

# The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, Teacher's Guide

## Lesson 8: The Lord Will Care for His Flock

### Zechariah 10:1–11:17

#### Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, these two chapters set the true Shepherd against the false shepherds and call God's people to trust, follow, and value the One God has appointed. Chapter 10 confronts the folly of seeking rain, that is, life and provision, from idols and diviners who 'utter nonsense' and give 'empty consolation,' and announces that the Lord of hosts Himself cares for His flock, strengthening, gathering, and redeeming them. Chapter 11 enacts the dark parable of the rejected Good Shepherd, sold for thirty pieces of silver, and pronounces woe on the worthless shepherd who deserts the sheep. Teach this as one unified message: the Lord is the faithful Shepherd of His people, and everything depends on whether we receive Him or reject Him for cheaper comforts and cheaper leaders.

Guard against two errors as you teach. First, do not let the regathering and restoration language of chapter 10 be read as a future earthly, political restoration of national Israel. The gathering, redeeming, and strengthening of God's flock is fulfilled in Christ and His church, the people God has redeemed by the blood of the true Shepherd and gathered from every nation (John 10:16; 11:51–52; Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:25). Second, when you reach the thirty pieces of silver, do not treat the link to Jesus as a clever coincidence. Matthew 27:3–10 explicitly draws on this very prophecy. Teach it boldly: Zechariah's enacted parable prefigures the rejection and betrayal of Christ, the Good Shepherd, valued at the price of a slave and bought back His people at infinite cost.

This passage was never meant merely to inform; it was meant to reorder where the student runs and whom the student follows. A student who really hears Zechariah will examine the 'idols and diviners' he has been consulting for comfort and guidance, will repent of having set a cheap price on the Shepherd, and will resolve either to follow Christ more wholeheartedly or to shepherd others more faithfully. So aim at both targets. Send students home understanding why God will not share His flock with worthless shepherds or His glory with empty idols, and send them home having named one concrete way to trust, treasure, and follow the Good Shepherd this week.

#### Question 1

##### Student Question:

*Zechariah opens by telling the people to 'ask rain from the Lord' rather than from idols, because 'the household gods utter nonsense' and the diviners 'give empty consolation' (10:1–2). What*

*does this reveal about God as the true source of every good gift, and about the emptiness of every substitute we put in His place?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Begin where Zechariah begins, with rain. In an agricultural land, the spring rain meant the difference between harvest and famine, between life and death. So the call to 'ask rain from the Lord' is not a minor agricultural tip; it is a question about where the people will turn at the point of their deepest need. God alone 'makes the storm clouds' and 'gives showers of rain' (10:1). He is the true source of every good thing.

Set this against the alternative the people had chosen. They consulted 'the household gods,' the teraphim, and 'the diviners,' fortune-tellers who claimed to read the future. God's verdict is blunt: the idols 'utter nonsense,' the diviners 'see lies' and 'tell false dreams,' and 'they give empty consolation' (10:2). The tragedy is not only that these things are forbidden; it is that they do not work. They promise comfort and deliver emptiness.

Help students feel how contemporary this is. We do not bow to clay figurines, but we run to plenty of substitutes for God when we are dry and afraid: money, control, expert opinion, horoscopes, the endless scroll, the next purchase, the strong personality who promises to fix everything. Each offers consolation; none of them sends rain. James reminds us that 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above' (James 1:17), and Jeremiah names the folly exactly: forsaking 'the fountain of living water' for 'broken cisterns that can hold no water' (Jeremiah 2:13).

Press toward the heart. The deepest issue is trust. Where do we instinctively turn first when life gets hard? That instinct reveals who we actually believe is in charge of the rain. The faithful response is to bring our real, urgent needs to the living God who alone can meet them, rather than to substitutes that flatter us and leave us empty.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God is the sole source of every good gift, including provision, comfort, and guidance (James 1:17).
- Idolatry and false guidance are not merely forbidden; they are powerless and deceptive, giving 'empty consolation.'
- Where we turn first in need reveals whom we actually trust to govern our lives.
- Forsaking God for substitutes is exchanging living water for broken cisterns (Jeremiah 2:13).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- When life turns dry and frightening, where do you instinctively turn first, and what does that reveal?
- Why do modern 'idols and diviners' feel so satisfying for a moment yet leave us empty?
- What would it look like this week to bring a real, urgent need directly to the Lord?

