

Brit-Am Biblical Commentary (BABCOM) to the Book of Zechariah.

Zechariah-11.

Spiritual Re-Union

<https://hebrewnations.com/articles/bible/zechariah/zechariah11.html>

This is a difficult chapter to get a handle on. The Commentators are all divided in their opinions concerning it.

Nevertheless it contains a potentially important message concerning Judah and the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel.

Most of the Commentators relate the described events to different specific historical happenings. This may be correct in some of the cases in so far as the Prophecy is Prototypical. It may take a known occurrence that took place before the time of the Prophet or during his lifetime or much later but prior to our time and shows how the description fits it. The Prophecy however still relates to the End Times like all Prophecy does. Its correspondence to some degree or other to known occurrences makes them paradigms of what will happen long afterwards.

Our own understanding of this chapter is derived mainly from the Commentary of Mordecai Zar-Kavod in the DAAT MIKRA (DM) series and from that of Rabbi Moshe Valley (RMV), 1697- 1776, Padua, west of Venice, Italy. (see RABBIS

QUOTED <https://hebrewnations.com/articles/sources/rabbisquoted.html> [[~6304]]).

1 OPEN YOUR DOORS, O LEBANON,
THAT FIRE MAY DEVOUR YOUR CEDARS.

2 WAIL, O CYPRESS-TREE, FOR THE CEDAR HAS FALLEN,
BECAUSE THE MIGHTY TREES ARE RUINED.

WAIL, O OAKS OF BASHAN,
FOR THE THICK FOREST HAS COME DOWN.

The trees are likened to a fortress that will be devoured by fire.

DAAT MIKRA says the mighty trees represent the rulers.

RMV says they represent the non-Israelite nations.

Another interpretation (quoted in the Talmud) relates "Lebanon" to the Temple and that Zechariah was predicting the Destruction of the Second Temple.

3 THERE IS THE SOUND OF WAILING SHEPHERDS!

DAAT MIKRA points out that the Prophet uses the semi-technical jargon of sheep-herders throughout this chapter, and end especially towards the end of it.

FOR THEIR GLORY IS IN RUINS.

THERE IS THE SOUND OF ROARING LIONS!

FOR THE PRIDE OF THE JORDAN IS IN RUINS.

"Pride of the Jordan" ["Gaon Ha-Yarden"] is the forested area adjoining the Jordan that supplied good pasture to shepherds and shelter for animals (both domestic and wild) in general (DM). RMV equates the "Pride of the Jordan" with a region belonging to the Tribe of Dan. The disaster will befall the non-Israelite heathen. RMV seems to be saying that Dan was a connecting point between Israel and

the Gentiles. The Gentiles will have been benefiting due to their connection with Israel and diverting the Blessing from Israel to themselves. This will cease.

4 THUS SAYS THE LORD MY GOD, FEED THE FLOCK FOR SLAUGHTER,
5 WHOSE OWNERS SLAUGHTER THEM AND FEEL NO GUILT; THOSE WHO SELL THEM
SAY, BLESSED BE THE LORD, FOR I AM RICH [will become r rich]; AND THEIR
SHEPHERDS DO NOT PITY THEM.

Everyone wants to make money and no-one really cares if other people suffer because of it. The Almighty supplies everything fro everybody yet people try to deprive each other.

6 FOR I WILL NO LONGER PITY THE INHABITANTS OF THE LAND, SAYS THE LORD.
BUT INDEED I WILL GIVE EVERYONE INTO HIS NEIGHBORS HAND AND INTO THE
HAND OF HIS KING. THEY SHALL ATTACK THE LAND, AND I WILL NOT DELIVER
THEM FROM THEIR HAND.

The Peoples of the Earth feed by virtue of Israel but are not aware of it. They fail to recognized God as their ultimate benefactor and oppress each other.

7 SO I FED THE FLOCK FOR SLAUGHTER, IN PARTICULAR THE POOR OF THE
FLOCK. I TOOK FOR MYSELF TWO STAFFS: THE ONE I CALLED BEAUTY, AND THE
OTHER I CALLED BONDS; AND I FED THE FLOCK.

BEAUTY - Hebrew "Noam" connoting pleasantness, gentlemanly.

BONDS - Hebrew "Chovlim" literally "blows, wounds, BRUISES." We will refer to it as "BRUISER." There is another word in Hebrew based on the same word root [H-V-L] but meaning "rope, string," and that is why the English Translation renders here it as "BONDS." the expression "Bruiser" is however more appropriate here.

RMV the two sticks represent the two aspects (mercy and punishment) through which the Almighty relates to the world. HE is good primarily to Israel.

8 I DISMISSED THE THREE SHEPHERDS IN ONE MONTH. MY SOUL LOATHED THEM,
AND THEIR SOUL ALSO ABHORRED ME.

RMV. The Three shepherds represent the spiritual-ideological forces that guide the non-Israelite nations of Europe.

