

# ZECHARIAH

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KFIR WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY - SESSION 7  
CHAPTER 7

# INTRO

So where are we at?

It's approximately two years after the night visions of Chapters 1-6 describing the whole future of Israel, including the subjugation of her enemies, her regathering in the Land, her cleansing, restoration, and the establishment of the theocracy. and about halfway through the period of temple rebuilding (520-516).

Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass *that* the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Chislev, <sup>2</sup>*when the people* sent Sherezer, with Regem-Melech and his men, *to* the house of God, to pray before the Lord, <sup>3</sup>*and* to ask the priests who *were* in the house of the Lord of hosts, and the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?"

## **COMMENTS**

Bethel located about 12 miles N. of Jerusalem; prominent as a religious center under the Northern Kingdom from the time Jeroboam I set up golden calves, etc.

Bethelites had returned with the remnant and rebuilt Bethel (Ezra 2:28; Neh 7:32; 11:31)

Tisha B'av: the mourning for the Temple and the city burned by the Babylonians on the (5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> day) of the 5<sup>th</sup> month = the "Ninth of Av."

These additional fasts were not commanded by God, but instituted by man. Yet because they were traditionally practiced for so long (at least 70 years), they developed an authority of their own. They thought, "We've done this **for so many years**, we may as well keep doing it."

# TISHA B'AV

- 1312 BC / Spies give the bad report
- 421 BC, 70 AD / Destruction of both Temples (Babylonians and Romans)
- 132 / Bar Kochba revolt crushed, over 100,00 killed.
- 1095 / First Crusade declared by Pope Urban II. 10,000 Jews killed in first month of Crusade.
- 1290 / Expulsion of Jews from England, accompanied by pogroms and confiscation of books and property.
- 1492 / Inquisition in Spain and Portugal 1942
- 1942 / Deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka

<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, <sup>5</sup>"Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me—for Me? <sup>6</sup>When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink *for yourselves*? <sup>7</sup>Should you not have obeyed the words which the Lord proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?'"

## COMMENTS

God's word through Zechariah rebuked the people of God for what their fasting had become - indulgent pity-parties instead of a time to genuinely seek God.

This also shows us that when we cling to the memory of sin or tragedy in the past, we may do it out of simple self-indulgence. We may do it for our self, not for the LORD.

Once we are assured of God's free forgiveness. When He forgives and restores, the need for dwelling on the bitter past is over... Too many of us are always dwelling beside the graves of the dead past" (Meyer).

# WHY FAST

- **1. TO SEEK GOD**
- **2. TO HUMBLE OURSELVES** - Ezra 8:21 And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God.
- **3. WHEN WE FACE GRIEF AND HARDSHIP**
- **4. TO EXPRESS OUR LOVE AND GRATITUDE**
- **5. TO REMOVE THE COBWEBS**
- In all these things, we need to remember that fasting is never a way of manipulating God into answering our prayers or showing us mercy. It is not a hunger strike to ensure that God will meet our list of demands.

**8** Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying,

**9** "Thus says the Lord of hosts:

'Execute true justice,

Show mercy and compassion

Everyone to his brother.

**10** Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,

The alien or the poor.

Let none of you plan evil in his heart

Against his brother.'

## COMMENTS

Sometimes we need to just love. We don't need to pray more, study more, repent more ... we just need to LOVE more!

# ISAIAH 58

5 Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul?

*Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes?*

Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the Lord?

6 "Is this not the fast that I have chosen:

To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens,

To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke?

7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;

When you see the naked, that you cover him,

And not hide yourself from your own flesh?

8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning,

Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you;

The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I

am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst,

The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,

# ISAIAH 58

10 If you extend your soul to the hungry, And satisfy the afflicted soul,  
Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,  
And your darkness shall be as the noonday.

11 The Lord will guide you continually,  
And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones;  
You shall be like a watered garden,  
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

12 Those from among you  
Shall build the old waste places;  
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,  
The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

**11** "But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. **12** Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts.

## **COMMENTS**

"Adamant stone": impenetrably hard substance; emery or diamond. Flint-like. It could not be graven itself, or receive the characters of God.

Note the *progression of rejection*. It begins with simply refusing to heed God, then a self-justifying shrugging of their shoulders, then stopping their ears. It all ends with hearts as hard as flint. When you meet people with **hearts like flint**, you know they did not become that way overnight. There was a gradual, certain progression to their present place of hardness.

When we lose our hunger for God's word it is a sobering evidence of the progression of rejection and hardness of heart.

**13** Therefore it happened, *that* just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen," says the Lord of hosts. **14** "But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

## **COMMENTS**

"Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly deserts fringed with a feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowful and despondent. . . It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land. . . Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land? Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition—it is dream-land." -Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*

# THE DESERT BLOOMS

All that began to change in 1909, when Jewish immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe to work the land in communal farms they called a kibbutz (Hebrew for "gathering"). These pioneers drained the swamps, built terraces in the hills, removed rocks, flipped the weather to use the intense heat for greenhouses, and irrigated the arid deserts. This hot, backbreaking work paid off big time. The result in 2016 is that Israel has some of the best fruits and vegetables anywhere in the world, with almost 4 percent of it in exports! Today, a trip across this small land is packed with lush green fields of corn, wheat, sorghum, and even cotton. You'd be hard-pressed to drive more than a few minutes without seeing orchards pregnant with oranges, lemons, bananas, dates, almonds, persimmons, olives, avocados, kiwi, mangoes, grapes, peppers, melons, peaches, plums, and even flowers.

As Bob Dylan famously sang of Israel's agricultural ingenuity, "He's made a garden of paradise in the desert sand, in bed with nobody, under no one's command." This paradise will be most apparent when you sit down to eat a scrumptious meal in one of her fine hotels or restaurants, or perhaps as you peruse the selection on the produce aisle in the grocery store.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. When was the last time you fasted? Why did you do it?
- 2. What are the dangers of a religious fast?
- 3. How is the land of Israel actually speaking today?

# FAST OF TAMMUZ

According to tradition, it was on the 17th day of Tammuz that the walls of Jerusalem were breached in both the first and second Temple periods, leading to the destruction of the Temples, and by extension, the destruction of Jewish life in Israel three weeks later on the 9th of Av. The beginning and end of this three week period are commemorated with a fast - the first, on 17 Tamuz, lasts from dawn till dusk, while the second, climaxing our feelings of mourning on the 9th of Av, is a 24-hour fast from sunset till sunset the next day.

As Jeremiah told the people:

"Thus says the Lord. There will again be heard in this place which lies desolate without man or beast - in the cities on Judah and the streets of Jerusalem...the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride....For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as it was at the first." (Jeremiah 33:10-11)

The prophecy of Amos is even more striking:

"And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine, they shall also make gardens and eat of their fruit." (Amos 9:14)

We are indeed fortunate to be living at a time when the reemergence of Jewish independence in the Holy Land has happened. The prophets teach that the climax and conclusion of this process of redemption will be with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. Until that time we must celebrate the present, but also mourn the past. However, once the Temple is rebuilt we will no longer fast on the traditional fast days nor mourn during this period of the Three Weeks. As Zechariah tells us:



# KFIR

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If you know anyone who would be interested in joining our KFIR Global Community, please send them to our website to get signed up. We have had great growth this year but believe God wants to continue growing this Group that seeks to be devoted to the WORD, to PRAYER and to be like the sons of ISSACHAR, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do!