## Question 2

### Student Question:

*The text says that because the people followed false comforts, they 'wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd' (10:2). When have you felt that kind of wandering, harassed restlessness in your own walk, and can you trace it back to leaning on something other than the Lord? Be specific about what you were leaning on.*

### Commentary and Teaching Notes

This first self-examining question fastens on a haunting phrase: the people 'wander like sheep; they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd' (10:2). The wandering is not random. It is the direct result of following empty comforts instead of the true Shepherd. Cut off from God, the flock has no direction, no protection, and no rest. They are harassed and helpless.

Help students recognize this condition in their own experience. Many believers carry a low-grade restlessness, a sense of being scattered, anxious, and never quite settled, without ever tracing it to its root. Zechariah names the root plainly: a flock leaning on the wrong shepherd will always wander. The remedy is not to wander harder or manage the anxiety better, but to return to the One who actually shepherds the soul.

Encourage honest tracing. Ask students to look at a recent season of inner turmoil and ask what they were leaning on at the time. Was it a relationship expected to carry the weight only God can bear? A career? A bank balance? A habit of control? The wandering usually has a name, and naming it is the beginning of returning.

Move toward return, not shame. The goal is not to flog students for past wandering but to point them home. Jesus looked on the crowds and saw them 'harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd' (Matthew 9:36), and His response was compassion. The Shepherd is not waiting to scold the wanderer; He is searching for him.

### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual wandering and restlessness flow from following the wrong shepherd or false comforts.
- A flock cut off from its shepherd is by nature directionless, exposed, and harassed.
- Naming the specific substitute we lean on is the beginning of returning to the Shepherd.
- Christ's response to wandering sheep is compassion, not contempt (Matthew 9:36).

### Discussion Prompts

- When have you felt a harassed, scattered restlessness, and what were you leaning on at the time?
- Why is it easy to manage spiritual restlessness without ever tracing it to its root?

- How does it change things to know the Shepherd searches for the wanderer rather than scolding him?

### Question 3

#### Student Question:

*God says, 'My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders,' yet in the same breath He says, 'the Lord of hosts cares for his flock' (10:3). What does it tell us about God's heart that His anger at false shepherds and His tender care for His sheep are two sides of the same love?*

#### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verse 3 holds two things tightly together that we tend to pull apart: 'My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders,' and 'the Lord of hosts cares for his flock.' These are not in tension; they are the same love seen from two angles. Precisely because God cares for the sheep, He is furious at the shepherds who have abused and abandoned them.

Teach the nature of God's wrath here. This is not divine temper; it is the settled opposition of a good God to everything that harms what He loves. A shepherd who watched a wolf savage his flock and felt nothing would not be gentle; he would be a hireling. God's anger against the false shepherds is the measure of His tenderness toward the sheep. Ezekiel 34 develops this very theme: woe to the shepherds who feed themselves and not the flock, and the promise that God will shepherd them Himself.

Help students apply this to their picture of God. Many imagine that a loving God must be a tolerant God who overlooks everything. Zechariah corrects that. Real love is not indifferent to harm. The God who 'cares for his flock' is exactly the God whose anger burns against those who exploit it. We should be glad He is not neutral.

Then turn it tender. The flock here is 'the house of Judah,' the very people who had wandered and chased idols, and still God claims them as His own and makes them His proud warhorse (10:3). His care is not earned by the sheep's performance; it flows from His covenant heart. That is the gospel pattern, fulfilled in the Shepherd who lays down His life for sheep who had gone astray (1 Peter 2:25).

#### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's anger against false shepherds and His care for the flock are two expressions of one love.
- Divine wrath is the settled opposition of a good God to all that harms what He loves.
- A God indifferent to the exploitation of His people would not be loving but negligent.
- God's care for His flock flows from His covenant heart, not from the sheep's worthiness (1 Peter 2:25).

## Discussion Prompts

- How can God's anger at false shepherds actually be evidence of His tenderness toward the sheep?
- Why do we sometimes wrongly assume that a loving God must be a tolerant, indifferent God?
- What does it mean to you that God claims and cares for a flock that had wandered after idols?

## Question 4

### Student Question:

*Verses 6 through 8 pile up promises: God will strengthen, save, bring back, and 'whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them' (10:6-8). Which of these words, strengthened, saved, gathered, redeemed, do you most need to hear from your Shepherd right now, and why?*

### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 6 through 8 are a cascade of grace verbs, and the teacher should slow down and let students feel each one. 'I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph. I will bring them back... I will signal for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them' (10:6-8). Strengthened, saved, brought back, gathered, redeemed: this is the full arc of what the Shepherd does for helpless sheep.