9 THEN I SAID, I WILL NOT FEED YOU. LET WHAT IS DYING DIE, AND WHAT IS
PERISHING PERISH. LET THOSE THAT ARE LEFT EAT EACH OTHERS FLESH.

10 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.

RMV understands the word "PEOPLES" to refer here to Peoples of the World, i.e., non-Israelite Gentiles. The non-Israelite Peoples who up until then had been benefiting due to Israel will no longer do so.

11 SO 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.

12 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.

The Prophet asks for his wages for having up until now been concerned for the good of the Gentiles. Now his task is ended and he wants his pay.

DM says that 30 shekels was considered about a year's wages.

13 AND THE LORD SAID TO ME, 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.

The Hebrew word translated as "potter" is "Yotser" and this can mean "potter" i.e., a maker of pottery. DM says it is a play on word connoting both "treasurer" and weaving craftsman. Different translations are also given for some of the other words used. Here is how DM renders the verse:

THROW IT [the money] TO THE weaving craftsman ["yotser'] for the precious cloak [adar ha-yakar] that I had woven [asher yakarti]. SO I TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER AND THREW THEM INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOR THE treasurer [Ha-Yotser].

14 THEN I CUT IN TWO MY OTHER STAFF, BONDS, THAT I MIGHT BREAK THE BROTHERHOOD BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

RMV renders this verse from the Hebrew as "I will root out my second stick, BRUISER, whose aim is to undo the brotherhood between Judah and between Israel."

This interpretation is actually a more literal one than the NKJV! Up until then there will have been a cause, a negative force, that disallowed brotherhood between Judah and the Lost Ten Tribes. This cause will be removed! This verse is potentially VERY IMPORTANT!

Here is a complete translation and paraphrase of the relevant commentary of Zechariah 11:14. It is framed in Mystical Kabbalistic Terminology but should be easy enough to understand.

In the same way as the rulership over the Gentiles in a Charitable Way was cut off and removed at the time when their fall was decreed (Zechariah 11:8-10) so too will it be necessary to cut off and remove the ASPECT OF HARSH JUDGMENT from Israel at the time of their favor and success.

This is the reason why it said at the beginning, AND I TOOK MY STAFF, BEAUTY, AND CUT IT IN TWO, THAT I MIGHT BREAK THE COVENANT WHICH I HAD MADE WITH ALL THE GENTILES (Zechariah 11:10). Now he says, "I will root out my second stick, BRUISER, whose aim is to undo the brotherhood between Judah and between Israel." That is to say, HE will root out and remove from them altogether that Aspect of Harsh Judgment that previously would undo the fraternity and cause division between Judah and between Israel. This intervenes between the head and the body. All the time that the Aspect of Harsh Judgment ruled over Israel it was not possible for the Upper Lights to illuminate the lower ones. That was the reason for the constant quarrelling between Judah and Israel. This will no longer be the case at the time when the Principle of Charity rules. On the contrary, at that time there will be love, fraternity, peace, and friendship, among them. The expansion of Charity spreading out leads to Unity. This is the secret of the expression: "The envy of Ephraim shall depart, And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim." (Isaiah 11:13). #

15 AND THE LORD SAID TO ME, NEXT, TAKE FOR YOURSELF THE IMPLEMENTS OF A FOOLISH SHEPHERD.

The word here translated as FOOLISH is "EVILI" meaning "criminally irresponsible." It is related to a similar word also pronounced "avil"

and meaning "wicked." These two words gave rise to the English word "evil."

Its etymology is given as:

Old English yfel (Kentish evel) "bad, vicious, ill, wicked," from Proto-Germanic *ubilaz (source also of Old Saxon ubil, Old Frisian and Middle Dutch evel, Dutch euvel, Old High German ubil, German ubel, Gothic ubils).

Evil was the word the Anglo-Saxons used where we would use bad, cruel, unskillful, defective (adj.), or harm (n.), crime, misfortune, disease (n.). In Middle English, bad took the wider range of senses and evil began to focus on moral badness. Both words have good as their opposite. Evil-favored (1520s) meant "ugly." #
<https://www.etymonline.com/word/evil>

Why not just admit that the word derives from the Hebrew words "evil" and "avil" and that the English derivative is (as usual) closer to the Hebrew than the others?

16 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.

17 WOE TO THE WORTHLESS SHEPHERD,
 WHO LEAVES THE FLOCK!
 A SWORD SHALL BE AGAINST HIS ARM
 AND AGAINST HIS RIGHT EYE;
 HIS ARM SHALL COMPLETELY WITHER,
 AND HIS RIGHT EYE SHALL BE TOTALLY BLINDED.

The bad shepherd will be condemned.