that is bound, kind of like a requirement. It's almost like meros, your part or portion. And in the Bible, oftentimes the measuring line, stretching the measuring line, is to establish what portion belongs to someone. And all of these ideas are sort of bound up together.

So this staff, it means union, it means that part or that piece that is unto itself. But it also occasionally has the implication of sorrow or pangs, oddly enough. It depends on context, and you know many of these Hebrew words are polyvalent. But there is Beauty and then there is Bonds. We'll just call them Beauty and Bonds, since that's how they're translated here.

And so I fed the flock. "I dismissed three shepherds in one month. Three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them and their soul abhorred me." If you look at Luke chapter 13, verse 33, as I said, these things so clearly foreshadow the first coming of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 13, verse 33. Look at verse 31. "That very day some Pharisees came to Him, saying, 'Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.' He said to them, 'Go tell that fox, behold I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.'"

Turn over then to Luke 21, verse 5. That's the government part, wanting to kill the Lord Jesus. Now look at 21 and verse 5. The temple adorned with stones, the day will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.

And when you look at verse 9 of Zechariah 11, He says, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." This is the destruction of the temple. It is the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. It is God withdrawing His protection from the people.

So when He took His staff Beauty in verse 10 and cut it in two to break the covenant made with all the peoples, this is all the peoples of the land. This is not the Abrahamic covenant. Abraham will be a blessing to all nations. That covenant has never been broken. It is still being fulfilled.

This is God's covenant with the people of the land. All of those who would come and join themselves to Israel. God is breaking that covenant. This means no more Davidic throne, no more land promise. "You will dwell in the land." All of that is broken.

That's why there has been no Israel. There has been no son. Remember God said, "You will not lack a man to sit on the throne." And yet there's been 2,000 years with no son of David sitting on the throne. The temple of God and the priesthood has not been functioning in Jerusalem. And there has been no prophet to Israel since the Lord Jesus Himself.

John the Baptist was the last great Old Testament prophet, and the Lord Jesus was the great prophet, capital P. And remember, there's a sort of a subversive chiasm there because when the Antichrist comes, he is also going to have a false prophet with him. You know, there's two beasts. There's the beast Antichrist. There's the false prophet beast that gives glory to the first beast and talks him up and coaxes everybody into worshipping him and taking his mark and all of that. But there's that false duo.

Elijah will come, and it's going to fool a lot of people in Israel who aren't seeking the Lord. Who does figure these things out? Look at verse 11. He says, in verse 10, "I took Beauty and cut it in two to break that covenant made with all the people. It was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock who were watching me knew that it was the word of the Lord."

The poor of the flock that were watching, paying attention, he that hath an ear, let him hear. If you have eyes to see and ears to hear and your heart has not become calloused, you get this. It makes sense to you and you say, "Aha." And there were those poor of the flock that were fed and figured this out.

Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages, if not refrain." So they weighed out for my wages 30 pieces of silver. You don't have to turn to it, but if you go over to Matthew 26, verses 3 through 5, you might want to write that down next to this, because right down to the very action.

By the time of the Lord Jesus, what kind of money is being used in the Roman Empire? You know, in the Old Testament it was shekels and this was money by weight. It could come in different pieces and you would measure it by weight, right? But by the time of Christ, how do they exchange money? Remember Jesus said—they said, you know, "Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?" What did He ask for? He said, "Show me a..."

Remember, they came to Jesus and said, “Should we pay tribute to Caesar?” What did He say? “Show me a coin. Whose face is on it?” They said, “Well, it's Caesar's face.” “Render unto Caesar things that are Caesar's, render to God the things that are God's,” right?

So what are they using for money in Jesus' day? When they had to pay the temple tax, Jesus—Peter comes and says, “Lord, we've got to pay the tax.” He says, “Peter, go catch a fish, pull it out of the sea. When he opened up its mouth, what was inside?” Not a shekel, it was a coin. And He said, “Take that and go pay the tax.” Coins.

So when Judas betrays the Lord Jesus, we talk about 30 pieces of silver, what could he easily have gotten? What could the Bible account easily say? They gave him, you know, drachma, or they gave him denarii, they gave him 30 denarii, or minas, or something, right? Could have done it that way.

