

# Religious Formalism or Relational Worship?

## Zechariah 7:1-14

8 And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying,  
 9 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:  
 10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.  
 11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.  
 12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

Two years after the Temple reconstruction had begun (and two years before it was completed) the Lord spoke through Zechariah again. This time in response to a question from some worshippers. The Jews while in captivity began a practice of fasting at certain time each year in commemoration of the destruction of Jerusalem and their beloved Temple. A delegation of worshippers now posed a question: since the Temple is being rebuilt, should we continue to fast in remembrance of its destruction? The Lord responds with a general examination of the hearts of the worshippers and then a specific answer regarding the fasts recorded in chapter 8.

**THE BIG IDEA**

What is the main truth The Lord showed you in this passage?

### **Part 1—A Question about Fasting**

Read Zechariah 7:1-3; 2 Kings 25:8-9; James 4:8-10

- 1) What happened in the fifth month which would cause the Jews to weep and fast? What might the phrase “as I have done these many years” (vs 3) indicate?
- 2) According to James 4 for what purpose and outcome would God’s people weep and be afflicted?
- 3) Do you think the Jews in Zechariah 7 were fasting for the right reason? Why?

### **Part 2—A Counter Question**

Read Zechariah 7:4-7; Matthew 6:16

- 1) What does the Lord imply with His counter questions?
- 2) According to Matthew 6 why were the religious leaders of Jesus’ day fasting?
- 3) How do you think the rebukes of the Lord (in Zechariah 7) and Jesus can be applied to Christianity today?

### **Part 3—The Evidence of True Worship**

Read Zechariah 7:8-10; Luke 6:43-46

- 1) What does this passage imply concerning the conduct of the Jews?
- 2) How does Jesus’ teaching in Luke 6 illustrate the issue in Zachariah 7?
- 3) What could be an evidence in your life that your worship on Sunday is true?

### **Part 4—The Reason for God’s Wrath**

Read Zechariah 7:11-14; Proverbs 28:9

- 1) What would you say is the ultimate reason God sent His wrath on the Jews?
- 2) According to Proverbs 28 might are our prayers go unanswered?
- 3) How do you think our attitude affects our relationship with God?

