

XIII. Zechariah in Biblical Perspective
The Gospel According to Zechariah
“The Prophetic Word #2: The Lord’s Fast
The Prophetic Word #3: True Religion”
Zechariah 7:1–8:23
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We looked at a prophetic word in the last study and now we’re looking at a series of prophetic words from our Lord through Zechariah to His people. Before we read the text, I want to make a couple of comments. Zechariah brings us in a trajectory to the New Testament. Zechariah is a prophetic book that's pointing to the Messiah and His coming. That's why the Gospels continually refer to the book of Zechariah, and that's why it brings us to that but it's also pointing us, even as this text does in this study, not only to the coming of the Messiah, but the second coming of the Messiah. So Zechariah points us to the first advent of the Messiah that would be the Gospels. Then he points us to the second advent of the Messiah, which is referenced prophetically by the Apostles and the Epistles, and then given to us in that apocalyptic literature that we call rightly the Book of Revelation.

This morning this young man asked me “Pastor, have you preached on the Book of Revelation?” I said, ‘Yes, three times and still working on it.’ He said, “Can you explain to me the symbolism in the Book of Revelation?” I said, ‘Do you know how to go to the website? I think you can go find your answer there to the symbolism in the book of Revelation.’ I love Zechariah because I believe that the Book of Daniel and the Book of Zechariah are your two key Old Testament prophetic books pointing in that direction.

Secondly, before we look at the text, I want to comment on this prophetic word, the words given through these prophets from the Lord. We have already looked at the eight visions/dreams that all came in one night to Zechariah, and now we're looking at these prophetic words given to Zechariah that are strung together with a very significant purpose, as we look at several in this study. When you read in the Bible the word prophecy or prophetic, it means to proclaim, or speak forth truth. Sometimes in the giving of the Bible, it was speaking forth God's Word that He was bringing to us in what we call Divine revelation. In other words, that 1600 years where we have the Prophets for the Old Testament and the Apostles for the New Testament, bringing to us the Word of God and the Word of the Lord. When they speak, they don't say, “This is an idea that I have about God or this is man’s word about God.” They say, ‘thus saith the Lord’ or they say, ‘I'm glad you received this word for that which it is not the word of men, but the very word of God, thus saith the Lord.’

Sometimes the word prophetic means not giving divine revelation or canonical truth that is put into the Bible, but it can mean giving us insights on the truth already. It would be the same thing as a sermon and that’s what we have in this text for this study. Zechariah is giving us new revelation that's pointing to the New Testament. Zechariah is also giving us insights, illumination into something that's already been said. In fact, I'll take you to a couple of texts that he is clearly working from in this prophetic word of the Lord as it is being given to us. So prophecy as preaching, illumination of God's given Word or during the 1600 years of giving us the Word of God was given to us through the Prophets and Apostles bringing Divine revelation to us that was been encompassed in the canon of Scripture.

Thirdly, I want you to put into your mind this notion of religion. How often do we talk about religion and how many times do I hear people say, 'Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship.' I understand what is attempting to be said there. Christianity is not a manmade religion designed to seek a relationship with God, but Christianity is a religion. In fact, the Old and the New Testament identify it as true religion that flows from the relationship with God. Religion basically as a term means a sacred, defined way of life. You can think of it this way; a way of life that is a statement of worship to the praise of God. Religion is not a bad word but what makes it bad is, if we have a manmade religion whereby we think we're going to work our way to heaven. But there is true religion and that true religion comes from the Divine initiative, by God's grace through His Son, as He sends forth His Spirit to bring us into a vital personal saving relationship with Christ and then that issues forth into what the Bible calls true religion which evidences that you have a saving relationship with Christ who has come from the heavens to save you and bring you to be with Himself.

The fourth thought is as we come to this text, there are always two enemies in the lives of God's people. God saves us for His glory where all of life is to be lived for the glory of God. My assignment in the Ligonier's Conference this week is one of preaching on I Corinthians 10:31, which happens to be one of my favorite texts of Scripture. The theme of the conference was Stand Firm, and in this day of challenge of the infiltration of the world and assault onto Christ's Church, we are called to stand firm, which doesn't mean to stand still, it means to stand up and to speak out on mission, on message and in ministry, to what God has called us to be and to do as His church making disciples. Then as His disciples we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, bringing the powerful truth of the Gospel and that's fulfilling the Great Commission, while we also have a great commitment to live the great commandment.

