

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Zechariah  
Message 26  
Israel Rejects Her Messiah  
November 3, 2013*



The Arrest of Christ by Dieric Bouts Cir 1485

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

# Pentwater Bible Church

**The Book of Zechariah**  
**Message Twenty-Six**  
**Israel Rejects Her Messiah So The Land is Destroyed**

November 3, 2013

Daniel E. Woodhead



Painting by Sharlene Lindskog-Osorio

BECAUSE ISRAEL REJECTS HER MESSIAH, THE LAND IS DESTROYED

Zechariah 11:1-9

*<sup>1</sup> Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. <sup>2</sup>Wail, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are destroyed: wail, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down. <sup>3</sup>A voice of the wailing of the shepherds! for their glory is destroyed: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of the Jordan is laid waste <sup>4</sup>Thus said Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of slaughter; <sup>5</sup>whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not. <sup>6</sup>For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah; but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. <sup>7</sup>So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. <sup>8</sup>And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul*

*also loathed me. <sup>9</sup>Then said I, I will not feed you: that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them that are left eat every one the flesh of another (ASV 1901).*

#### THE COMPLETE DESOLATION OF THE LAND

#### Zechariah 11:1-3

*<sup>1</sup> Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. <sup>2</sup>Wail, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are destroyed: wail, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down. <sup>3</sup>A voice of the wailing of the shepherds! for their glory is destroyed: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of the Jordan is laid waste (ASV 1901).*

Chapters nine and ten provide Israel with blessing and prosperity. Now in this chapter the text tenor turns to a depiction of sin and punishment for the Nation Israel. The blessings mentioned in the previous two chapters and withheld until the time of punishment is completed. This punishment is all due to the fact that they rejected their Messiah when He came for them the first time. Jesus said that He had come for Him but they rejected Him.

#### Matthew 15:24

*But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel (KJV).*

The strongest affirmation that the leaders of the Jews rejected Jesus is recorded in the gospel of John during His trial before Pontius Pilate.

#### John 19:15

*But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar! (KJV)*

He predicted this rejection in tears as He wept over Jerusalem because the Jewish leaders rejected their Messiah.