Underline the agent in every clause: I will, I will, I will. The flock does not strengthen itself, save itself, gather itself, or redeem itself. Every verb belongs to God. The sheep contribute the need; the Shepherd supplies everything else. This guards us against a do-it-yourself spirituality in which we are the heroes of our own rescue.

Resist reading these promises as a blueprint for a future political regathering of national Israel. The gathering and redemption Zechariah promises are fulfilled in Christ, who gathers His scattered children into one flock (John 11:51-52), redeems them by His blood, and rescues them from the domain of darkness into His kingdom (Colossians 1:13). The true regathering is the church, drawn from every nation into one fold under one Shepherd (John 10:16).

Now make it personal, which is the point of this question. Ask each student which of these words he most needs to hear today. The weary believer needs 'strengthened.' The guilt-ridden one needs 'saved' and 'redeemed.' The one who has drifted far needs 'brought back' and 'gathered.' Let students name their need out loud and hear the Shepherd's promise spoken over it.

### Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Shepherd alone strengthens, saves, gathers, and redeems; the sheep supply only the need.
- Salvation is God's work from beginning to end, guarding against a self-rescue spirituality.
- The promised regathering is fulfilled in Christ gathering one flock from every nation (John 10:16; 11:51–52).
- Redemption rests on God's prior claim: 'I have redeemed them' (Colossians 1:13).

### Discussion Prompts

- Which word, strengthened, saved, brought back, gathered, or redeemed, do you most need to hear today?
- Why does it matter that every verb in these promises belongs to God and not to us?
- How does seeing the church as God's regathered flock guard us from misreading these promises?

### Question 5

#### Student Question:

*The Lord promises to make His once-scattered people 'like a mighty warrior' and says 'they shall be radiant' and their hearts 'glad as with wine' (10:5, 7), gathering them not by their strength but because He redeems them (10:8–12). How does this show that the strength and joy of God's people flow from the Shepherd Himself and not from their own resources?*

#### Commentary and Teaching Notes

These verses describe a stunning transformation. The scattered, harassed flock becomes 'like a mighty warrior in battle,' their hearts 'glad as with wine,' their children rejoicing, the whole people 'radiant' (10:5, 7). Sheep do not naturally become warriors. Something has happened to them, and the text is careful to tell us what: the change comes 'because the Lord is with them' (10:5) and 'I will make them strong in the Lord' (10:12).

Draw out the doctrinal point that strength and joy are derived, not generated. The flock is not strong in itself; it is 'strong in the Lord.' Their gladness does not come from improved circumstances but from the presence of their Shepherd. This is the same truth Paul lived by: 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13), and Nehemiah's word that 'the joy of the Lord is your strength' (Nehemiah 8:10).

Apply this to the temptation toward self-sufficiency. We constantly try to manufacture our own strength and our own happiness, and we exhaust ourselves doing it. Zechariah points the other direction: the strongest and gladdest people are not those with the most resources but those most connected to the Shepherd. The warhorse is strong because of its rider, not itself.

Bring it to the heart. Ask students where they have been trying to be strong in themselves and running dry. The invitation is to stop generating and start receiving, to draw strength and joy from union with the Shepherd. A sheep made mighty is always a sheep near the Shepherd.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The strength and joy of God's people are derived from the Shepherd, not generated by themselves.
- God's presence, not improved circumstances, is the true source of His people's gladness (Nehemiah 8:10).
- Self-sufficiency exhausts; dependence on the Lord makes weak sheep mighty (Philippians 4:13).
- Spiritual strength is a fruit of union with God: 'I will make them strong in the Lord' (10:12).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Where have you been trying to manufacture your own strength or joy and running dry?
- What is the difference between joy that depends on circumstances and joy that depends on the Shepherd?
- What would it look like this week to draw strength from God rather than from yourself?

