

4 – THE ISSUE OF FASTING (ZECHARIAH 7:1-8:23)

I. The Practice of Fasting (Zechariah 7:1-7)

A. The Question about Fasting (Zechariah 7:1-3)

- Almost two years after the night visions, men came from Bethel seeking favor from the Lord.
- They raised the issue concerning whether they should continue to fast in the fifth month.
- They pointed out that they maintained this practice of fasting for many years.

B. The Rebuke (Zechariah 7:4-7)

- Through the prophet, the Lord asks for whom did they fast during the last 70 years.
- He also asks for whom were they eating and drinking.
- He points out that the former prophets warned Jerusalem against empty ritual practices.

II. The Lord's Directives (Zechariah 7:8-14)

A. The Lord's Commands (Zechariah 7:8-10)

- Through the prophet, the Lord tells the people to render true judgments.
- They were to show kindness and mercy to each other.
- They were not to oppress others and not devise evil towards another person in their hearts.

B. The Response of Their Fathers (Zechariah 7:11-14)

- The Lord points out that their fathers refused to hear and hardened their hearts.
- They hardened themselves lest they respond to the law and the word of the Lord.
- Therefore, the Lord became angry and scattered them among the nations.
- As they were scattered, the land became desolate.

III. The Coming Restoration (Zechariah 8:1-23)

A. The Renewed Relationship (Zechariah 8:1-8)

- The Lord expresses that he is jealous for Israel with a great jealousy and a great wrath.
- He states that he has returned to Zion and will dwell within Jerusalem.

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- The city will be called a faithful city and the mountain of the Lord, the holy mountain.
- The city will be a place for the elderly and children.
- The Lord will regather his people to Jerusalem from all over the world.

B. The Lord's Message (Zechariah 8:9-17)

- Those who are hearing these words of the prophets are to be encouraged.
- The Lord states that he will not deal with the remnant as he did in the former days.
- The remnant will no longer be a cursing among the nations, but shall be a blessing.
- Just as he purposed to punish their fathers, he will bring good to Jerusalem and Judah.
- He once again reiterates the commands that he gave to their fathers.

C. Concerning Fasting (Zechariah 8:18-23)

- The Lord stated that the scheduled fasts will become seasons of joys and feasts.
- Therefore, the people are encouraged to love peace and truth.
- The people from many nations will come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem.