

Zechariah's Prophecy to the Remnant—Hypocritical Fasting (December 7, 518 BC)

Zechariah 7–8

Question About Fasting

7:1 In King Darius' fourth year, on the fourth day of Kislev, the ninth month, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah.

2 Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melech and their companions to seek the LORD's favor

3 by asking both the priests of the temple of the LORD [of hosts] and the prophets, "Should we weep in the fifth month, fasting as we have done over the years?"

God's First Response—Examine Your True Motives

4 The word of the LORD who rules over all then came to me,

5 "Speak to all the people and priests of the land as follows: 'When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and seventh months through all these seventy years, did you truly fast for me—for me, indeed?

6 And now when you eat and drink, are you not doing so for yourselves?'"

7 Should you not have obeyed the words that the LORD cried out through the former prophets when Jerusalem was peacefully inhabited and her surrounding cities, the Negev, and the Shephelah were also populated? [cf. [Isa 58:1–8](#)]

God's Second Response—A Call to Repentance

8 Again the word of the LORD came to Zechariah:

9 "The LORD [of hosts] said, 'Exercise true judgment and show brotherhood and compassion to each other.

10 You must not oppress the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, or the poor, nor should anyone secretly plot evil against his fellow human being.'

11 "But they refused to pay attention, turning away stubbornly and stopping their ears so they could not hear.

12 Indeed, they made their heart as hard as diamond, so that they could not obey the Torah and the other words the LORD who rules over all had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore, the LORD who rules over all had poured out great wrath.

13 "'It then came about that just as I cried out, but they would not obey, so they will cry out, but I will not listen,' the LORD [of hosts] had said.

14 'Rather, I will sweep them away in a storm into all the nations they are not familiar with.' Thus the land had become desolate because of them, with no one crossing through or returning, for they had made the fruitful land a waste."

Israel's Future Restoration

8:1 Then the word of the LORD who rules over all came to me as follows:

2 "The LORD who rules over all says, 'I am very much concerned for Zion; indeed, I am so concerned for her that my rage will fall on those who hurt her.'

3 The Lord says, 'I have returned to Zion and will live within Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem will be called "truthful city," "mountain of the LORD who rules over all," "holy mountain."

4 Moreover, the LORD who rules over all says, 'Old men and women will once more live in the plazas of Jerusalem, each one leaning on a cane because of advanced age.

5 And the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing.

6 And,' says the LORD who rules over all, 'though such a thing may seem to be difficult in the opinion of the small community of those days, will it also appear difficult to me?' asks the LORD who rules over all.

7 "The LORD who rules over all asserts, 'I am about to save my people from the lands of the east and the west.

8 And I will bring them to settle within Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.'

9 "The LORD who rules over all also says, 'Gather strength, you who are listening to these words today from the mouths of the prophets who were there at the founding of the house of the LORD who rules over all, so that the temple might be built.

10 Before that time there was no compensation for man or animal, nor was there any relief from adversity for those who came and went, because I had pitted everybody—each one—against everyone else.

11 But I will be different now to this remnant of my people from the way I was in those days,' says the LORD who rules over all,

12 'for there will be a peaceful time of sowing, the vine will produce its fruit and the ground its yield, and the skies will rain down dew. Then I will allow the remnant of my people to possess all these things.

13 And it will come about that just as you (both Judah and Israel) were a curse to the nations, so I will save you and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid! Instead, be strong!'

14 "For the LORD who rules over all says, 'As I had planned to hurt you when your fathers made me angry,' says the LORD who rules over all, 'and I was not sorry,

15 so, to the contrary, I have planned in these days to do good to Jerusalem and Judah—do not fear!

16 These are the things you must do: Speak the truth, each of you, to one another. [[Eph 4:25](#)] Practice true and righteous judgment in your courts.

17 Do not plan evil in your hearts against one another. Do not favor a false oath—these are all things that I hate,' says the LORD."

18 The word of the LORD who rules over all came to me as follows:

19 “The LORD who rules over all says, ‘The fast of the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months will become joyful and happy, pleasant feasts for the house of Judah, so love truth and peace.’

20 The LORD who rules over all says, ‘It will someday come to pass that people—residents of many cities—will come.

21 The inhabitants of one will go to another and say, “Let’s go up at once to ask the favor of the LORD, to seek the LORD who rules over all. Indeed, I’ll go with you.”

22 Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD who rules over all and to ask his favor.

23 The LORD who rules over all says, ‘In those days ten people from all languages and nations will grasp hold of—indeed, grab—the robe of one Jew and say, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’”

Zechariah’s Prophecy to the Remnant—The Anointed King Rejected (c. 517–516 BC)

Zechariah 9–11

Judgment on the Nations Surrounding Israel (Historical and Eschatological)

9:1 An oracle of the word of the LORD concerning the land of Hadrach, with its focus on Damascus: The eyes of all humanity, especially of the tribes of Israel, are toward the LORD,

2 as are those of Hamath also, which adjoins Damascus, and Tyre and Sidon, though they consider themselves to be very wise.

3 Tyre built herself a fortification and piled up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets!

4 Nevertheless the Lord will evict her and shove her fortifications into the sea—she will be consumed by fire.

5 Ashkelon will see and be afraid; Gaza will be in great anguish, as will Ekron, for her hope will have been dried up. Gaza will lose her king, and Ashkelon will no longer be inhabited.

6 A mongrel people will live in Ashdod, for I will greatly humiliate the Philistines.

7 I will take away their abominable religious practices; then those who survive will become a community of believers in our God, like a clan in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.

8 Then I will surround my temple to protect it like a guard from anyone crossing back and forth; so no one will cross over against them anymore as an oppressor, for now I myself have seen it.

