

## Zechariah Lesson 07

Zechariah Chapter 7

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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Memory verses for this week: *Psa 114:7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; Psa 114:8 Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.*

**Introduction:** Last week we covered the Zechariah's tenth vision about the chariots. This week we begin with the question concerning the feasts.

### I. The Question of the Feasts

*Zec 7:1 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu;*

*Zec 7:2 When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the LORD,*

*Zec 7:3 And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?*

Our attention is called to the exact time that the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah. It was in the fourth year of Darius in the fourth day of the ninth month. Four years had passed since Cyrus released the Jews and permitted them to return to Jerusalem. Remember, some of the Jews chose to remain in Babylon.

In verse 2, the company of men sent from Babylon inquired about the fast of the fifth month.

In Zech. 8:19, we see the people had been keeping four fasts...one in the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months.

*Zec 8:19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.*

They were sent to the priests and prophets as to what the word of God says about keeping the fast of the fifth month. It appears that there was no question concerning the fast of the fourth, seventh and tenth months.

Verse 3 says that this keeping of the fast in the fifth month had been practiced for many years. It was in memory of their past sad experience before the captivity. Apparently, they wanted to discontinue this fast. At least there must have been some doubt as to whether it should be continued.

## II. THE ANSWER TO THEIR INQUIRY

*Zec 7:4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,*

*Zec 7:5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?*

Notice the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah and came with a question.

When they did fast in the fifth and seventh months, was it unto the Lord? Or was it just merely ceremonial? It was a religious form. This message was to be to all the people of the land and to the priests.

God gave the feasts and the ordinances to the people and they were to be continued. They were recognized all the way until Jesus Christ's time.

*Lev 23:37 These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:*

*Lev 23:38 Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.*

When Christ came and died for us on the cross, the old ordinances and ceremonial laws were eliminated and we have no need to gather to remember feasts recognized in the Old Testament times.

*Eph 2:14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

*Eph 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*

*Eph 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

*Eph 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.*

*Eph 2:18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

*Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;  
Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;  
Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:  
Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

*Zec 7:6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?*

*Zec 7:7 Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?*

God declares that it was to themselves that they did eat and drink. God tells them that they should have heard the words of the prophets while they were living in prosperity before they were carried away into Babylon.

#### Why We Should Hear God's Word

1. If we would listen to the message of God and obey it, we would not face near as many disappointing hours as we do.
2. In an hour of prosperity, men seemingly do not realize the need of God.
3. It appears that men will not call upon the Lord until a great tragedy comes into their lives.
4. When death or sickness comes, people begin to think about God and their spiritual condition.

Matthew Henry made these comments about verse 7.

The principal good thing they should have done was left undone (v. 7): "*Should you not hear the words which the Lord has cried by the former prophets?* Yes, that you should have done on your fast-days; it was not enough to *weep and separate yourselves* on your fast-days, in token of your sorrow for the judgments you were under, but you should have *searched the scriptures* of the prophets, that you might have seen what was the ground of God's controversy with your fathers, and might have taken warning by their miseries not to tread in the steps of their iniquities.

You ask, Shall we do as we have done, in fasting? No, you must do that which you have not yet done; you must repent of your sins and reform your lives. This is

what we now call you to, and it is the same that the former prophets called your fathers to.”<sup>1</sup>

### III. WHY THEIR PRAYERS WERE NOT ANSWERED

*Zec 7:8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,*

*Zec 7:9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother:*

*Zec 7:10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

Again we are told that the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah.

In verses 9 and 10, God gives some instruction to Israel. He tells them to execute true judgment and show mercy and compassion on every man to his brother. They were to not oppress widows or the fatherless, nor strangers, nor the poor. They were to not imagine evil towards their fellowman in their heart.

Jesus said that the world would know us by the love we show one to another.

*John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

*John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Jesus went on to say that true religion before God is demonstrated on how we deal with widows and the fatherless.

*James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

*Zec 7:11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.*

*Zec 7:12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.*

The people refused to listen to the instructions. The message seemed to fall upon deaf ears. They simply would not hear and turned their hearts away from this message.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

Verse 12 says their hearts became hardened and cold. Because of their rejection of the message of the Lord, He sent wrath. If we want God's blessings upon our country, we as Christians must hear God and seek to do righteously as we are commanded. This is what we need to do to bring America back to being a true nation of God.

*2 Chr 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

J. Vernon McGee elaborated on my point for the need of Christians to come back to God's ways in his commentary. It is blunt and very pointed, but I think we all need to hear what he said.

If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we couldn't stand ourselves. Only God could put up with us. Oh, if we would just come to the Word of God and rest in the Word of God! God is going to be specific with them and put these commandments right down upon their lives. This is what we need to do also. I do not mean to step on your toes, but I am trying to tell you what the Word of God says. Let me illustrate my point. If all the church officers in this country would simply read the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) to see what are God's requirements for being an officer in the church, and if they would simply follow those requirements, over one-half of the church officers in this country would resign before next Sunday. The church would be better off, and I think a revival would break out in many places. When I teach those epistles, I receive less mail from my listeners than during any other period of time. Why? Because they do not like to hear what the Word of God has to say. Even some of us preachers would have to walk out of the pulpit and never enter it again if we really followed what the Word of God says.

There is little wonder that the church has the problem that it has. There is little wonder that it is filled with a bunch of babies, sucking their thumbs, crying loud and long unless they are given some attention, a rattle to play with, or maybe a yo-yo. They take some little course of instruction and think that that makes them a full-grown child of God in a few weeks. These little courses are not even an all-day sucker for the babe. During the Second World War when there was a shortage of officers, they instituted a ninety-day course to produce second lieutenants. They were called "the wonder boys." We sure have a lot of "wonder Christians" who know nothing about the Word of God.

Again let me illustrate what I am talking about. Although I have taken as long as five years to teach the entire Bible, I feel like I am a babe as far as the Word of God is concerned. I've missed so much even teaching at that slow pace.<sup>2</sup>

*Zec 7:13 Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:*

*Zec 7:14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.*

By refusing to hear and being rebels, the people reaped what they sowed. God cried unto them and they would not hear. When it was too late, and they cried unto Him, He then would not hear. If you remember Noah and how he preached all those years, yet no one would hear. But when the rains started and the door was closed, they all perished. Salvation is similar to that picture. God is offering salvation to all who will come, but He will not strive with man forever.

Verse 14 points out that the judgment of God upon them has lasted for over two thousand years. They have been scattered among the nations all these years.

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**

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<sup>2</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary* [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.