

# Zechariah 11:15-17

Zechariah 11:15 – “Then the Lord said to me, “Take once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.

196 [e]	7462 [e]	3627 [e]		3947 [e]	5750 [e]	413 [e]	3068 [e]	559 [e]
'ē-wi-lī.	rō-'eh	kə-lī	lə-kā,	qah-	'ō-wd̄	'ê-lāy;	Yah-weh	way-yō-mer
אֹלִי:	רֹעֵה	כְּלֵי	לְךָ,	קַח-	עוֹד	אֵלַי	יְהוָה	וַיֹּאמֶר 15
foolish	of a shepherd	the implements	for yourself	take	Next	to me	Yahweh	And said
Adj-ms	V-Qal-Prtcppl-ms	N-msc	Prep   2ms	V-Qal-Imp-ms	Adv	Prep   1cs	N-proper-ms	Conj-w   V-Qal-Conseclmpf-3ms

1. 11:7-14 – The good shepherd (Messiah, Jesus) brought Favor and Union to the flock (Israel). But, the sheep (Jews) detested him (Jesus) and he became impatient with them and broke the staffs of Favor with God and Union with each other.
 

***“I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. So I said, “I will not be your shepherd. What is to die, let it die. What is to be destroyed, let it be destroyed. And let those who are left devour the flesh of one another.”*** (Zechariah 11:8-9)
2. Since the flock (Israel) will reject the true shepherd (Messiah, Jesus) Zechariah is told by the Lord to act out the part of the:
  - a. “foolish shepherd” (11:15) –
    - i. “foolish” – *ewili* or *evili* - /ev-ee-lee'/ - means “foolish”, even suggesting a stupid, brutish person who, according to Proverbs 14:29 and 24:9, “despise wisdom and discipline”
    - ii. “foolish” has denotes a person who is morally deficient.
      1. They will not be just or righteous
      2. They will not be able to keep a covenant (“love”)
      3. They will not be able to be a servant to the people in a leadership position
    - iii. Used only here and in Isaiah 19:11 – “The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the wisest counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel. How can you say to Pharaoh, “I am a son of the wise, a son of ancient kings”?”
    - iv. This is the opposite of the wisdom of God
  - b. “worthless shepherd” (11:17)
    - i. “worthless” – *elil* – /el-eel'/ - (*haelil*) – meaning “insufficiency, worthlessness”
    - ii. Used of worthless gods, idols in Lev. 19:4; 26:1; Isaiah 2:8; Ps. 96:5;
  - c. This shepherd would be against God (“foolish”) and against people (“worthless”)
3. This foolish shepherd would be selfish, corrupt, greedy and would afflict the people of Israel causing them great harm
4. “equipment” – *keli* – “an article, utensil, vessel”
  - a. The equipment of a shepherd would include:
    - i. Bag for food
    - ii. A pipe or reed for calling the sheep (Judges 5:16)
    - iii. A knife
    - iv. A medical case for caring for the injuries of the sheep and setting broken bones
    - v. The two staffs (“thy rod and thy staff”):
      1. Club to use against threats from wild predators
      2. Crook or hook to reach and lift
    - vi. Sling and stones (1 Samuel 17:40)

vii. Leather garments worn by the shepherd which is the “equipment” or – *keli* – of Leviticus 13:49

- b. Zechariah would have taken up the equipment of a true shepherd in Zechariah in 11:4 and 11:7 since here Zechariah is told to “take once more the equipment” or “take again the equipment”)
- c. Here Zechariah is to again take up the equipment of a shepherd, but it is the morally deficient, worthless, empty, foolish shepherd who is set on self-interest and self-promotion at the cost of the sheep. This shepherd will not protect the sheep, but will consume the sheep.

5. The next verse explains why Zechariah is to act out the part of a foolish shepherd after he has acted out the part of the good shepherd that was despised by the flock.

