
LESSON 7

You are desolate no more (Zech 7)

Following the 8 visions in Zech 1-6, we now enter into the second section of the book of Zechariah. God gave 4 messages to Zechariah for the people of Israel. These 4 messages pose 4 questions for the Israelites to search their heart, as they respond to God's purpose for Israel.

We will look at the first 2 questions this week:

1. Are you serving yourself or God?
2. Are you listening to yourself or God?

UNDERSTANDING

1. Compare Zech 7:1 with Zech 1:1; how much time has passed between the 8 visions and the 4 messages?
2. Notice the phrase *"the word of the LORD ... came to..."* in 7:4; 7:8; 8:1 and 8:18 and mark out the 4 messages from the Lord. What was the occasion that marked the beginning of these series of messages? (See Zech 7:2-3)
3. Fasting is a good spiritual discipline usually signifying repentance and an earnest seeking after God. For 70 years, the people in exile had been fasting on the fifth and seventh months each year.
 - a. What does the fast of the fifth month (Zech 7:3, 5) commemorate? (See 2 Kings 25:8,9).
 - b. What does the fast of the seventh month (Zech 7:5) commemorate? (See 2 Kings 25:25)

(Note: 2 Kings 25:22- Gedaliah was the Jewish governor appointed by the Babylonian king after Jerusalem was burnt down).
4. However, God was not pleased with their fast. Why? (Zech 7:5,6)

5. Read verses 9 and 10. What were the four areas that God wanted Israel to listen and obey?
 - a. Administer true j _____
 - b. Show m _____ and c _____ to the one another
 - c. Do not o _____ the w _____, or the f _____, or the a _____, or the p _____
 - d. In your hearts do not t _____ e _____ of each other.
6. How did the Israelites respond to the Word of God? (Zech 7:11-13)
7. What was the result of their hard-heartedness? (Zech 7:14)

REFLECTING

8. Fasting, like other spiritual disciplines, such as giving, serving, fellowship, worship and the like is of great benefit to our spiritual growth. Discuss how these good spiritual disciplines can be self-centered rather than God-pleasing.
9. The scattering in Zech 7:14 took place 70 years earlier. The result was, the pleasant land that the Lord had given had become desolate. How should Israel respond in the future if they were to avoid being desolate again?
10. A desolate town can be described as empty, degenerating, overgrown with shrubs, uninhabitable...etc. The condition may reflect the spiritual condition of the soul. **How would you** describe the condition of a desolate life?

APPLYING

11. Jesus came to give us an abundant life. Those who listen, believe and obey Him will continue to grow into this abundant life. Read Zech 7:9,10 again. How would you listen and obey these words of the Lord in your daily life?
12. What are some ways as a Cell you could bring practical expressions of obedience to Zech 7:9,10?

LOOKING FORWARD

Despite Israel's hard-heartedness which resulted in their exile, God did not abandon them. In the next Chapter, we will see God's vision of what will happen when Jerusalem is restored again.