But what does Matthew 27—I'm sorry, 26, 3 through 5—say? “The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people.” Oh, what? Matthew 26:3, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people. The scribes are the Pharisees and the Sadducees, right? So how many shepherds? Three. How many kinds of wood? Three. How many kinds of leadership in Israel? Three. Who did Judas go to and get paid by? Three.

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people. They assembled at the palace of the high priest called Caiaphas, plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

Go down to verse 14. One of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priest and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they measured out to him—this literally says in Greek—they weighed out to him 30 pieces of silver. It doesn't say they paid him 30 denarii or 30 drachma. They weighed out to him. And it's the Greek equivalent of what it says here in Zechariah. They weighed out for my wages 30 of silver. Thirty pieces of silver weighed out, measured out. There is a direct link verbally to this.

By the way, most people—I say most—there are quite a number of people who think that Matthew may have originally existed as an Aramaic original, since it's sort of the gospel for the Jews and it was later translated into Greek. It would be really fascinating if they ever dig up that, if there is such a thing and they dig it up, to see if the verb is exactly the same.

So quickly now, the Lord said, “Throw it to the potter, that princely price they set on me.” Now, why 30 pieces of silver? Keep your finger here and turn back to Exodus 21. This is laws concerning servants, concerning violence. It says animal control laws here in my Bible.

Look at verse 28, Exodus 21:28. “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten. The owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox had a habit of doing this and his owner knew it and didn't keep him confined, then the ox and his owner shall be put to death. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. If it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment, it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master 30 shekels of silver.”

Thirty pieces of silver here for a servant. So the implication here is the servant is either disabled or dead. The servant can no longer serve. Probably killed. And so the price of a servant is 30 pieces of silver. That's the redemption money.

If you look at Leviticus chapter 27, we have laws concerning a vow. When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the Lord, people could just dedicate somebody to the Lord. Remember Hannah dedicated her son to the Lord? Well, if somebody had wanted to redeem young Samuel back from the fulfillment of that vow, somebody had said Hannah was in the grip of elevated elation and thanksgiving and we don't really want Samuel, we need him back at the farm. We're going to redeem him back. This is how you would redeem a person that had been dedicated to the Lord, either yourself or somebody else. A son or a daughter or a servant or whatever.

So it says, if your valuation is a male from 20 years old up to 60 years old, the valuation shall be 50 shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary. That's what somebody is worth to be redeemed. So if the Lord Jesus got His proper price, He would have been betrayed for 50 shekels and not 30. Thirty is the price of a dead slave, not a healthy man.

And by the way, I'm just going to throw this in gratis for anyone who is tempted to be drawn into the direction of equality for all and women's liberty and all the rest of it. Keep reading. If it is a female, your valuation shall be 30 shekels. A male from 20 to 60, 50 shekels. Female, 30 shekels. Well, that's not very egalitarian. That's not very equal.

If from 5 years old up to 20 years old, your valuation for a male shall be 20 shekels and for a female, 10 shekels. A little kid is only worth half as much if she's a girl than if she's a son. Month old to 5 years old, your valuation for a male will be 5 shekels. For a female, valuation shall be 3 shekels, not worth as much.

And if you're old, I'm about to cross this threshold, if from 60 years old and above and it's a male, your value goes down from 50 shekels to 15 shekels. I am not looking forward to my next birthday. I'm going to lose 35 shekels worth of value in a day. And for a female, she goes down from 20 shekels to 10 shekels. Loses half her value on her 60th birthday.

Now, why is this? Is God really saying women aren't worth as much as men? This is the kind of thing that your skeptic Bible people come to and raise all kinds of cane about. Read the context. This is a person that has been dedicated to the service of the Lord. They're not a Levite. They're not a priest. They can't function within the temple environs, but there's lots of other things they can do.

There's a whole culture, there's a whole society around temple function that involves a lot more than just the priests and Levites. And you could dedicate someone to the Lord who was not a Levite. He could serve the Levites. He could be a manservant or a maidservant. He could be a young lad who fixes broken sandals or carries out the trash or helps in cultivating the garden. No end of things where they could serve and be adjuncts, be associated with the work of the Lord without being formally in the temple environs.