### **Question 6**

#### **Student Question:**

*In chapter 11 the prophet enacts the role of a shepherd over 'the flock doomed to slaughter,' tending even 'those who bought and sold them' showed no pity (11:4-7). Where is God calling you to shepherd faithfully, in a home, a friendship, a class, or a congregation, even toward people who may not appreciate or deserve it?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Chapter 11 turns the prophet into an actor in a living parable. He is told to 'become shepherd of the flock doomed to slaughter,' sheep whose own owners 'buy them and slaughter them' without pity and whose shepherds 'have no pity on them' (11:4-5). Into that grim situation the prophet steps and genuinely tends them, even the most wretched of the flock. This is faithful shepherding offered to people who have known nothing but exploitation.

Use this to widen the lesson from following the Shepherd to becoming a shepherd. Every believer shepherds someone: a parent shepherds children, a friend shepherds a struggling friend, a teacher shepherds a class, elders shepherd a congregation. The question is what kind of shepherd we will be, the faithful one who tends even the difficult sheep, or the hireling who serves himself.

Be honest about the cost. The prophet shepherds people who will not appreciate him and will ultimately reject him. Faithful shepherding is rarely rewarded with gratitude. Those we serve may be ungrateful, difficult, even hostile. The model is Christ, who shepherds sheep who 'were straying' (1 Peter 2:25) and laid down His life for people who valued Him at the price of a slave.

Press toward a specific arena. Ask each student where God has placed him to shepherd, and toward whom that calling is hardest right now. The faithful response is not to wait for the sheep to deserve our care but to tend them as the Lord has tended us, with patience, sacrifice, and pity that the world withholds.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Every believer is called to shepherd someone, in a home, friendship, class, or congregation.
- Faithful shepherding means tending even difficult and ungrateful sheep, not serving ourselves.
- Christlike care is offered to people before they deserve it, modeled on the Good Shepherd (1 Peter 2:25).
- Faithful shepherding is costly and often unrewarded by gratitude.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Where has God placed you to shepherd others, and toward whom is that calling hardest right now?
- Why is faithful shepherding so often met with ingratitude rather than appreciation?
- What would it look like to tend a difficult 'sheep' the way the Lord has tended you?

### **Question 7**

#### **Student Question:**

*The rejected shepherd takes two staffs named Favor and Union, and when he is rejected he breaks them, annulling the covenant and breaking the brotherhood (11:7, 10–14). What do the breaking of 'Favor' and 'Union' teach about the costly consequences of rejecting God's appointed Shepherd?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The prophet takes 'two staffs, one I named Favor, the other I named Union,' and tends the flock with them (11:7). The staffs are not random props. 'Favor' represents God's gracious covenant favor toward His people; 'Union' represents the bond that holds the people together as one. As long as the Shepherd is received, both blessings hold. When He is rejected, both are forfeited.

Trace what happens. The flock 'detested' the shepherd, and he in turn grew weary of them, and so he breaks the staff Favor, 'annulling the covenant,' and later breaks Union, 'breaking the

brotherhood' (11:8–14). The breaking is not arbitrary cruelty; it is the consequence of rejection. To refuse the Shepherd is to lose the very favor and unity that His shepherding secured.

Teach the sober principle clearly: rejecting God's appointed Shepherd carries real, costly consequences. This is not the language of unconditional security but of genuine forfeiture. When people will not be shepherded, they lose the protection of covenant favor and the gift of being knit together as one. The New Testament echoes this seriousness: those who reject the Son reject life itself (John 3:36; Hebrews 10:26–31).

Apply it with care. Where God's people will not submit to His shepherding, favor and unity fray. Division, scattering, and loss follow rejection of the Shepherd as surely as the staffs were broken. The lesson is not despair but warning: receive the Shepherd, and the staffs of Favor and Union stay whole in His hand.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- 'Favor' and 'Union' represent God's covenant grace and the unity of His people, secured by the Shepherd.
- Rejecting God's appointed Shepherd carries real, costly consequences, not automatic security.
- Forfeiting favor and unity is the consequence, not the cause, of refusing to be shepherded.
- To reject the Son is to forfeit the life and covenant He alone secures (John 3:36; Hebrews 10:26–31).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What do the staffs named Favor and Union tell us about what the Shepherd secures for His people?
- Why does the breaking of the staffs follow from rejection rather than from divine whim?
- Where do you see favor and unity fray when people will not submit to God's shepherding?

