

Zechariah 10-11 — “Ask the Lord”

1. Ask The Lord — Not The Fakes (Zechariah 10:1–12)

1. What does God command his people to do in verse 1, and what were they doing instead, according to verse 2?

Verse 1 is a command: “ask the LORD for rain.” For a farming, exile-recovering community, asking for rain was asking for provision and life itself. Verse 2 exposes the problem: the people had been consulting teraphim (household idols) and diviners instead. These weren't necessarily people who had consciously rejected God — they thought these were legitimate ways to hear from him.

2. Who is God's anger directed at, and what's the contrast within the very same verse?

God's anger burns against “the shepherds” — Israel's own political and religious leadership, who had failed the flock. In the same verse, God announces he will personally visit and strengthen Judah. This sets the pattern for the rest of chapters 10–11: human shepherds fail; the LORD does not — and it sets up the promise of a true Shepherd-King in verse 4.

3. List the four images used of the coming leader from Judah. How do these point to Jesus and what sort of King/Shepherd is being promised?

Cornerstone, tent peg (secure), battle bow (Strong and mighty), and ruler — images of stability, security, strength, and authority. The New Testament elsewhere applies cornerstone language directly to Jesus (Matthew 21:42; 1 Peter 2:6-7). How tightly verse 4 points to one specific coming king versus a restored Davidic leadership generally is debated — but the trajectory toward Christ is unmistakable.

4. What is God promising to Judah and Ephraim, and what earlier event in Israel's history does this promise deliberately echo?

God promises to regather and reunite his scattered people — Judah in the south and Ephraim, representing the ten northern tribes exiled since 722 BC — into one people again. Passing through Egypt and Assyria, crossing the sea, and the Nile drying up deliberately recall **the exodus**, framing this restoration as a **new exodus**: God redeeming and regathering his people as he once did at the Red Sea.

5. After several verses describing a return to specific places (Egypt, Assyria, Gilead, Lebanon), what does the passage's final promise actually rest on?

The chapter shifts from geography to identity in its last clause: “in his name they will live securely.” Their security was never ultimately about location — it's about whose name they belong to. This anticipates the New Testament's teaching that there is a name above every name (Philippians 2:9-11) and that believers do everything in that name (Colossians 3:17). Zechariah's audience didn't yet have a name to attach to the promise. We do.

6. Think about the decisions and worries filling your week right now. In practice, who or what do you actually turn to first for guidance or comfort — and what would it look like to genuinely “ask the Lord” first instead?

2. Confess The Cheap Price We've Put On The Lord (Zechariah 11:1–14)

8. Summarise what Zechariah is told to act out. What are his two staffs called, and what happens to each one?

God has Zechariah act as a shepherd over a flock “marked for slaughter” — exploited by corrupt buyers, sellers, and under-shepherds. He carries two staffs: Favour and Union. After the flock

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comes to despise him, he breaks Favour, symbolising God lifting the covenant protection that had shielded his people from surrounding nations, and later breaks Union, symbolising the shattering of the bond between Judah and Israel — both consequences of the flock rejecting its true shepherd.

Read Zechariah 11:12–13

9. Why does the specific amount of “thirty pieces of silver” matter, and how does the New Testament pick this detail up?

Thirty shekels was the exact legal compensation required when an ox gored a slave to death (Exodus 21:32) — not simply a small wage, but a calculated insult against the shepherd, and through him God. Matthew's Gospel draws directly on this passage at Judas's betrayal of Jesus for the identical sum (Matthew 26:15), and the chief priests' use of the money to buy a potter's field (Matthew 27:3-10) precisely fulfils the strange detail of “throw it to the potter.”

10. Where might you, more quietly, be putting a cheap price on Jesus — treating his words as less authoritative than a feeling, a friend's opinion, or a confident voice online?

3. Refuse Every Voice That Isn't The Lord's (Zechariah 11:15–17)

11. What kind of shepherd does God say he will raise up in place of the rejected true shepherd, and what happens to that shepherd in verse 17?

God allows a “foolish” or “worthless” shepherd to take over — one who neglects, exploits, and devours the flock rather than caring for it. Importantly, verse 17 pronounces a woe and a curse on this foolish shepherd — God ordains the judgment, but the shepherd remains fully guilty and is himself judged for it.

12. What voices today can sound like they're speaking for God without actually being rooted in his word — a feeling, a claimed “word” or dream, a confident trend even within Christian circles? How do we go about testing them?

Read John 10:11–16, 27–28 and Hebrews 1:1–2

13. How does Jesus fulfil both the promised King/Shepherd of Zechariah 10 and the rejected, undervalued Shepherd of Zechariah 11?

Jesus is both the cornerstone-King of chapter 10 (Matthew 21:42) and the Good Shepherd who, unlike the hired hand, lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:11) — the very shepherd who was priced like a slave and betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Hebrews 1:1-2 shows that God's revelation, partial and fragmented through the prophets, is now complete and final in his Son — the voice Zechariah's audience longed to hear clearly is now fully given to us in Christ and his word.

14. What would it look like this week to actually treat Scripture as sufficient — trusting it over a more “personal” or “fresh” word you might be tempted to chase instead?