Why are the males from 20 to 60 given the highest value? They can do the most work. They can carry the heaviest burdens. They can lead the biggest oxen. These things have got to be corralled and stabled and fed, and feed has to be taken. They've got to be managed in all kinds of ways. There's construction that can go on. Maybe you're building a house for the Levites and the little guy can be carrying pegs while the bigger guys are constructing and all that.

Well, women could not contribute as much by way of work. And so their value is less because this is the nature of the work in that culture and in that time that they could do. Now in our modern day, we've got computers and women can oftentimes do a better job than men. And this valuation would not apply. But in an agricultural society, brawn counts in the same way that they were valued as men of war. And you count the men of war when you're taking a census because these are guys that can actually go out there and lift all of that heavy stuff and swing it and wreak havoc with it.

So it isn't personal value. And notice there's no distinction here made between freemen and slaves. It's simply age-related. And they needed some sort of guideline.

And by the way, if you keep reading, if it's an animal, verse 9, they can bring as an offering to the Lord, anyone who gives it shall be holy. You don't substitute or exchange it, even an unclean animal, verse 11. You don't offer it as a sacrifice, but you can present the animal. This could be a donkey that a priest is going to ride or use for some purpose. It could be attached to a thing and grind some grain or whatever. They have all kinds of needs. Pull a cart and so on. And you could dedicate things for use.

And then they could be redeemed at their value plus 20%, if you read this on down. You must add one-fifth of the valuation. If you dedicate it for a time and then you buy it back, you would add a fifth. When a man dedicates his house, verse 14, maybe you're going to give it as a place for the man of God or something, dedicated to the service of the Lord. If you want to take that house back because your son got married and you want to give it to him for a present, you add a fifth of the valuation, you buy it back, and now it's again. Part of a field in verse 16 and so on.

So this is functional use. Functional value, not intrinsic value. But people that are wanting to cast dispersions aren't going to take the time to inform themselves and understand what's really being talked about.

Suffice it to say that the value for an ox-gored slave was 30 pieces of silver, and it's the only thing that is valued at 30. None of those in Leviticus 27 come out to 30. The Lord Jesus could have been 50 at the age between 20 and 60, but it's 30. So He's valued at the value of an ox-gored slave.

So when Zechariah says, “The Lord said, throw it to the potter, that princely price they set on me.” This princely, it doesn't have any relation to the Hebrew word for prince. It means, literally, it means something sort of wide. But what it actually means, it's only used one other place in the Old Testament and it's over in Micah. And in Micah, you know what it's translated? Robe. “Throw it to the potter, that robe price they set on me.”

What Judas got for the Lord Jesus here is called the robe price. How many robes are associated with the Lord Jesus in His crucifixion? Careful now, Bible trivia. How many robes are spoken of in connection with the crucifixion?

What did the Roman soldiers do to Jesus when they were beating Him? They found an old purple robe, gave Him a crown of thorns. Then they took that robe off and put His own clothes back on Him. Then when He's on the cross, what are they gambling for down below? They portioned out His garments, but His robe, they did not part. Remember, it was woven of a piece.

Here in Zechariah, in connection with the betrayal and the thirty pieces of silver, you've got the word that means robe. His robe was worth more than He was at that point.

I took the thirty pieces of silver, threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter. You remember Matthew 27:7, where Judas goes back and throws the money back in, and so they buy a field with it. They call it Akeldama, a field of blood. You also have this in Acts 1:17-19, a field of blood. It's blood money. They didn't want to use betrayal money because they're so sanctimonious and holy. Here they've purchased the death of a man, breaking every concept of the law, but they don't want to use the money for an unholy purpose.

Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Now Israel's already long gone in Zechariah's day. They've been gone since the Assyrians took the ten northern tribes out. That's 200 years in the past.

So how is God breaking the bond between Judah and Israel? Who were all of God's original promises made to when He was talking to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? It's a unified Israel. Who is David's throne going to reign over? All Israel, right?