### **Question 8**

#### **Student Question:**

*When the prophet asks for his wages, the flock weighs out thirty pieces of silver, and the Lord calls it 'the lordly price at which I was priced by them' (11:12–13). In what areas of your life have you, in effect, set a cheap price on the Shepherd, treating Him as worth less than your time, comfort, or loyalty? Be honest about where He gets the leftovers.*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Now comes the staggering scene. The rejected shepherd asks for his wages, and the flock weighs out 'thirty pieces of silver' (11:12). The detail is precise: thirty shekels was the price of a slave gored by an ox (Exodus 21:32). It is a deliberate insult, a calculated low valuation of the

Shepherd's worth. And the Lord responds with searing irony: 'the lordly price at which I was priced by them' (11:13).

Help students feel the irony. The God of heaven, the true Shepherd of the flock, is appraised at the going rate for a dead slave. This is not honest economics; it is contempt dressed up as payment. The flock would rather be rid of the Shepherd, and they price Him accordingly. There is no neutral valuation of God; we either treasure Him supremely or we cheapen Him.

Now turn the question inward, which is its purpose. We are quick to be horrified at the flock, but we set our own price on the Shepherd every day. When He gets the leftover minutes after everything else has had the prime hours, we have priced Him cheaply. When our comfort, our preferences, or our loyalties consistently outrank His claims, we have weighed out our own thirty pieces of silver. The price we put on Christ shows up not in our words but in our calendars, our wallets, and our choices.

Lead toward honest confession and re-valuing. The goal is not to wallow in guilt but to recalibrate. Where has the Shepherd been getting the leftovers? What would it look like this week to treasure Him as supremely valuable, to give Him the first and best rather than the last and least?

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave, a deliberate insult to the Shepherd's worth (Exodus 21:32).
- There is no neutral valuation of God; we either treasure Him supremely or cheapen Him.
- The true price we set on Christ shows in our time, money, and choices, not merely our words.
- Re-valuing the Shepherd means giving Him the first and best, not the leftovers.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- In what areas of life does the Shepherd tend to get your leftovers rather than your first and best?
- Why is there no such thing as a neutral or modest valuation of Christ?
- What would it look like this week to treat the Shepherd as supremely valuable?

### **Question 9**

#### **Student Question:**

*The thirty pieces of silver thrown to the potter in the house of the Lord (11:12-13) finds its haunting fulfillment when Judas hurls the same silver into the temple and the priests buy the potter's field (Matthew 27:3-10), and the rejected shepherd of Zechariah points to Jesus, the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11-15). Tracing the thread from Zechariah's enacted parable to Christ rejected for the price of a slave, then to the woe*

*pronounced on the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock (11:15–17), what does this passage reveal about the seriousness of rejecting the Shepherd God sent, about Christ's willing self-giving as the true Shepherd over against every worthless hireling, and about the judgment that awaits selfish spiritual leaders who feed themselves and abandon the sheep?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This is the heaviest block of the lesson, and it deserves the most time, because here Zechariah's enacted parable opens directly onto the cross. The thirty pieces of silver are thrown 'to the potter in the house of the Lord' (11:13). Centuries later, Judas, gripped by remorse, hurled his thirty pieces of silver into the temple, and the priests, unwilling to put blood money in the treasury, used it to buy 'the potter's field' (Matthew 27:3–10). Matthew explicitly says this fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet. This is not a loose parallel; it is prophecy meeting fulfillment with stunning precision: the silver, the temple, the potter, all of it.

So teach the identification plainly: the rejected Good Shepherd of Zechariah 11 is Jesus Christ. He is the Shepherd God sent to a flock doomed to slaughter, who tended even the wretched of the sheep, who was detested and rejected, and who was valued at the price of a slave by the very people He came to save. When Jesus said, 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep' (John 10:11), He was stepping into the role Zechariah had acted out. The difference is that Jesus' rejection was not the end of the flock but the means of its redemption; the Shepherd priced at thirty pieces of silver bought His people back with His own blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18–19).

Hold up the contrast with the worthless shepherd that closes the chapter. God raises up 'a worthless shepherd' who 'does not care for those being destroyed,' who feeds himself and tears the flock, and over him falls a stinging woe: 'May the sword strike his arm and his right eye!' (11:15–17). Here are the two shepherds side by side: the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, and the worthless one who deserts and devours them. The whole passage forces a choice and pronounces judgment. Selfish spiritual leaders who feed themselves and abandon the flock stand under God's woe; this is sobering for anyone who leads in the Lord's church, and it answers Ezekiel 34's same complaint against shepherds who feed themselves.

