

Minor Prophets  
Zechariah  
Lesson 7

Text: Zechariah 7:1-14

Intro: For the past several weeks we have looked at the visions that came in one night to Zechariah. Last week we finished up with the last one, and when Zechariah awoke, He had a symbolic message to give to the Nation of Israel. He took a crown and placed it on Joshua's head. Joshua was priest, not governor, and the symbolic message that was conveyed to the nation was, there is one coming that will fill both the priestly and the kingly role. Signifying Jesus Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. This week we are going to move to the second half of the book of Zechariah. Starting with a message of remembrance. Sometimes it does us good to remember some things, reasons, responsibilities, and proper prospective of things.

**I. Traditions & Truth, Vs.7:1-14**

A. Time Marches On,

**i. In the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Darius,**

- a) First, let us remember who Darius was,
  - the king of Persia, it is important to remember that the Nation of Israel is still controlled by a foreign nation.
  - When Jesus made the statement of truth setting you free (**John 8:32**) the Jews around Him responded “We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free”
    - the Jews had not known freedom since about 600 years before this time.
      - First the Babylonians, then the Med-Persian, after that the Grecian, and then and they were still under Roman rule.
  - So even tho, they were allowed to rebuild Jerusalem, they were still under a foreign power.
- b) Now it is the 4<sup>th</sup> Year of Darius,
  - notice **Chapter 1:vs.1** “in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius the king, in the 6<sup>th</sup> month,...”
  - now starting at the 7<sup>th</sup> **chapter** it is the 4<sup>th</sup> year and the 9<sup>th</sup> month,
    - so about two years after the night visions.
- c) I have been thinking about this a lot here lately,
  - sometimes we see these events and we think they are the norm, the norm of Moses, the norm of Elisha, or Elijah. We read about theses Great events in the lives of people and we think that is the norm.
  - but here we see that two years have passed from the night visions and this example. What happened during those two years?
    - Well for one thing, building continued, I'm sure Zechariah continued to preach and minister to the Nation. Problems came and went. Basically life went on.
    - We want the major events of life, but we need the day to day as well.
- d) Moses was 120 when He died (**Deu. 34:7**)
  - We have his birth, several events of his life and his death recorded, but in reality, how much of his life is recorded? There were a lot of great things, major things to happen during his life, but he had many more normal days than he did the ones recorded.
  - But, ministry and life goes on, as it should with us as well.

e) So 2 years passed, and the building continued.

B. Questions about Traditions, **Vs.2-7**

**i. Two were Sent with Questions,**

a) Sherezzer (Sar-Ezar) and Regemmelch (Regem-Melek)-

- both of these names are of Babylonian origins, Sherezzer means prince of fire and Regemmelch means kings heap (the root for heap is like stones laid together like a wall)

b) these were sent from Babylon, from the Jews that were still there to ask a question, and I'm sure to see the progress as well.

- Specifically to speak to Zechariah concerning the fast and feast they have been observing.

**ii. The Fast and Feast,**

a) Traditions can be useful,

- there are many things that we do that is good, for instance a pastor friend sent out a question the other night concerning the altar call, is there any biblical evidence for giving one?
  - It is hard to point to a specific location as to one in the bible, their services and ours are very different, even the building is different. But the bible does say “and the Spirit and the Bride say Come, and Let him that hear say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely” **Rev.22:17 & Isa. 1:18** “Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool”
    - now this doesn't say to have an altar call, but the principle to call for people to come is sound. But it is tradition,
    - **Proverbs 22:28** “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set”
    - **Proverbs 23:10** “Remove not the old landmarks;...”
    - in context, the instruction is to be cautious about doing away with the good things that have been established.

b) But, there are some traditions that need to be done away with.

- If we have lost the focus and reason for them, then we need to reevaluate them,
  - and this is exactly what the question was about.

c) Under the Law of Moses, how many fast were prescribed? One,

- **Leviticus 23:16-32** lays out the fast for the day of atonement. This was the only national fast. Individuals could choose to fast at other times.

d) Traditions produced how many fast? 5, the original one plus 4 more.

e) The purpose of these fast were to commemorate the destruction of the temple:

- one in the 10<sup>th</sup> month when the Babylonians began their sieges
- one in the 4<sup>th</sup> month when the walls were broken through,
- one in the 5<sup>th</sup> month when the temple was burned,
- one in the 7<sup>th</sup> month when Gedaliah, the Jewish governor was assassinated (**Jer. 41**)

f) So the logical question is now, that the temple is being and about to be rebuilt, do we still fast?