So if you break the bond, not between the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom, but you break the bond between Judah, which is what is left, and Israel, the Israel of God, what does it mean? I'm still going to honor My promises to Israel, but Judah, I no longer consider you part of that covenant Israel. Breaking the staff breaks the bond.

That's why there can be no Israel, no man on the throne, no fulfillment of the land promises and everything else, because this flock destined for slaughter didn't recognize the shepherd, didn't follow the shepherd, crucified the shepherd, loathed Him, and God says, “No more grace for you, no more care and feeding, and no more connection between you and the Israel that is going to inherit all of the promises.” They're snapped off.

Remember Paul talking in Romans about the branches that were broken off because of faithlessness? This is that staff being snapped.

The Lord said, “Take yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand.”

How should Israel in the tribulation, when the age of Israel resumes, how will they know that the Antichrist is not the actual Messiah? How should they know? They better come and read this passage and look for where is his charity? How come he's not doing what Jesus did? Is he ministering to the poor? Do the poor celebrate him and are glad? Is there a blind man in John 9 saying, “All I know is once I was blind, now I see”?

The false shepherd will not care for those who are cut off. He will not seek the young and he will not heal those that are broken and will not feed those that still stand. He will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. That's what the Antichrist is going to do.

And when they see the abomination of desolation, they had better flee to the hills. If they don't pay attention, they're going to be fooled again. They missed the real Messiah and they'll fall for the false Messiah, that tribulation of generation.

“Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock. A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye.” The arm and the eye, what do these stand for? What is the arm? “I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will hold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” The arm of the Lord is strong for salvation. This is strength and power, right?

So what's going to happen to the false shepherd? Whether he is the prophets, priests, and kings category in Jesus' day, the scribes and Pharisees, the priests and the civil government, they are going to be broken. What's ultimately going to happen to the Antichrist? His power is going to be cut off. It's a little thing called the battle of Armageddon.

And his eye will be totally blinded, his right eye, his best strength and his best perception. Remember how Ahithophel went in and frustrated the counsel that was being given to Absalom during the time that David was gone, and Absalom couldn't see what was happening and he ultimately was dethroned? Absalom is a picture of the Antichrist, you know this, right? David is driven out and Absalom takes his throne and cares nothing for the poor, sets himself up with the concubines and all the rest of it. It's a foreshadowing of the Antichrist.

Same thing here, but he's going to be blind and that's how he's going to be overthrown. Satan himself, driving the Antichrist, can't see what's going to happen. That's why the Bible doesn't record what the thunders say. Remember, there's actually four sequences in Revelation. You've got the seals, the trumpets and the bowls, and what else? Thunders. But God tells John through the angel, don't write down what the thunders said.

And Satan's right eye and his little false messiah and false prophet, that unholy trinity, they're going to have their arm and their eye ruined in that day. Then God is going to fulfill, and that's what's coming up in chapter 12 that we saw in 9 and 10. These millennial fulfillments, the second coming of the Lord Jesus is going to heal all of that out.

But there's no greater picture foreshadowing the coming of the Lord Jesus in His first advent than Zechariah chapter 11. He is all through it. It's like a movie.

Now what do we take away from all of this? Does God know the end from the beginning? Does He know what's going to happen before it happens? Could the gospel writers have somehow faked all of these details and written them up after the fact trying to match these prophecies?

I will tell you this: try to go read Midrash and Talmud on the prophets and what the Jews actually think a lot of these prophecies represent, and you will see that for somebody to try to go back and decrypt these and then put it into a story, saying, “Well, this is what happened to Jesus in order that it might be fulfilled,” they are too—they're inside a Chinese puzzle box, and those guys didn't have the keys.

Only the actual life of the living Lord could fulfill these the way they are fulfilled. These were locked, they were hidden, they were inscrutable, and it isn't until we come along with the hindsight and the unfolding in the ministry of the Holy Spirit to look back and see not only what the gospels overtly identify as, “Thus it was done that it might be fulfilled, it was spoken by the prophet.”

And by the way, some of this is attributed—the 30 pieces of silver in the gospels is attributed to Jeremiah. And they say, “Oh, it's a mistake, it's in Zechariah and he says Jeremiah.” It's not a problem. You have to remember that it's like volumes of an encyclopedia, and you've heard me say before, you know, there are labels on the spine that cover everything.