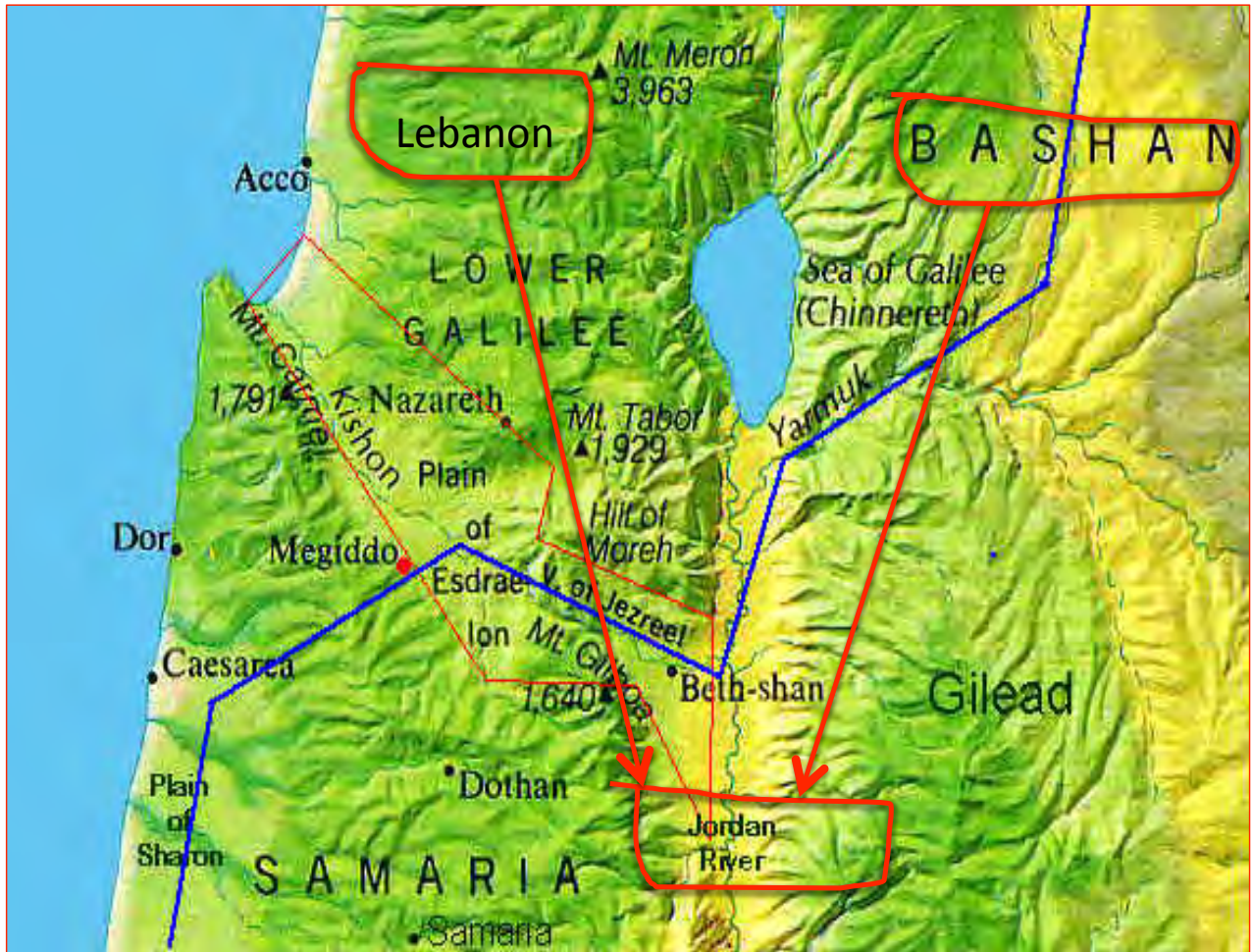
#### Luke 19:41-44

*<sup>41</sup> And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, <sup>42</sup> Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. <sup>43</sup> For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, <sup>44</sup> And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation (KJV).*

So as a result they would receive a dire punishment from God for this most grievous sin. These three verses are written in a poetic form of Hebrew. The imagery is directed to the northern areas of Israel, which are Lebanon and Syria (Bashan) both known for their trees. The cedars of Lebanon and the Oaks of Bashan have been known in the Old Testament for their excellence. There is a blending of actual events with the figurative in these verses for illustration purposes. The primary reference is to the physical desolation, which will come into the land in consequence of its being invaded by an enemy. This prophecy encompasses *all* their battles including the three major ones (70 AD; 135 AD) from the time of this prophecy in 485 B.C. including the final campaign of Armageddon wherein Israel is punished to the point of belief in their Messiah. The progress of the devastating scourge, which is here depicted, is being graphically described. In stirring language the prophet addresses the majestic Mount Lebanon on the border of Syria (Bashan) and Israel. The mountain is more than fourteen thousand feet high and snow capped. This is the origin of the name Lebanon (Hebrew *lavan* for white). God says, “*Open thy doors, O Lebanon*” meaning give access to the destruction since they are powerless to stop it. This opening will allow the firepower of the enemy to destroy the precious cedars. In figurative language personifying the trees they are told to, *Wail, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are destroyed*. This is saying that if the precious one were targeted and shown no mercy then they too would meet the same fate. As the storming troops sweep down on the land of Bashan (Syria) the splendid forest of oaks are targeted and they too are told to; *wail, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down*. Again Syria is told to wail because the strong (cedars) have come down and they are protected due to their elevation and steep location on the Mountain of Lebanon. Therefore the fiery judgment will reach them as well, which are more easily accessible. Finally the leaders, government and religious officials are heard loudly *wailing of the shepherds! for their glory is destroyed*.

From the northern region the invasion moves south to the Jordan valley where there is heard, *a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of the Jordan is laid waste*. The shepherd wail and so do the young lions for their lairs and food is destroyed. The pride of the Jordan is a reference to the thick vegetation that is in the Jordan valley in its central and lower sections south of the Sea of Galilee. This vegetation was a desired place for the lions to live. They inhabited Israel in greater numbers after 722 B.C. when the northern kingdom was sacked by the Assyrians (II Kings 17:25; Jeremiah 49:19) and flourished there through the eleven hundreds A.D.

While this destruction is a physical desolation of the land it also indirectly is an announcement of the destruction and punishment of the people of Israel who live in it. This is simply a passage that announces a judgment, which would embrace, as already stated, the land and the people, and move to Jordan, which will include the holy city, and Temple. While the prophet Zechariah has had much to say regarding the prophecies it is important to make it clear that he is God’s representative and not making these prophecies apart from the Lord. These are not in any sense speculative.



