

Zech 7:1-14

Session Six, Zechariah

Review from Last Week

“While chapters 1-6 focus upon a restored temple and city, chapters 7-8 envision a restored covenantal community” (Lessing, 271). What’s the difference?

Which statement is Zechariah’s real message?

- “Live faithfully so that Yahweh will come to dwell in the temple again.”
- “A rebuilt temple will save people even if their lives are not characterized by faith.”
- “Yahweh’s holy presence in the temple will empower a holy people.”

Chapter 7: Repent and live faithfully because of what God did in the _____

Chapter 8: Repent and live faithfully because of what God will do in the _____

Chapters 7 & 8 are _____ % oracles. What’s an oracle?

Timeline

Zech 1:7	Feb. 15, 519 BC	Zechariah publishes his visions
Zech 7:1	Dec. 7, 518 BC	Bethel delegation arrives “fourth year of King Darius”
Ezra 6:15	March 12, 515 BC	Temple completed and dedicated

Zech 7:1-7

Located 12 miles north of Jerusalem, Bethel goes back to the days of Jacob (Gen. 28:11-12), known for its connections to idolatry, yet some were still loyal to Jerusalem and its temple.

The matter at hand: “The fasts mourning the fall of Jerusalem began with during the exile. Now that the exile is over, should they continue?” (Lessing, 282)

T / F These fasts (in the 5th and 7th months) were prescribed by the Law (Torah) of Moses.

Luther observes: “In the entire Old Testament there is scarcely a place so clear—as we shall see here in this chapter—against the traditions of men.”

What authority do we ascribe to tradition today?

“If people think that the religious rites merit justification, the righteousness of faith becomes obscured... The apostles compel us to teach that traditions do not justify, that they are not necessary for justification, and that no one ought to create or accept traditions with the notion that they merit justification....The apostles violated traditions, and Christ excused them.” (Ap XV, Human Traditions in the Church)

T / F The only fast YHWH commanded in the OT was for the Day of Atonement.

“The people were not fasting for YHWH but for themselves” (Lessing, 286).

Knowing The History

Aug. 25, 587 BC in the fifth month, was their “date that lived in infamy”. Now that it’s Dec. 7, 518 BC, (_____ years later) is it time to weep or celebrate? Is the exile over?

Gedaliah was assassinated in the seventh month (2 Kings 25:25; Jer 41:1-3). Who was Gedaliah? He was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to be the governor of the remnant in Judah during the exile. Ishmael and his men killed him at the meal. (They didn’t want to submit to Babylon.) Even though Gedaliah had been warned, he didn’t believe he was in any danger. “At this, all the people from the least to the greatest, together with the army officers, fled to _____ for fear of the Babylonians” (2 Kings 25:26).

Structure and Progression

7:1-7	reproves false faith	past
7:8-10	describes living faith	present
7:11-14	warning against no faith	future

Zech 7:8-14

The Sinai covenant is still operative. The return from exile did not usher in the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). What does?

If the conditional covenant of Sinai is still in effect, what does that mean for the people?

Who made their hearts “diamond-hard”? (v. 12)

V. 13 Yahweh is receptive to his people’s prayers, but they are unwilling to listen to Him.

“Just as the prior inhabitants forfeited their right to live in Canaan due to their wickedness, Israel could lose the privilege of the land through persistent unbelief and idolatry. Most tragically, this is exactly what happened in 70 AD when Rome sacks Jerusalem. “A delightful land became a desolation” (7:14).

“Zechariah’s contemporaries had better not think that rebuilding the temple was all Yahweh wanted. Trust in the temple, but not in the God who inhabited it, was the sin of their fathers, who rejected the prophet’s preaching and brought down God’s righteous indignation” (Lessing, 288).

For Discussion

- 1) What’s the solution if “the heart of the problem is always a problem of the heart”?
- 2) What role must social justice have in the expression of our faith?
- 3) What lesson have you had to learn the hard way more than once?