Well, you say, bring me Jeremiah. Jeremiah is the first book in the scroll that includes the minor prophets that end with Zechariah and Malachi. And so when he says the prophet Jeremiah, he's saying it's in Jeremiah's scroll. That's where you're going to find Zechariah, is in Jeremiah's scroll, because all of those exilic and post-exilic prophets were cataloged together. It's not a problem at all.

So here's the bottom line: the Scriptures that have already proven out prophecy that is fulfilled, anticipating the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, documented—it's so interesting. Josephus, by the way, records that—Josephus,

there are people that say a lot of his stuff is fantastical or made up or whatever, but let me just tell you one final thing.

You remember how this chapter began. What was the first thing that happened? You remember, with three kinds of wood. Well, how does it begin? “Open your doors, O Lebanon.”

Josephus, who was no fan of the Lord Jesus and doesn't say hardly anything about Him at all, but in a completely unrelated section, if you read Wars and Antiquities of the Jews in Josephus, he records a very odd thing. Forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, which Josephus witnessed, 40 years prior to that he records a rabbi named Yohanan who says that 40 years prior there was an odd happening where the doors of the temple mysteriously swung themselves open.

The doors of the temple, 40 years before 70 AD, mysteriously swung open. Now what happened 40 years before 70 AD? What would the year be? Circa 30 AD. What happened circa 30 AD? What happened to the veil in the temple? Torn in half. What happened to the doors in the temple? According to Josephus, they inexplicably swung open. What does Zechariah 11:1 say? “Open your doors in preparation for your destruction,” because the Lord Jesus on the cross is the final straw that seals the fate of that temple and all of the people living in that day.

So is the Bible trustworthy? Does it contain the truth of God and divine revelation? It absolutely does. And the same God that looks out for the poor and preserves them and makes promises to the remnant that will come through for Israel makes those same promises to us. And that same Lord Jesus that came the first time is coming back for us, and He will ultimately return for the redeemed of Israel and fulfill all these promises.

But look at the book of Zechariah in its context. The people have come back from captivity. They're back in the land. And here is one of the last prophets to talk to them until John the Baptist. And what is he telling them? You need to start watching for Messiah. You need to start watching for that good shepherd. Don't miss Him.

How's Malachi going to close? Elijah the prophet's going to come and he's going to turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the sons to the fathers, otherwise I will smite the land with a curse. It's the last verse in Malachi. We'll see it here in a few weeks. Watch for Elijah, John the Baptist. Pay attention to who he identifies.

If you don't want to be the sheep for slaughter, then you need to let the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world take your place. Those people didn't accept Him as their Messiah. He was not their Lamb, and they became the lambs for slaughter. They became those whose shepherds were destroyed and they themselves were destroyed.

So it's a wonderful anticipation, and it is a reminder to us of how important it is for us to know the Word of God, to live in its light, and to be motivated by the hope that is put before us and the future that is so vividly portrayed for us. Because our last heartbeat and our last breath is going to be immediately followed by our reunion with the Lord Jesus in the air, and that is immediately followed by the judgment seat.

Are we going to be ready? Are we those who by faith and patience inherit the promises, or are we those who are going to be in the darkness which is outside? The Word of God is magnified above God's own name, and it is certain. It is verified in the past, it is true in the present, and everything it says is happening in the future is going to come to pass.

Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for this wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus in His first coming and the assurance that it gives to us that no word of Yours falls to the ground. You orchestrate the events of history. You are fair. You grant to us the opportunity to see these things, to view the Lord Jesus in His atoning work, and to make our decisions about Him.

And we thank You for the grace that has been given to us in Him so that we can be on the positive side of Your justice and Your judgment. We can be those who do inherit, who live to see that wonderful eternal future that is promised to us, and to walk in white with the Lord Jesus and be a part of that coming administration.

We pray that as we review these things in our hearts and souls, that God the Holy Spirit will help us to see their pertinence and application in our daily lives, that we can fulfill our responsibilities, exploit our potential, and

avail ourselves of each and every opportunity to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.