When God's people gather, it ought to be a different place from the world, and it should not reflect the cacophony of the age, the divisiveness of the age, the anger of men that rules in the age. It should reflect the very oil of gladness poured out by the grace of God. It ought to be that place, as a wonderful hymn says, 'where from every stormy wind it is our Lord that brings us to that calm and sure retreat, for it is the mercy seat occupied by our Savior, enthroned for glory because of His grace.' As the Gospel stabilizes us and sends us into the world, what we do is worship. There are two kinds of worship that is giving God glory. One is gathered Lord's Day worship and two, is everyday life style worship.

Romans 12:1 says *[1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy (because of the sprinkled blood of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* Notice how this says 'by the mercies of God,' where it's not to gain God's mercy but it's because of God's grace and mercy, that with your very existence you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, because Christ did away with the dead sacrifices of the Old Testament when He came to present Himself as our glorious Sacrifice. This is our reasonable service of worship. A Baptist preacher once said 'the only problem with living sacrifices is they keep wiggling off the altar.'

This is to be our life worship. I Corinthians 10:31 says *[31] So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* The whole purpose of our redemption is worship of the Triune God for He created us for His glory. He sustained us for His glory. He redeemed us for His glory. Then worship is crucial. We want it to be authentic and real. It's about God, not about us. When we worship we come before Him as it says in Psalm 103:1, *[1] Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!*

Just like there's threats to true religion, there's two threats to worship. One is, the dryness of ritualism where we're checking the box. This is a great challenge. We here on staff don't go into a think tank each Lord's Day and say 'What is it we can do this Sunday?' No, God says we are to worship in spirit and in truth. Where is truth? His Word is truth. We don't worship by vain imagination – make no graven images (Exodus 20:4). Don't imagine for human imagination doesn't guide us in worship. It is Divine revelation so God willing, every time that chime is struck on the Lord's Day, until the benediction, every element of worship has been prescribed by the Lord, and now it awaits the people of God. Is that what moves their soul? It is not are you doing something in worship that moves me? But am I moved in my soul to provide the worship that God has prescribed, and that is my delight.

So what are those two enemies of worship? One is the vanity of our imagination in worship that we bring to God what we think He ought to be pleased with, instead of bringing to God from our soul what He says pleases Him. When you come together on the first day of the week, bring that which you have purposed to give. Shall I appear before the Lord empty handed? We are to be singing psalms, hymns and spiritual psalms, making melody in your heart. Hear that? God's not testing the quality of your voice for His pleasure. He's listening to your heart – making melody in our heart. Why do we sing out? It is because what's in the heart comes out of the mouth. We also sing out because this is gathered worship, speaking to one another. I don't want to be provocative in this, but honestly, if we're silent in worship, that's either telling God in the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, that you don't have anything in your heart to come out of your mouth or you don't care about those around you? Because part of this singing is to speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

In this worship we are to make the common confession of truth. That's why we have a confession. Until I come give attention to the public reading of Scripture, that reading of the Word where we have Old Testament and New Testament readings every Lord's Day. Give attention to the reading of the Scriptures and the exhortation from them – the preaching of that Word. I urge that prayers and supplications intercessions with thanksgiving be made on behalf of all men. Have you ever wondered why every month we always pray for those in authority over us locally, regionally and nationally? Because that text then ends, especially for those in authority over you. You might be thinking, "Well, I didn't vote for that." It doesn't matter. We're to pray for them and that the sovereign hand of God would be at work upon them, in them and through them and that's to be in our worship.

So, we don't we don't go into gathered worship with the vain imagination where we put together the worship that we think He ought to be pleased with nor do we take the elements and just check off the box as we work our way down the list – confession done, prayer done, offering done, Scripture reading done, benediction done. That's the deadness of ritualism, but the answer to ritualism is not serendipity worship. The answer to ritualism is the soul that's thrilled with bringing God the worship that He says pleases Him. What pleases us is to go to His Word to find out what worship honors Him. That's what the prophetic word to Zechariah deals with in this text. Let's walk through it together. I want to show you five things from it as we go through it.