The Coming of the Messiah, Israel’s True King (Historical and Eschatological)

9 Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion!

Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

Look! Your king is coming to you:

he is legitimate and victorious,
humble and riding on a donkey—

on a young donkey, the foal of a female donkey. [[Matt 21:5](#); [John 12:15](#)]

10 I will remove the chariot from Ephraim

and the warhorse from Jerusalem,

and the battle bow will be removed.

Then he will announce peace to the nations.

His dominion will be from sea to sea

and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

The King Delivers Israel (Eschatological)

11 Moreover, as for you, because of our covenant relationship secured with blood, I will release your prisoners from the waterless pit.

12 Return to the stronghold, you prisoners, with hope; today I declare that I will return double what was taken from you.

13 I will bend Judah as my bow; I will load the bow with Ephraim, my arrow! I will stir up your sons, Zion, against yours, Greece, and I will make you, Zion, like a warrior’s sword.

14 Then the LORD will appear above them, and his arrow will shoot forth like lightning; the Lord God will blow the trumpet and will sally forth on the southern storm winds.

15 The LORD who rules over all will guard them, and they will prevail and overcome with sling stones. Then they will drink, and will become noisy like drunkards, full like the sacrificial basin or like the corners of the altar.

16 On that day the LORD their God will deliver them as the flock of his people, for they are the precious stones of a crown sparkling over his land.

17 How precious and fair! Grain will make the young men flourish and new wine the young women.

The King Rejects the Wicked Leaders (Eschatological)

10:1 Ask the LORD for rain in the season of the late spring rains—the LORD who causes thunderstorms—and he will give everyone showers of rain and green growth in the field.

2 For the household gods have spoken wickedness, the soothsayers have seen a lie, and as for the dreamers, they have disclosed

emptiness and give comfort in vain. Therefore the people set out like sheep and become scattered because they have no shepherd.
3a I am enraged at the shepherds and will punish the lead-goats.

The King Selects the Righteous Leaders (Eschatological)

3b For the LORD who rules over all has brought blessing to his flock, the house of Judah, and will transform them into his majestic warhorse.

4 From him will come the cornerstone, the wall peg, the battle bow, and every ruler.

5 And they will be like warriors trampling the mud of the streets in battle. They will fight, for the LORD will be with them, and will defeat the enemy cavalry.

6 “I (says the LORD) will strengthen the kingdom of Judah and deliver the people of Joseph and will bring them back because of my compassion for them. They will be as though I had never rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and therefore I will hear them.

7 The Ephraimites will be like warriors and will rejoice as if they had drunk wine. Their children will see it and rejoice; they will celebrate in the things of the LORD.

The King Regathers His People—the Second Exodus (Eschatological)

8 I will signal for them and gather them, for I have already redeemed them; then they will become as numerous as they were before.
9 Though I scatter them among the nations, they will remember in far-off places—they and their children will sprout forth and return.

10 I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria. I will bring them to the lands of Gilead and Lebanon, for there will not be enough room for them in their own land.

11 The LORD will cross the sea of storms and will calm its turbulence. The depths of the Nile will dry up, the pride of Assyria will be humbled, and the domination of Egypt will be no more.

12 Thus I will strengthen them by my power, and they will walk about in my name,” says the LORD.

A Lament for the Destruction of the Three Trees/Shepherds/Kings (Historical—Preexilic)

11:1 Open your gates, Lebanon,

so that the fire may consume your cedars.

2 Howl, fir tree, because the cedar has fallen;
the majestic trees have been destroyed.

Howl, oaks of Bashan,

because the impenetrable forest has fallen.

3 Listen to the howling of shepherds,
because their magnificence has been destroyed.

Listen to the roaring of young lions,

because the thickets of the Jordan have been devastated.

The Rejection of the Messiah as Illustrated by Zechariah’s Role-Playing (Historical—Preexilic and Exilic)

4 The LORD my God says this: “Shepherd the flock set aside for slaughter.

5 Those who buy them slaughter them and are not held guilty; those who sell them say, ‘Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich.’ Their own shepherds have no compassion for them.

6 Indeed, I will no longer have compassion on the people of the land,” says the LORD, “but instead I will turn every last person over to his neighbor and his king. They will devastate the land, and I will not deliver it from them.”

7 So I began to shepherd the flock destined for slaughter, the most afflicted of all the flock. Then I took two staves, calling one “Pleasantness” and the other “Binders,” and I tended the flock.

8 Next I eradicated the three shepherds in one month, for I ran out of patience with them and, indeed, they detested me as well.

9 I then said, “I will not shepherd you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be eradicated, let it be eradicated. As for those who survive, let them eat each other’s flesh!”

10 Then I took my staff “Pleasantness” and cut it in two to annul my covenant that I had made with all the people.

11 So it was annulled that very day, and then the most afflicted of the flock who kept faith with me knew that that was the word of the LORD.

12 Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, pay me my wages, but if not, forget it.” So they weighed out my payment—thirty pieces of silver.

13 The LORD then said to me, “Throw to the potter that exorbitant sum at which they valued me!” So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the temple of the LORD. [cf. [Matt 26:14–16; 27:3–10](#)]

14 Then I cut the second staff “Binders” in two in order to annul the covenant of brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

The Evil Shepherd/King to Come (Eschatological)

15 Again the LORD said to me, “Take up once more the equipment of a foolish shepherd.

16 Indeed, I am about to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not take heed to the sheep headed to slaughter, will not seek the scattered, and will not heal the injured. Moreover, he will not nourish the one that is healthy but instead will eat the meat of the fat sheep and tear off their hooves.

17 Woe to the worthless shepherd
who abandons the flock!
May a sword fall on his arm and his right eye!
May his arm wither completely away,
and his right eye become completely blind!”

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