Now draw out the three weights the question raises. First, the seriousness of rejecting the Shepherd God sent: to price Christ cheaply, to detest and dismiss Him, is the gravest possible error, and the broken staffs and the woe show its cost. Second, Christ's willing self-giving: He was not a victim caught off guard but the Good Shepherd who freely laid down His life (John 10:18), the true Shepherd over against every hireling who runs when the wolf comes. Third, the judgment awaiting worthless shepherds: those entrusted with God's flock who exploit it rather than feed it will not escape. Read all of this in Christ and His church, not as a future political program; the flock God gathers and redeems is His people, purchased by the blood of the Shepherd.

Bring it home to the heart and to the church. For every student, the question is whether Christ is treasured as the Good Shepherd who gave His life, or quietly cheapened and rejected. For those who lead, the question is whether they are shepherding the flock as under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1–4), or feeding themselves. The cross stands at the center: the Shepherd was sold for silver and gave Himself for the sheep, and the only fitting response is to follow Him and to shepherd others as He has shepherded us.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Zechariah's enacted parable prophesies the rejection and betrayal of Christ; Matthew 27:3–10 names the fulfillment.
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd of Zechariah 11, valued at a slave's price and rejected by the flock He came to save.
- Christ's rejection was not the end of the flock but the means of redemption; He bought His people with His blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18–19).
- The Good Shepherd laid down His life willingly; He was not a helpless victim (John 10:11–18).
- Rejecting the Shepherd God sent is the gravest error and carries real judgment (Hebrews 10:26–31).
- Worthless, selfish shepherds who desert and devour the flock stand under God's woe (Zechariah 11:15–17; Ezekiel 34).
- The flock God gathers and redeems is His church, fulfilled in Christ, not a future earthly political restoration.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- How does the precision of the thirty-pieces-of-silver prophecy strengthen confidence that Jesus is the Shepherd God promised?
- What is the difference between the Good Shepherd who lays down His life and the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock?
- If you lead others in the Lord's church or home, how does the woe on the worthless shepherd sober and shape you?

### **Question 10**

#### **Student Question:**

*Look back across both chapters, from the people seeking empty comfort from idols, to the Lord's promise to gather and redeem His flock, to the Good Shepherd sold for silver. Name one specific way the true Shepherd is forming you through this passage, whether to stop running to a substitute, to follow Him more wholeheartedly, or to shepherd others more faithfully where He has placed you.*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This capstone question asks students to look back across both chapters and respond personally. Trace the movement once more with them: the people seeking empty comfort from idols and diviners, the wandering flock harassed for lack of a shepherd, the Lord's promise to strengthen, gather, and redeem His own, the prophet's enacted parable of faithful shepherding, the rejected Shepherd sold for thirty pieces of silver, and the woe on the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock. It is the whole drama of who shepherds the soul.

Resist letting the lesson end at admiration. It is possible to be moved by the picture of the Good Shepherd and change nothing. The aim of Zechariah is movement: away from the idols and diviners, away from a cheap valuation of Christ, toward wholehearted trust in and following of the true Shepherd, and toward faithful shepherding of others. A student who closes with only a nod has missed it.

Help each person land on one concrete step, and notice the question gives three possible shapes. For one student it will be to stop running to a particular substitute for comfort or guidance. For another it will be to follow the Shepherd more wholeheartedly, giving Him the first and best rather than the leftovers. For another, an under-shepherd of some kind, it will be to tend the flock more faithfully where God has placed him. The call is the same; the form will differ.

Close on the Shepherd, not on the student's resolve. The courage to leave the idols, to treasure Christ, and to shepherd faithfully does not come from gritted teeth but from the One who laid down His life for the sheep and was raised as the Chief Shepherd. Let students leave hearing the heart of the lesson: the Lord will care for His flock, and He has already proven it at the cross.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Genuine response to God's word moves from admiration to concrete action.
- Spiritual formation happens through specific, namable steps, not vague good intentions.
- The call may take shape as leaving a substitute, following more wholeheartedly, or shepherding more faithfully.
- Courage to follow and to shepherd rests on the Good Shepherd who gave His life, not on our own resolve (1 Peter 5:4).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- What one specific way is the true Shepherd forming you through this passage this week?
- Is your next step to leave a substitute, to follow Him more wholeheartedly, or to shepherd others better?
- How does the Good Shepherd's self-giving at the cross give you courage to take that step?