11:16 – “**For behold, I am raising up in the land a shepherd who does not care for those being destroyed, or seek the young or heal the maimed or nourish the healthy, but devours the flesh of the fat ones, tearing off even their hoofs.**”

3808 [e]	3582 [e]	776 [e]	7462 [e]	6965 [e]	595 [e]	2009 [e]	3588 [e]
lō-	han-niḵ-hā-dō-wṯ	bā-’ā-reṣ,	rō-’eh	mê-qîm	’ā-nō-ḵî	hin-nêh-	ḵî
לֹא	הַנִּיחָדוֹת	בְּאֶרֶץ	רֹעֵה	מִקִּים	אֲנֹכִי	הִנְהִי	כִּי
not	those who are cut off	in the land	a shepherd	will raise up	I	indeed	For
Adv-NegPrt	Art   V-Nifal-Prtcppl-fp	Prep-b, Art   N-fs	V-Qal-Prtcppl-ms	V-Hifil-Prtcppl-ms	Pro-1cs	Interjection	Conj

5324 [e]	7495 [e]	3808 [e]	7665 [e]	1245 [e]	3808 [e]	5288 [e]	6485 [e]
han-niṣ-ṣā-bāh	yə-rap-pê;	lō	wə-han-niṣ-be-reṯ	yə-ḅaq-qéś,	lō-	han-na-’ar	yîq-ḳōḏ
הַנִּצְבָּה	יִרְפָּא	לֹא	וְהַנְשֻׁבְרֹת	יִבְקֹשׁ	לֹא-	הַנְּעָר	יִפְקֹד
those that stand still	heal	nor	and those that are broken	seek	nor	the young	[who] will care for
Art   V-Nifal-Prtcppl-fs	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Conj-w, Art   V-Nifal-Prtcppl-fs	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Art   N-ms	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms

s	6561 [e]	6541 [e]	398 [e]	1277 [e]	1320 [e]	3557 [e]	3808 [e]
	yə-ḅā-réq.	ū-ḅar-sê-hen	yō-ḵal,	hab-bə-rî-’āh	ū-ḅə-śar	yə-ḵal-kél,	lō
ס	יִפְרָק:	וּפְרִסֵיהֶן	יֹאכַל	הַבְּרִיאָה	וּבִשָׂר	יִכְלֹל	לֹא
-	tear in pieces	and their hooves	he will eat	of the fat	but the flesh	feed	nor
Punc	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	Conj-w   N-fpc   3fp	V-Qal-Imperf-3ms	Art   Adj-fs	Conj-w   N-msc	V-Piel-Imperf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt

1. Some of the qualities of a shepherd or a leader are found here, but stated in the negative:
  - a. Care for those being destroyed or those being cut off or the lost
  - b. Seek the young
  - c. Heal the maimed or broken
  - d. Nourish the healthy or feed those who are grazing
2. This foolish shepherd will do none of these things, but like a corrupt leader he will:
  - a. Devour the flesh of the sheep
    - i. He will not feed the sheep, but instead feed on the sheep.
    - b. Using everything to his advantage including even the hoofs of the sheep.
3. Six levels of negligence here: 4 + 2 = 6.
  - a. Four types of sheep
    - i. “the lost” – *hannikhadot* – meaning “those who are cut off” or who face annihilation, but not directly a sheep that has lost his way. They are perishing from some situation. These should be cared for.

- ii. “the young” – hanna’ar – from – *na’ar* – is a word that never describes animals, but always the young of humans or “children”. This is the willful neglect of children.
  - iii. “heal the injured” – The word “heal” is – *yerappe* – and is used for the name “Jehovah Rapha” or “The LORD heals”
  - iv. “feed” – *yekalkel* – which is the basic responsibility of the shepherd
- b. Two violent actions:
- i. The shepherd is killing and eating the sheep that he is to be tending for his master.
  - ii. “Tearing off their hoofs” cannot be explained as a benefit, so it can be assumed to be senseless mutilation of the sheep by the shepherd.