Zechariah 7:1-3 says [1] In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chisleu. [2] Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favor of the LORD, [3] saying to the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, "Should I weep and abstain in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"

Based on this one might be thinking “What in the world is he talking about?” We have to do some work in Jeremiah and the other prophets to help us here. First, we have to set the chronology so the first question is what year are we in right now in the book of Zechariah? When we started in Zechariah, his ministry began in the second year of Darius’ reign so now we’re in the fourth year and that means the temple is halfway constructed. We can see the people are starting to hear that now. Why is that important? That’s important because back when the people were taken into Babylonian captivity, in order for the leadership to not forget who they were, declared a regiment of fasts that were going to be observed every year by the people.

There were going to be four fasts that eventually were set in place for those who remained back in Jerusalem and to be observed by those who had been taken into the Babylonian captivity. Those four fasts are outlined for us in the Scriptures. I’m not going to give you the Hebrew months but I’ll do it in our months and I’ll give you the dates around those four fasts. In July of every year there would be a fast to remember the capture of the city of Jerusalem by the Babylonian hordes. Then there was a fast the next month in August, and that is the remembering of the burning of Jerusalem. Then the third fast was done in October of every year to remember a massacre that had taken place. There was a prophet leader in the people of Israel named Gedaliah who was captured and tortured. Then 80 of his men were massacred and that massacre and the assassination of Gedaliah was remembered. Then in January there was a fourth fast that remembered the third siege of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, when he placed them completely under his control, having deported so many of their citizens into slavery and captivity. So, the four fasts happened in July, August, October and January, of our months.

Now Cyrus had sent the decree that they were to return. The Medo-Persian empire has defeated the Babylonian empire and Cyrus, the Persian has sent them back. Cyrus was followed by Darius the Mede, and he continues to send them back and to support them to establish the nation again, to rebuild Jerusalem, rebuild the walls eventually, rebuild the gates but they are to start with their temple. That’s the organizing point. They gave some of the furnishings back that had been taken away. They gave the resources to get started, and they’ve come back building what is known as the Second Temple of Israel or the Zerubbabel temple of Israel.

The foundations of the altar in the temple have been built and it’s about halfway done at this point in Zechariah. The priests have been located, prophets are back in ministry like Haggai and Zechariah. In the northern part of Israel, the people of Bethel send down a message – do we continue the regimen of fasts? Now these are not Biblically commanded fasts. In the Bible there is only one fast commanded of God’s people in the law of Moses and that was the fast related to unleavened bread. These were things that had been developed by the leadership so that the people would not forget who they were, what they had, and where they were when the hand of God’s judgment fell upon them with the Babylonians, that is a nation that was not His but that He used to discipline His covenanted national people.

As this question of continuing this fast comes for there is one coming up in the fifth month, then comes a series of prophetic words that are strung together in response to this inquiry that comes from Bethel. The first one that comes is given to us in Zechariah 7:4-10. It is a word that calls the people to repent of their ritualism in worship, that is checking the boxes in worship. Let’s look at what it says.

Zechariah 7:4-10 says [4] Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me: [5] “Say to all the people of the land and the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? [6] And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? [7] Were not these the

words that the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?”

[8] And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, [9] “Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, [10] do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”

Starting in verse 4, we find that he gives a call to abandon rituals in the name of religion. Do you hear what he's saying? Basically they are doing the same thing in these fasts that they have designed, that they were doing that caused God to bring the judgment. Here is what God is saying to them; In the days of their prosperity and success that led up to the days of the discipline of Babylon coming in were you not eating and drinking and having everything that you enjoyed to yourself? You did not take what I had given to you to use for Me, for in the days of blessing it wasn't about Me. Now, in the days of My judgment, the fasts that you have put in place, in light of the judgment, you still are not focused on Me. You now have not merely the thoughtlessness of how you use My blessings, you now have the self-absorption of your ritualism that you have invented in worship. He calls them to repentance out of the deadness of false religion and ritualism.

Secondly, he calls them now to embrace true religion. According to Zechariah 7:8-10 he wants them to repent of their false judgments and render true judgment, true measures, true balances, show kindness and mercy to one another. Don't devise evil against another in your hearts. Now look what it says in Zechariah 7:11, *[11] But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear.* So before we go to the third thing, they have been called to repentance from the deadness of man-made religion and ritualism and the call to focus upon the Lord, whether it's a feast of blessing or a fasting of repentance, it's to the Lord that they are to be focused.

