

Zechariah 7:1-14

Setting: Zechariah was born in Babylonia captivity under Nebuchadnezzar. He's now back in Jerusalem and they are in the process of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. They are very discouraged with all the devastation. God gives Zechariah a word of encouragement for the land of Israel. Two years had passed since the visions of encouragement have occurred. Chapter 7 is like a little parenthesis in the life of Zechariah. Some people are asking questions, looking for answers from Zechariah. This is where we start today.

Vs1: (518 BC) Chisleu is December. December 4, 518 BC is the time.

Vs2: two men plus a group of men are sent to Jerusalem to ask some questions to answer their issues.

Vs3: once Nebuchadnezzar had taken over Jerusalem and destroyed the temple, the people set up fast days, not feast days, for mourning. The men had been fasting for four days in the year in the 4th and 7th month for 70 years, and they wanted to know if they should continue. They didn't ask God if they should set them up, they just took it upon themselves and set it up. Now they want to know if they should continue since the captivity is over and we're back in our city walls.

Vs4: God is answering the question Himself through Zechariah.

Vs5: God asked were you fasting for yourself or to address Me in the spiritual realm? What were you recognizing by fasting? What is really in your heart when you fast and pray? Are you looking for God for spiritual edification or are you being self-serving?

Vs6: God said they fasted for themselves, not HIM.

Vs7: God says, Listen here. What you should've done was listen to what I had to say to you before this destruction occurred. Then the 70 years of captivity and all this devastation wouldn't have happened in the first place.

Vs8: Jeremiah 42 is a good chapter to read about the warnings God gives to countries that aren't behaving in a Godly way. God is giving another message to Zechariah. Zechariah always starts out by saying "the word of the Lord came to me"

Vs9: Here's God's answer to the men about the fasting: instead of doing all these fasts for something that happened in history that you can't change, why don't you treat your fellow man with mercy and compassion, I like your brother?

Vs10: show mercy and compassion to widows, fatherless people/children, strangers, poor people, and don't dare any of you think bad thoughts about these people in your heart. If we treat people like we should, we'd be ok.

Vs11: instead of listening to what God had to say to them, the men yanked their shoulders away and put their fingers in their ears. The Israelites didn't want to hear what God had to say.

Vs12: they made their hearts into adamant stone and wouldn't listen. An adamant stone is a diamond, harder than anything else imaginable.

Vs13: that is why the destruction to Jerusalem came. Israel didn't listen to God, so God didn't listen to Israel when they cried out.

Vs14: But God is not done with the nation of Israel. God scattered the Jews throughout the world and laid their land desolate, but now the Jews are back in their land, and the worst is yet to come. They are there because God has put them there.