

## Exegetical Analysis — Zechariah 7:1-14

7:1-14 – In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. [2] Now the town of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men to seek the favor of the LORD, [3] speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, "Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?" [4] Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, [5] "Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? [6] When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? [7] Are not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?'" [8] Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying, [9] "Thus has the LORD of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; [10] and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.' [11] But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. [12] They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. [13] And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts; [14] "but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate."

Questions about fasting and hypocrisy. Hypocrisy (the use of masks to answer from under the mask). Hypocrites answer from under the mask from his face. The prophets despised hypocrisy. Temple had been constructed. Bethel had sent a delegation of two (Sharezer and Regem-Melek). Fasts in the 5th month (founded in captivity), destruction of Jerusalem. Now that we have had a temple, should we continue the fasting? It was natural for these two delegates to speak to the Priests and the and the Prophets. Have they come to pray for the sake of tradition, and ritual, or for the heart? "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?" – it appears that they thought that they must do it, but there has been no joy because of the tribulation. It appears as though their intention is good, Bethel appears to have changed, but Zechariah knew that it was all on the surface, they were speaking under the mask.

"Ask all the people of the land and the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? 6 And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves? 7 Are these not the words the Lord proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its surrounding towns were at rest and prosperous, and the Negev and the western foothills were settled?'"

Here on the surface, it appears good, but it was a deep loss of admiration of the Lord. Fasting is not a problem; it is a means to separate ourselves from the affairs to the men. In their fasting, there was no deepening of the relationship at all. "This is what the Lord Almighty said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. 10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.' The Lord wants obedience to his Word. "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. 12 They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. They refused to hear the Word of the Lord, and the answer from the prophets. Religious activities when there is no reality in them, are hollow shams before God, and he hates them.