



Gutenberg College Summer Institute 2015
REUNION: Tanakh and the Gospel of Matthew

Talk 23: Background to Zechariah 11:12-13 and Matthew 27:9-10
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- A. Zechariah is writing at the time of the return from Babylonian captivity.
- B. Zechariah is a highly symbolic combination of visions and oracles. It can be very difficult to tell whether a particular passage is referring to Zechariah's time or far in the future. For example, Zechariah talks about Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, and yet it is debated whether he in fact is using them as symbols of the coming Messiah.
- C. The words Matthew quotes seem pretty clearly to come from Zechariah 11:12-13, but Matthew says it is from "Jeremiah." Several kinds of possibilities are proposed:
 - 1. It was common to group prophecies together and then name them by the most important prophet (in this Jeremiah). So it is proposed that pieces from chapters 18, 19, and/or 32 of Jeremiah could be included in Matthew's mind as relating to this quotation.
 - 2. Jeremiah was the name of a larger collection that included Zechariah in some way.
 - 3. Matthew made a mistake.
 - 4. Later copyists made a mistake.
- D. Some think it is significant that there is a possible textual variant in Zechariah: perhaps the Hebrew text in Zechariah has the word "treasury" rather than the word "potter."
- E. The word for the treasury in Matthew is *korbanas*, which is from the word *korban*, denoting those things that people give in dedication to God. So the *korbanas* seems to be the treasury where people's dedicated gifts to God were kept. So it was thought to be inappropriate to put "blood money" into it, and so they bought land to bury non-Jews instead.
- F. The book of Acts describes the death of Judas in a way that seems different from our passage:
 - 1. Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out. And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called *Hakeldama*, that is, Field of Blood. (Acts 1:18-19)
- G. You have probably noticed that we have the word "fulfill" again. And once again our question is: in what sense did this story of the death of Judas "fulfill" the Old Testament passage?