

## Zechariah 7

### Notes

Chapters 7 & 8 are a response to the questions brought by a delegation from Bethel (house of God).

Chapter 7 has a negative tone – ending in the scattering of the people. Chapter 8 has a positive tone with the nations clinging to the robe of the Jews.

Two primary questions are addressed in chapter seven. First, are we serving ourselves or God? Second, are we listening to ourselves or God?

Title ideas:

The Glory of True Religion!

The Glory of Right Worship!

Zechariah 7:1-14 – The Glory of Right Worship!

Scriptures

<sup>1</sup> Now in the fourth year of King Darius it

came to pass *that* the word of the LORD

came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the

ninth month, Chislev,

Notes

'fourth year of Darius' =  
518 B.C.

Scriptures

<sup>2</sup> when *the people* sent Sherezer, with

Regem-Melech and his men, *to* the house

of God, <sup>to</sup> <sup>pr</sup>ay before the <sup>L</sup>LORD,

H2470 -

Notes

'house of God' – in  
the Hebrew =  
'Bethel'

## Scriptures

Malachi 2:7 -

For the lips of a priest  
should keep knowledge,  
And people should seek the  
law from his mouth;  
For he is the messenger of  
the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 58:1-9a -

Cry aloud, spare not;  
Lift up your voice like a  
trumpet;  
Tell My people their  
transgression,  
And the house of Jacob  
their sins.  
2 Yet they seek Me daily,  
And delight to know My  
ways,  
As a nation that did  
righteousness,  
And did not forsake the  
ordinance of their God.  
They ask of Me the  
ordinances of justice;  
They take delight in  
approaching God.  
3 'Why have we fasted,'  
they say, 'and You have not  
seen?'  
Why have we afflicted our  
souls, and You take no  
notice?

"In fact, in the day of your  
fast you find pleasure,  
And exploit all your  
laborers.

4 Indeed you fast for  
strife and debate,  
And to strike with the fist  
of wickedness.  
You will not fast as you do  
this day,  
To make your voice heard  
on high.

5 Is it a fast that I have  
chosen,  
A day for a man to afflict  
his soul?  
Is it to bow down his head  
like a bulrush,  
And to spread out  
sackcloth and ashes?  
Would you call this a fast,  
And an acceptable day to  
the LORD?

6 "Is this not the fast  
that I have chosen:  
To loose the bonds of  
wickedness,  
To undo the heavy  
burdens,  
To let the oppressed go  
free,  
And that you break every  
yoke?  
7 Is it not to share your  
bread with the hungry,

3 **and** to ask the priests who **were** in the

H559 -

house of the LORD of hosts, and the

prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the

H1058 -

fifth month  and fast as I have done for so

H5144 -

many years?" 

And that you bring to your  
house the poor who are cast  
out;

When you see the naked,  
that you cover him,  
And not hide yourself from  
your own flesh?

8 Then your light shall  
break forth like the morning,  
Your healing shall spring  
forth speedily,  
And your righteousness  
shall go before you;

The glory of the LORD shall  
be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and  
the LORD will answer;  
You shall cry, and He will  
say, 'Here I am.'

## Notes

'ask the priests' – The role  
of the priest was to help  
people understand and  
relate to God. They were  
to speak on behalf of God  
([Mal. 2:7](#)).

'fast' – consecrate  
yourself. Fasting is a  
spiritual discipline that is  
important for our faith.  
But like many other  
spiritual things it can do  
done in a way that is not  
spiritual ([Isa. 58:1-9a](#)).

'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 9<sup>th</sup>.

'weep/fast in the fifth  
month' – commemorates  
the tragic events  
surrounding the fall of  
Jerusalem and the  
destruction of the Temple.  
Since they were back in  
the land and the temple  
was being rebuilt, should  
they keep up the tradition  
of this fast? It is good to  
examine our traditions  
and rituals. At the very  
least we should regularly  
remind ourselves why we  
do them.

Scriptures

<sup>4</sup> Then the word of the LORD of hosts came

Notes

to me, saying,

#### Scriptures

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.

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.

<sup>5</sup> “Say to all the people of the land, and to

the priests: ‘When you fasted and mourned

in the fifth and seventh **months** during

those seventy **years**, did you really fast for

Me—for Me?

#### Notes

‘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 ([Matt. 6:16-18](#)). Everything we do, but especially religious things should be done for the Lord and not for men ([Col. 3:23-24](#)).

True fasting and mourning must be an expression of what is going in our own hearts. We live in a time when virtue-signaling deserves an awards show, like the Oscars.

Scriptures

Deuteronomy 12:7 -

And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.

<sup>6</sup> When you eat and when you drink, do you

not eat and drink *for yourselves?*

Notes

There is nothing wrong with religious rituals as long as those rituals are God-ordained and done with Him as the sole reason for doing them ([Deut. 12:7](#)).

Scriptures  
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.

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.’

1 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is  
not slack concerning His  
promise, as some count  
slackness, but is  
longsuffering toward us,  
not willing that any should  
perish but that all should  
come to repentance.

7 Should you not *have obeyed* the words which

the LORD  proclaimed through the former

H7121 – to call out – “ to  
proclaim v. — to state or  
announce something  
formally and authoritatively.

prophets when Jerusalem and the cities

around it were inhabited and prosperous, and

H3427 -

H7961 –  
secure,  
tranquil, safe,  
at ease

the South and the Lowland were inhabited?’ ”

Notes

‘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 Sam. 15:22).