Map of Israel from Bible History Online <http://www.bible-history.com>

#### THE PROPHET'S COMMISSION TO DIRECT AND FEED THE FLOCK (ISRAEL)

Zechariah 11:4-5

*<sup>4</sup>Thus said Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of slaughter; <sup>5</sup>whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not. (ASV 1901)*

Most of the leaders of Israel betrayed their God given office for their own personal career advantage to the detriment of the population. These people of Israel were doomed to be slaughtered because they rejected the one person who wanted to and had the capability of helping them, their Messiah Jesus. Zechariah was told to *Feed the flock of slaughter*. God wanted Zechariah to accurately convey His Covenant and laws to the people of Israel realizing that they would be slaughtered for their disobedience. God desires to show His love for the Jews in spite of unworthy rulers (shepherds) over them. The rulers don't see themselves in a place of any accountability while they (Possessors) are so blinded by self-

interest that they see no sin for the way they treat the flock. They feel so little remorse that they actually thank God for their ill-gotten gains. The prophet is speaking of chiefs and rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, who played into the enemies' hands, and thought of nothing but how to make a gain of the subject people. Jesus denounced these types as untrustworthy shepherds (John 10:11–13). It is appropriate to include the foreign powers, which had oppressed the Jews at various times too. Some examples are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece and Rome. Regardless of the cause, God still has love for his people, and when they are punished He will retaliate and will punish their enemies. In this verse the offenders against Israel are of three classes—buyers, sellers, shepherds. These three references are directed at Israel's own shameless leaders. For example the avarice of the Pharisees was colossal but they still had the hypocrisy to thank God for their ill gotten wealth. Fellow Jews were equally accountable for taking inappropriate profit from their fellow Jews. All the while they did not care who they harmed in the process.

#### GOD DELIVERS HIS PEOPLE TO THE PERSECUTORS

Zechariah 11:6

*<sup>6</sup>For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah; but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them (ASV 1901).*

There is a descent in the wretchedness of the Jews who are given over to God's judgment, which is described in verses five and here in six. First, the Gentile nations have no pity on them, but buy and sell and slay them as "sheep of slaughter." Secondly, their own shepherds, from whom something different might have been expected, have no compassion for them and do the same thing; and thirdly, and most terrible of all, "*I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah,*" for long-continued defiance which exhausts even the patience of Jehovah. God finally says I will take no more of this for I have endured this enough. All of their iniquity culminated in the rejection of the Messiah and that finally was enough for God to say, "*no more pity!*" All the sin in this world will be judged and God will only let it go on for so long before He brings it to an end. One of the reasons for the Great Tribulation coming on this earth is to make an end of sin (Isaiah 13:9, 24:19-20) and sinful ones. Another is to bring the Jews to their Messiah (Daniel 11-12; Ezekiel 20:33-38).

#### ZECHARIAH FOLLOWS GOD'S COMMAND

Zechariah 11:7-9

*<sup>7</sup>So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. <sup>8</sup>And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed me, <sup>9</sup>Then said I, I will not feed you: that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them that are left eat every one the flesh of another (ASV 1901).*

Zechariah actually performed this in his own time. He carried out God's command with the two staves, which are Graciousness (*beauty*) and Unity (*bands*). The complete

fulfillment was not until the appearance of Jesus. Zechariah and Jesus after him cut-off the three shepherds, who are the priests, teachers of the law and the civil magistrates. They stopped having any discourse with them because of their obdurate manner. Closely linked to the disowning of the three shepherds is the flock's disowning of their True Shepherd whom they detested, a word (used only here in the OT) that means to loathe to the point of physical sickness. Finally as a consequence of their continued devotion to idols and avoidance of anything good God will abandon them to their fate of persecution just as God threatened. They will be left to deal with, plague, war, famine, combined with civil strife. God says that they will *Eat every one the flesh of another* (Isaiah 9:20 <sup>20</sup>*And one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:* <sup>21</sup>*Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still ASV 1901*). Many see here a reference to the awful scenes enacted when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and feuds filled the city with bloodshed and added to the horrors of famine. In times of famine and war cannibalism becomes a reality.

NEXT WEEK: THE REJECTION OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD IS PREDICTED

**Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments**

[Info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com](mailto:Info@pentwaterbiblechurch.com) Toll Free 877-706-247