



ZECHARIAH

A Glorious Future!

The Glory of Right Worship!

Zechariah 7:1-14

Message #8 of 15 – S1015

Sermon given on September 25, 2022



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Glory of Right Worship!

Zechariah 7:1-14

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Zechariah 7**
- Today, we continue a series through the book of **Zechariah: A Glorious Future**
- Last weekend was my grandson Harvey's fifth birthday
- One of the presents he got was a Tyrannosaurus Rex Lego set which I was volun-told to help him build
- There were at least 100 pieces to this set
- Rather than building it for him, I walked him through the process
- On the instructions, I showed him the part he needed and where it was supposed to go
- I patiently insisted that he put them in the right place before we moved on to the next part
- Was I being unreasonable, not letting him put those parts wherever he wanted to, or where he thought best?
- No, because the result we were working toward was only going to be accomplished if we did it the right way
- Do you think it mattered to me how that T-Rex turned out?
- I've raised two boys with Legos – rarely did their projects stay in one piece for very long
- It was important to me that he went through the process of building it right, of finishing it well
- Zechariah is a prophet sent to speak to the Jews who are rebuilding the temple and the city of Jerusalem
- They were rebuilding their whole lives, culture, and religion
- Today's text is a response to a question about their religion
- In the end it didn't really matter to me what happened to the T-Rex
- Do you think it matters to God how we worship Him?
- Let's pray and see what the Spirit might say to us - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Glory of Right Worship!**

9/23/2022

ZECHARIAH – A Glorious Future!
Zechariah 7:1-14 – The Glory of Right Worship!

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- The first six chapters of Zechariah contained eight visions
- Chapters seven and eight form a single section
- Chapter seven begins with a little background
- **Zechariah 7:1-3**
- Darius was the king in the area of Babylon
- His fourth year would have been 518 B.C.
- A delegation is sent to pray and ask the priests a religious question, probably from Bethel
- Sounds like a good thing so far
- They wanted to know if they should continue to have an annual time of weeping and fasting in the fifth month
- ‘fifth’ month = approximately August.
- The Jews mark the taking of Jerusalem to have happened on August 9, 587 B.C. and the destruction of both the first temple and the second temple happened on August 9th.
- This was a reasonable question – since the temple is being rebuilt and also the city of Jerusalem, should they keep up this commemoration of the past?
- The Lord responds through Zechariah
- **Zechariah 7:4-6**
- ‘did you really fast for Me’ – This is a rhetorical question.
- God knows that they weren’t doing it for Him, but so that they would appear spiritual to others.
- Fasting had become a religious ritual lacking in spiritual meaning.
- Jesus warned the disciples about this false type of fasting **Matthew 6:16-18**

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- Everything we do, but especially religious things should be done for the Lord and not for men or for yourself **Colossians 3:23-24**
And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

- True fasting and mourning must be an expression of what is going in our own hearts.
- Every church has some kind of rituals
- Those are the things they do in a certain way
- For us, Communion is something of a rite, though we are not very ritualistic in the way we practice it
- It has deep spiritual meaning – if it is done right
- As a church we are always going to try to be reverent in expression of Communion, but we can't control what is going on in the hearts of God's people
- The Lord then challenges them to examine themselves
- **Zechariah 7:7**
- 'Should you not have obeyed...' – This suggests that they were fasting as a substitute to obedience to God's proclamations through the prophets.
- Obedience is always better than religious exercises **1 Samuel 15:22**
So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.
- God expects His people to obey Him – all the time and in everything
Jeremiah 7:23
But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'
- They were weeping and fasting as a religious act
- We must be careful that we aren't worshipping God like that
- When David leads us in praise and worship – are we abandoning ourselves in worship?
- Are we sensing God's presence and seeing ourselves in the very throne room of God?
- Are we singing the words of the songs as an expression of our love and adoration of God?
- Or are we focused on how the musicians are playing?
- Or on how the others around us sound?
- Or concerned about what others might think about how we sound?

- One of the reasons we play some of the same songs each week is so that you can learn them and then when it comes time to worship you can close your eyes and just worship the God who loves you

- The Lord then goes on to say that right worship is not limited to what we do in church

- **Zechariah 7:8-10**

- Our relationships with other people reflect our relationship with God

- Jesus summarized this by telling us to love God and our neighbor

Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- Showing justice, mercy, and compassion are expressions of God’s nature

- Not oppressing those who are vulnerable or who you have power and authority over display God’s character

- True worship involves obedience to God and His Word

- And it extends beyond our time in community with other believers out into every facet of our lives

- There is no part of our lives that is excluded from our worship of God

- Every breath you take can be an act of worship to God

- Everything you do with every breath can be an act of worship

- But for it to be right worship, it must be in obedience to God and reflect His character and nature into your relationships with others

- The things the Lord says through Zechariah in this chapter are what the prophets had been saying for hundreds of years

- But it didn’t benefit those who heard them

- The Lord explains why

- **Zechariah 7:11-12**

- Why is it that some people seem determined not to believe in Jesus

- The simple answer is – they don’t want to!

- Their independence is more important to them than God’s forgiveness

- Their desire to follow their own path blinds them to the goodness of God’s ways

- Once they have made the decision to not believe, they shrug their shoulders, plug their ears, harden their heart, and refuse every attempt by God to reach them

- There is a terrible consequence to doing that

- **Zechariah 7:13-14**

- God had warned the people of Judah before the exile that if they refused to listen, repent, and return to Him, God would cause them to be kicked out of the land and that He would not listen to them when they called out to Him **Jeremiah 11:11**

Therefore thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.”

- These men had come to ask about their religion

- God turned it around and asked them to examine their heart

- True worship is not so much about what we do

- True worship is about trusting, believing, and obeying God and His Word

- True worship is about how I express God’s love to the people around me

- Maybe you are here or watching online and wondering, why should we worship God

- The simple answer is that you should do it because that is what you were created by God to do

- The Bible teaches that we are not capable of worshipping Him as we should, because inside of each of us is a nature that doesn’t want to

- God, as an expression of His love, grace, and mercy, sent His Son Jesus to make a way for us to worship Him

- That way was to sacrifice His life to pay for our rebellion

- Jesus died so that I could worship His Father, our God in heaven

- And when I accept His sacrifice, the burden of all my sins is lifted and forgiven – no more guilt

- And then I am promised eternal life in heaven with Jesus and all those I love who have received Christ

- And I am blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to help me to worship God and love Him and others as I should

- The more I get to know God and what He did for me and what He is doing and will do, the more I am inclined to worship Him
- God doesn't need my worship, just like I didn't need Harvey to build that Lego T-Rex
- I worship God because I need to worship Him – I need to worship God in the same way that my lungs need to take in air
- Worshipping God breathes life into my spirit
- And the truer my worship is, the more life there is in my spirit
- And the more life there is in my Spirit, the more of Jesus people can see from my life
- That is what God is looking for – close with this verse **John 4:24**
God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
- As I pray, ask God to open your heart wide and to make your worship true!
- **Pray**