This is not new. As I said, this prophetic word is not just Divine revelation, it's also illumination from previous revelation. Let's look at Deuteronomy 10. Back in the Mosaic Covenant, God knows the danger of the deadness of ritualism. Whenever you prescribe something that is to be done in obedience to the Lord, there is always the emptiness of ritualism as a possible snare and trap that we want to avoid. The answer is not to hire somebody to get up here and become a performer on Sunday morning to manipulate us. No, God is our liturgist. The pastor and others on staff are just the prompters. It is God who comes to lead His people with the elements that He's prescribed and out of our love to Him, that becomes the joy of our heart so that we say 'no' to the deadness of man-made ritualism.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 says *[12] “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, [13] and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?”*

Now let's look at I Samuel 15. Here we see the flip side. These historical books are so rich for us to set the context of the ministry of the Prophets after the exile and this text will sound familiar because the Psalmist will say it as well. This is a hymn that Samuel writes. I Samuel 15:22-23 says *[22] And 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 listen than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.”*

In other words, is it the prescribed element that delights the Lord or the delight of your obedience to Him? Obedience shows the heart that sacrifices to the Lord and yes, bring the good offerings to the Lord. The Lord delights when you listen and love His word read and proclaimed. In other words, instead of seeking Him with this Word, they've just come and checked the boxes and think He ought to be grateful for the fat of the rams that they bring and the sacrifices that they have purchased to bring. What He wants is your heart as you embrace the elements of worship. Then what about this matter of true religion that is calling us to? I want to go back to Zechariah and read it again, and then I want to take you somewhere else and see if this doesn't strike a chord within you.

Zechariah 7:8-10 says [8] *And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, [9] "Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, [10] do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart."* Slander, gossip and judgment among God's people ought not to be there. Those who know that they've been saved by grace are ready to speak and love, and those who know how to speak truth in love are very difficult to offend. When they are offended, they're always ready to forgive from the heart already and then verbally with repentance. Does that this sounds familiar?

Let's look at James in the New Testament for I want you to see the trajectory of this call into the Epistles, the very words from our Savior's brother, the one who gave leadership to the church at Jerusalem. Does he think that there's no such thing as religion? No. But does he know there's a dead religion? Yes. But he also knows out of a living relationship with Christ that delights to hear the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, there is true religion.

James 1:22-27 says [22] *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23] For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. [24] For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. [25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty (this is God's law rightly used in the Gospel of grace, where Christ has set us free from the dominion of sin), and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

[26] *If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. [27] Religion that is pure and undefiled (unstained) before God the Father is this (hear the quote from Zechariah): to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.* I love that word unstained, for it's not just simply nit-picking sins off that are clinging to us, but to go to that sin that would stain us into our very being and by God's grace, bring it out of us. Now let's go back to Zechariah 7 where we will look at the third things that he calls for in terms of true religion and see how this call continues to us.

Zechariah 7:11-14 says [11] *But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. [12] They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts. [13] "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts, [14] "and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate."*

We're actually told in the Scriptures that the 70 years were designed by God to affirm their refusal to obey the Sabbath year commandment and leave the land to rest. God brought discipline upon them, and yet the discipline did not send them to repentance. So He calls them not only to true religion, but He calls them to faithfulness. He says, 'Will you not learn from My discipline over these 70 years? Yet you're still making it about yourself.' Let's look now at Zechariah 8.

Zechariah 8:1-8 says [1] And the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, [2] "Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. [3] Thus says the LORD: I have returned to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain. [4] Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of great age. [5] And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets. [6] Thus says the LORD of hosts: If it is marvelous in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvelous in my sight, declares the LORD of hosts? [7] Thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will save my people from the east country and from the west country, [8] and I will bring them to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness."

He says in my hand of discipline upon Jerusalem, you did not learn. Then He says, 'Yet I will be faithful. Not only will this temple be rebuilt, but I will visit the Holy Mountain, the Temple Mount of Zion, and I will bring the hand of blessing and the streets will be full of joy in My presence. In this new Jerusalem with a remnant of My people, they will be united with people that are not My people. I will call a people to My remnant from the East and from the West, and they shall fill My city.' Where is He going? I want to take you to where He's going. Let's look at Acts 2.