God expects His people to  
obey Him – all the time  
and in everything (Jer.  
7:23).

As an expression of God’s  
grace, mercy, and  
patience, He does not  
punish people as soon as  
they sin. Instead, He sends  
warnings in the hopes that  
they will repent and turn  
from their sins (1 Pet. 3:9).

If we are going to serve  
God rather than  
ourselves, we must do it  
through faithful  
obedience, not through  
empty rituals.

“There is just no  
substitute for heart  
righteousness; all religious  
acts must flow out of a  
genuine response of faith  
and obedience to God, or  
they are self-serving, self-  
glorifying, and  
consequently, self-  
condemning.” (Kaiser,  
1992) page 368

Scriptures

<sup>8</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to

Zechariah, saying,

<sup>9</sup> “Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Execute true justice, show mercy and

H571 –  
right,  
faithful,

H4941 – “justice n. —  
judgment involved in  
the determination of  
rights and the  
assignment of rewards  
and punishments.

H2617 –  
kindness,  
lovingkindness

compassion everyone to his brother.

H7356 - compassion  
n. — a deep  
awareness of and  
sympathy for  
another’s suffering.

responsibility, as God’s  
representative, to  
discern where mercy  
could be exercised.

Notes

Next, the Lord reminds them of things He has told them already. And then He reminds them that disobedience to God is why they ancestors were sent into exile.

Notes

‘true justice’ – This is justice that aligns with God’s Word and will. We live in a time when justice is whatever the supposed ‘victims’ say it is.

‘mercy’ – not giving what they deserve.

How do you balance justice with mercy? Justice is getting what you deserve, and mercy is not getting what you deserve. An example of how this might be handled is with the cities of refuge. The taking of a human life is a capital offence – a life for a life. In the case of murder there is to be no mercy, but in the case of manslaughter, the unintentional taking of a human life, the manslayer can flee to a city of refuge and receive mercy. It was the judge’s

#### Scriptures

Micah 2:1-2 -

Woe to those who  
devise iniquity,  
And work out evil on  
their beds!

At morning light they  
practice it,  
Because it is in the  
power of their hand.

2 They covet fields  
and take them by  
violence,

Also houses, and seize  
them.

So they oppress a man  
and his house,

A man and his  
inheritance.

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."

## <sup>10</sup>Do not oppress the widow or the

H6231 – "to oppress v.  
— to come down on or  
keep down by unjust  
use of one's authority.

fatherless,

The alien or the poor.

Let none of you ~~plan~~ evil in his heart

H2803 -  
devise

Against his brother.'

#### Notes

'widows and  
fatherless/orphans' were  
the most vulnerable  
people in the community.

'The alien' – someone  
who was not a Jew. The  
alien did not have all the  
rights as a Jew, but that  
did not mean it would be  
okay to oppress them.

'the poor' – No matter  
how prosperous a nation  
becomes, there are some  
who will be poor. While  
not as vulnerable as the  
widow or the orphan, they  
could easily be oppressed  
and taken advantage of or  
disregarded. To do so  
would be evil.

'plan evil' – God knows  
what we are thinking. In  
every culture and society  
there are some who have  
the power and influence  
that makes it possible for  
them to oppress others.  
When God allows  
someone to be in a  
position of power or  
influence His desire is that  
they would lead others to  
Him and His will. It  
displeases Him when they  
don't ([Mic. 2:1-2](#)).

Jesus summarized this by  
telling us to love God and  
our neighbor ([Matt.  
22.36-40](#)).

Scriptures

<sup>11</sup> But they refused to heed, shrugged their

H3985 -

H7181 – “to heed v. — to listen, hear, or pay close attention to, and usually respond in conformity.

shoulders, and stopped their ears so that

they could not hear.

Notes

Scriptures

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it spring the issues of life.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 - Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

2 Chronicles 36:16 - But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

<sup>12</sup> Yes, they made their hearts like flint,

refusing to hear the law and the words

H8085 –  
implies  
refusing to  
understand

which the LORD of hosts had sent by His

Spirit through the former prophets. Thus

great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.

H7110 -  
indignation

Notes

'hearts like flint' – The state of our heart is very important to God. Life has a way of damaging and hardening the human heart. Regular work must be done to make sure it doesn't get hard ([Prov. 4:23](#)). Only God has the power to change a human heart ([Ezek. 11:19-20](#)).

'Thus great wrath...' – There is a terrible consequence for rejecting God, especially after He has been faithful to warn you of the consequences ([2 Chron. 36:16](#)).

Scriptures

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.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore it happened, *that* just as He

proclaimed and they would not hear, so

they called out and I would not listen," says

the LORD of hosts.

Notes

God had warned them  
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 ([Jer.  
11:11](#)).

Scriptures

Deuteronomy 28:64 -  
Then the LORD will scatter  
you among all peoples,  
from one end of the earth  
to the other, and there  
you shall serve other gods,  
which neither you nor  
your fathers have  
known—wood and stone.

<sup>14</sup> “But I scattered them with a whirlwind

H5590 -

among all the nations which they had not

known. Thus the land became desolate after

H8074 –  
extensively  
destroyed

them, so that no one passed through or

returned; for they made the pleasant land

H2532 –  
goodly,  
precious,

desolate.”

Top of Chapter

Notes

God always does what he  
says He will do ([Deut.](#)  
[28:64](#)).