- Specifically the 5<sup>th</sup> month fast (**vs.3**) the burning of the temple. If it is rebuilt, then should we fast any longer?
  - It is natural to wonder about the length of mourning to be done, the same is

true today. Especially when it comes to the mourning of the dead, take a wife or husband that has lost their spouse. How long should they mourn? First, can they ever get married again? Yes, of course they can, but how long? Is a year long enough? What about 6mo. Or even 2 mo. How long is long enough? This was the question.

### iii. The response,

- a) most problems we face, and most questions are a matter of the heart,
  - they are spiritual in nature, not physical.
  - And it is true for the question that was being asked here.
- b) This is why, we do not see Zechariah answering the question right away, the answer does not come until **8:9**
- c) First, Zechariah had to deal with the spiritual matter.
  - Our heart is the compass of our lives, it will lead us, and pull us in the direction it wants.
    - This is why Jesus tells us to seek first the kingdom of God.
    - Paul put it this way in his letter to the Colossians,
    - **Colossians 3:2** “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”
  - the heart is an indicator of what is inside,
    - **Luke 6:45** “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”
    - **Proverbs 4:23** “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.”
- d) In a Rabbinical fashion Zechariah answers the question by asking questions,
  - He ask simply, When you fasted, did you do it for the Lord, or yourself,
    - when you did eat and drink, was it for the Lord or yourself?
    - **I Corinthians 10:31** “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
    - **Colossians 3:23** “And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; ”
  - He was asking about the fast, and the feast they observed,
    - the prophets of old, warned the nation that the observance of these should stem from the heart.
    - **I Samuel 15:22** God made it clear that He desired their obedience more than their sacrifice. (See also **Isaiah 1, Isaiah 58 & Micah 6**)
    - Questions from God are never for His understanding, but to get us to think.
- e) Zechariah was not condemning traditions, he was simply pointing out that our relationship to the Lord is not like a facet that can be turned on and off as desired.
  - In everything we do, we should do it for the glory of God.
- f) The answer will be given in chapter 8, but in short one day, the fast will all be turned into a feast.

### iv. The Correcting Word, Vs.8-14

- a) Zechariah reminds the people of how their fathers had lived, and responded to God.
  - I noted the 4 additional fast, but what was the real reason for them?
    - Not the event, but what caused the event? Their disobedience.
    - They had....

- **II Timothy 3:5** “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”
  - know this is instruction about the way people will be in the end times, but it is also a pretty good description of the Nation of Israel as well.
- b) The prophets had constantly warned the nation to practice “justice”
  - but the rich exploited the poor, the political took advantage of the system,
  - the powerful oppressed the weak.
  - The Law was ignored, or worse, misused or perverted.
  - All this is to say, God does not want their sacrifices, their feast or their fast, but He wants the hearts.
- c) The problem with Tradition, according to Jerislav Pelikan is, tradition is the living faith of the dead, and traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.
  - That is to say, traditions were established to show the faith of those who came before us, but we must continue to have faith and not just practice those things.
- d) Sometimes the Lord needs to bring discomfort into our lives in order to draw us back to a proper life,
  - **Psalm 119:67** “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”

#### v. Tradition,

- a) the word comes from the Latin, “to hand over”
- b) the Christian faith is one full of traditions
  - We hand the our faith from generation to generation:
    - **I Corinthians 11:1&2** “Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.<sup>2</sup>Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered *them* to you.”
    - **II Timothy 2:2** “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. ”
    - **I John 1:1-3** “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;<sup>2</sup>(For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)<sup>3</sup>That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
      - I think the answer to what traditions should accomplish in our lives is found in **I John 1**, the next verse says “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”
        - it should be used to encourage us to continue, and to let us know God is with us, but to never stand in for our faith.
      - **Jude 3** tells us to earnestly contend for the faith that was delivered to us.
- c) Traditions are not the inspired word of God,
  - they can be good, but we must never get them confused with the word of God.
  - Jesus told the pharisees your traditions have made the word of God of no effect. **Matthew 15, Mark 7**
  - One commentator said, traditions should be a guide, not a jailer.
    - He went on to say it is easier for man to have a religion of habit than a religion of the heart.