

## Zechariah Chapter Seven

**Introduction:** This chapter concerns the nature and use of certain fasts kept by the Jews, on account of the destruction of the temple, and other things; and concerning the message of the former prophets to them, and the effects of it. The reason for the first part was an embassy sent by the Jews to the priests and prophets, to know whether they should continue the fast of the fifth month; upon which the prophet was sent by the Lord unto them. The time of the prophecy is noted, #Zec 7:1. An account of the embassy is given, of the persons that were sent, and to whom, and upon what account, #Zec 7:2,3. The answer of the Lord to it by the prophet, showing the usefulness of fasts to him, and they were a listening to his voice by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was in great prosperity, #Zec 7:4-7 and then they are exhorted by him, in the ministry of the present prophet, to acts of righteousness, several species of which are mentioned; and which were the same they had been exhorted to by the former prophets, but had neglected, and hardened their hearts against all exhortations and instructions, #Zec 7:8-12 and were the reason of their captivity and desolation, #Zec 7:13,14.

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;

This is into the second year of laying the foundation of the walls and temple but some two years before it is complete. This month corresponds to parts of our October and November.

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

This is the embassy or group of men sent as noted in the introduction.

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?

Some try to teach this is about the Jews still in captivity but that doesn't fit with the over all prophecy. The work on the walls is at least going forward and it appears they may be finished. So the ones in Jerusalem are asking should they continue this feast to commemorate the temple after it was destroyed.

4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,

The beginning of yet another prophecy from God.

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?

They have been keeping these fast for seventy years, but the Lord asks why they did and for what purpose? When you keep these feasts do you rally remember God and do you mourn because of the sinfulness that you know is not of God? Serious charges from God against His people,

6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat [for yourselves], and drink [for yourselves]?

You say you are in mourning and feasting for God. Is this the real reason?

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 points out His word to them by the former prophets and asks should they not have listened to them. They knew prosperity and the whole of the land from the mountains to the sea was prosperous. They had reason to listen to the former prophets, but did not do so then.

8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

The Lord then tells Zechariah to repeat the words of the former prophets.

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

The same thing God said to the people before the captivity He now has the prophet speak to this people present in Jerusalem. God does not change and His word is forever the same.

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.

The Jews always had laws that demanded the poor and helpless be taken care of. This was much different than the nations around them where these classes of people had no standing and were taken advantage of at every turn.

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

Still speaking about the Jews before the captivity and how they knew better and had deliberately turned away from doing what God told them to do.

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.

This is said to be a particularly hard stone, like a diamond and the Jews say it was this kind of stone that Moses used to write with and that Solomon used to hew the stones so perfectly when building the first temple. So it is saying that they have deliberately hardened their hearts so they cannot hear what God is saying to them.

13 Therefore it is come to pass, [that] as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, says the LORD of hosts:

The Jews would not listen to God and do what God said for them to do, even when God cried out to them and begged them to obey Him. Thus in turn when things were not prosperous and the Jews cried out to God, God did not hear them that is listen to their cries for help.

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.

Because the former people disobeyed and by their own choice did not listen God sent them into captivity. God had given everything to them, but they had destroyed the beauty of God with their disobedience.