11:17 – **“Woe to my worthless shepherd,  
 who deserts the flock!  
 May the sword strike his arm  
 and his right eye!  
 Let his arm be wholly withered,  
 his right eye utterly blinded!”**

5921 [e]	2220 [e]	5921 [e]	2719 [e]	6629 [e]	5800 [e]	457 [e]	7473 [e]	1945 [e]
wə-’al-	zə-rō-w-’ōw	’al-	ḥe-reḅ	ḥaṣ-ṣōn,	’ō-zə-ḅî	hā-’ē-lîl	rō-’î	hō-w
וְעַל-	זְרוּעוֹ	עַל-	חֶרֶב !	הַצֹּאֵן	עֹזְבֵי	הַאֲלִיל	רֹעִי	הוֹי 17
and against	his arm	against	a sword [shall be]	the flock	who leaves	the worthless	to shepherd	Woe
Conj-w   Prep	N-fsc   3ms	Prep	N-fs	Art   N-cs	V-Qal-PrtcpI-msc	Art   Adj-ms	V-Qal-PrtcpI-msc	Interjection

s	3543 [e]	3543 [e]	3225 [e]	5869 [e]	3001 [e]	3001 [e]	2220 [e]	3225 [e]	5869 [e]
	tiḵ-heh.	kā-hōḥ	yə-mî-nōw	wə-’ên	tî-ḅāš.	yā-ḅō-wōš	zə-rō-’ōw	yə-mî-nōw;	’ên
ס .	תִּכְהָהּ	כֹּהֶה	יְמִינוֹ	וְעֵין	תִּיכָשׁ	יְכוּשׁ	זְרוּעוֹ	יְמִינוֹ !	עֵין
-	shall be blinded	totally	his right	and eye	shall wither	completely	His arm	his right	eye
Punc	V-Qal-Imperf-3fs	V-Qal-InfAbs	N-fsc   3ms	Conj-w   N-csc	V-Qal-Imperf-3fs	V-Qal-InfAbs	N-fsc   3ms	N-fsc   3ms	N-csc

1. Now the “foolish shepherd” is identified as the “worthless shepherd”
2. This foolish, worthless shepherd will “desert the flock”
  - a. During his time as the leader of Israel this foolish shepherd will desert Israel. He will abandon them to their enemies. Even becoming an enemy of Israel himself.
3. Historically the false shepherds that appeared after Jesus and led Israel for their own advantage could include:
  - a. Ptolemy
  - b. Antiochus
  - c. Herod the Great
  - d. Bar Kokhba in his 132-135 AD revolt against Rome and Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD). Some Jews including Rabbi Akiba recognized Bar Kokhba as the Messiah.
  - e. Some say the foolish shepherd does not represent any individual, but all the worthless, selfish leaders Israel would face from the time of Zechariah until the Messiah.
4. This description of the “foolish” and “worthless” shepherd actually matches the Antichrist:
  - a. Ezekiel 34:2-4 – ““Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel

who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.” (Read 34:1-31)

- b. Daniel 7:24-26 – “As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end.”
- c. Daniel 9:27 (and, Matthew 24:15) – “And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”
- d. Daniel 11:34-39 – “When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time. And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.”
- e. John 5:43 – “I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.
- f. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 – Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness[b] is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- g. Revelation 13:1-10 – “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

5. Symbolic meanings:

- a. “Sword” – a greater military power
- b. “Arm” – power, military strength
- c. “Right Eye” – intelligence, wisdom
- d. “Arm be wholly withered” – military power totally paralyzed
- e. “Right eye utterly blinded” – his insight, plans, philosophy, strategies, intelligence, wisdom is totally dark and incapable of perceiving reality.

6. His military power and strategic insight will be nothing

- a. Revelation 19:19-21 – “And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.
- b. Revelation 20:10 – “The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

7. The foolish shepherd is left without an arm to lift the sheep and without an eye to find the sheep

8. Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd in John 10:11 – “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

9. Jesus says he know the Father and will lay his life down for the sheep in John 10:14-15 – “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”