Here in Acts 2 the disciples have been there in diligent intercessory prayer in the Upper Room, as Jesus had directed them. There is Pentecostal power in the formal infilling of the body of Christ in this new church that He has established with 120 in that Upper Room. As they are there, they are filled with the Spirit of God, and then they go out in the day of the Feast of Pentecost. Here there are now no stubborn shoulders, no devising evil for here is a company of His covenant people.

Acts 2:1-4 says [1] When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He was going to set their tongues on fire by His Spirit with His Word, even giving them the ability to preach that Word in languages they did not know. Why was that important? Here's why it's important, because people from the East and West have come and God has come through the Messiah ascended, pouring forth His Spirit, as He is igniting this glorious and great commissioned church, living the great commandment to love the Lord with heart, soul and mind and one another. Let's continue in Acts 2.

Acts 2:5-13 says [5] Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews (the remnant), devout men from every nation under heaven. [6] And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. [7] And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? [8] And

how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? (This isn't babbling for they hear God's Word preached in their own language) [9] Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, [10] Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, [11] both Jews and proselytes (Gentiles), Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” [12] And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” [13] But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” As usual there are always those who were mocking.

Here is the initial fulfillment and then in Acts 9 through 12, it will go further to Judea and then to Samaria and then to the world as this glorious fulfillment of God's faithfulness that will be birthed in Jerusalem and it will spread throughout all the nations until all of this people have been brought to Him in this New Covenant. Then the Jerusalem of heaven shall down and in its environs we will dwell forever in a new heavens and a new earth. Now let's go back to Zechariah to see this last section. We have seen the repentance from ritualism, the call to true religion, the declaration of God's faithfulness and now the last section.

Zechariah 8:9-13 says [9] Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Let your hands be strong, you who in these days have been hearing these words from the mouth of the prophets who were present on the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built (This is the downpayment of what is coming). [10] For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for beast, neither was there any safety from the foe for him who went out or came in, for I set every man against his neighbor. [11] But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, declares the LORD of hosts. [12] For there shall be a sowing of peace. The vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its produce, and the heavens shall give their dew. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. [13] And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong.”

This is what I've promised to happen, says the Lord. You're going to see it because the same hand that brought judgment upon you is now going to bring a measure of blessing in your own days. Your profits will preach, the temple will be rebuilt, the foundations will be laid and there will be this measure of blessing returning to this earthly Jerusalem in anticipation of that day of My faithfulness, when I send My Messiah and a new people from the East and West will be gathered together into that place of Jerusalem and then spread throughout all the world until the coming of the heavenly Jerusalem at His return. Let's continue in the text.

Zechariah 8:14-19 says [14] For thus says the LORD of hosts: “As I purposed to bring disaster to you when your fathers provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the LORD of hosts, [15] so again have I purposed in these days to bring good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; fear not. [16] These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; [17] do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the LORD.”

[18] And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, [19] “Thus says 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 seasons of joy and gladness and cheerful feasts. Therefore love truth and peace.

All these fasts that they've asked about shall be to the House of Judah, not of fasting and mourning for My promises are true. Here's your answer. Because of who I am and what I'm doing, make the fasts, the cheerful declarations of praise in the feast of God's grace and gladness, therefore love, truth and peace. Let's continue in the conclusion of this text.

Zechariah 8:20-23 says [20] *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. [21] The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.’* (Can't you see the Great Commission there? We're going to nation after nation after nation, and you're not going without me. I'm going with you. Hear our Savior say, I will be with you to the end of the age.) [22] *Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. [23] Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, (We're united. There is no Jew or Gentile.) saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”* And thus, we are together until He comes. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, thank You for the moments together in Your Word. Thank You for this glorious Word of prophetic proclamation that enlightens what You have already said in the Scriptures and then anticipates those glorious Gospel truths of fulfillment in Christ and then the ascended Christ bringing, this glorious, joyful work of a New Covenant into the streets of Jerusalem that will go to Judea, Samaria and to the world, and then back to this Jerusalem will come that Savior, splitting open, the Mount of Olives and the heavenly Jerusalem shall come down. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.