

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Sunday Sermon

Date: November 17, 2019

Text: Zechariah 7:1-14

Scripture Reading: Zechariah 7:1-14

Subject: Zechariah Series, Chapter 7, "Shall we weep in the fifth month?"

In our last message from Zechariah we considered chapter 6 in which we learned of the 10th and final vision of Zechariah – that of the four chariots with horses in them. We also studied the crowning of the high priest Joshua and considered THE BRANCH, who should build the temple of the LORD, be crowned with many crowns, and bear the glory and rule upon his throne.

Today, we are come to the seventh chapter in which is a question that brings a stinging response from the LORD of hosts to the people of the land – the remnant which had returned under Ezra and Nehemiah after the seventy years captivity. This chapter is a great lesson for every one of us as God's children.

Zec 7:1 (KJV) *And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu;*

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, -- The fourth year of king Darius of Persia was about two years after the time recorded in the first chapter of Zechariah, verse one. Near two years after the foundation of the temple was laid,

Hag 2:18 (KJV) *Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.*

Moreover, it was nearly two years before it was finished,

Ezr 6:14-15 (KJV) *And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.*

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So, the work was going forward, and there was a great deal of reason that the Jews believed it would be completed. So, it was at this time ---

That the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu: -- Chisleu, the Hebrew ninth month corresponds roughly to our October and November.

Zec 7:2-3 (KJV) *When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezzer and Regem-melech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, 3 And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?*

When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezzer and Regem-melech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, -- When "they" had sent apparently means the people of the land, the priests and the prophets. The prophets at this time, as we have learned, are Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi. We do not know anything about Sherezzer and Regem-melech or those called their

men. These two are not mentioned elsewhere. They were sent to pray before the LORD,

And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so

many years? – Good question! On the seventh day of this fifth month, according to **2Ki 25:8-9**, Solomon's temple was burnt by the Chaldeans who had besieged Jerusalem before the 70 years captivity.

2Ki 25:8-9 (KJV) *And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9 And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.*

Apparently, this had been done in sad remembrance of the burning of the temple on the 10th day of that month all during the 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

Zec 7:4-5 (KJV) ***Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, 5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?***

Here, we see the LORD of hosts reply to this question of this weeping in the fifth month. ***Speak unto all the people of the land***, -- Of the land of Judea, who had sent these men on this errand, and whom they represented, and in whose name they spake. ***And to the priests***, -- Clearly, these priests had been consulted about this weeping in the fifth month.

When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? – Or, was it for yourselves? the fast they kept was not according to the command of God, but was done according to their own opinion and desire. The fast was not directed to the glory of the LORD of hosts; and therefore it was nothing to him whether they fasted or not.

Isaiah 58:3-7 (KJV) *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

Zec 7:6 (KJV) ***And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?*** -- as they ate and drank at common meals or at feasts or festivals. Did you only eat and drink for your own refreshment and pleasure, and not for the glory of God? The glory of God ought to be object of all that His people do.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (KJV) *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Zec 7:7 (KJV) *Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?*

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Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, -- As Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. Would not it have been much better for them to have paid close attention to the exhortations and instructions which the Lord sent them by his servants? Had they done so, would it not have prevented their captivity? If they had heeded my words spoken by those sent by me, there would have been no occasion of fasting and mourning about the destruction of the temple. : for those prophecies were delivered out

when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain? – The LORD I, by these words, is making the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem call to remembrance that those prophets spoke to them when Jerusalem and the cities of the surrounding area were full of people, who were enjoying all the blessings of life in great plenty. In heeding my message, my warnings, and my cautions spoken by my prophets, that time of plenty and joy would have continued.

Zec 7:8-10 (KJV) *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.*

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, 9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying – This word of the LORD which came to Zechariah is so that Zechariah will say again those things which the LORD spake by his prophets before the Babylonian captivity. How long are his mercies toward his people, even when they are prone to walk astray! Truly his mercies are new every morning!

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. – Execute true judgment – rather than pervert judgment! Shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother. Every man! All his brothers! Ah, yes, the LORD God has shown us, O men, what is good and how to walk, has he not?

Micah 6:8 (KJV) *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Don't oppress widows, orphans, strangers, nor the poor. It is the wicked religionists who devour widow's houses and rob the poor! Let none of us imagine evil (devise some wicked scheme against) his brother in his heart!! Certainly, these Israelites were commanded to love their brethren!

Zec 7:11 (KJV) *But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.*

They (the Jews before their captivity) refused to hearken! Look at this! They pulled away the shoulder! They stopped their ears, that they should not hear! They refused to hear! All of this shows their contempt for the LORD God who had blessed them again and again!

Zec 7:12 (KJV) *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.*

Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, -- Look at this! They made their hearts as an adamant stone! They did it! Though the heart of itself is far from taking impressions, and receiving kindly the law of God, yet these desperate sinners think it is too pliable, they study how to harden it, and this was the fault of many of them. An adamant; the hardest of stones. Webster defines adamant as: "A very hard or impenetrable stone; a name given to the diamond and other substances of extreme hardness." Such is a habitual, voluntary, willful hardness; refusing to be reformed, hating to be healed: such a desperate hardness, as neither ministry, nor misery, nor miracle, nor mercy could possibly soften or make tender. And this they did lest –

lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: --

They liked not to hear anything that was opposed to their lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. They boldly stood against any change from what they enjoyed doing in the flesh to do the will of the LORD. They heard the prophets – but didn't hear! They saw their preaching – but didn't perceive, because of their hard, impenitent hearts. The prophets had become to them as one who sings a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear God's words, but they do them not.

Zec 7:13 (KJV) *Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:*

In the same way that the LORD of hosts cried and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear! We see this same idea in the Proverbs:

Proverbs 1:1-6 (KJV) *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings...*

Proverbs 1:20-33 (KJV) *Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: 21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, 22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? 23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. 28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: 29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. 31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own*

way, and be filled with their own devices. **32** For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. **33** But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Zec 7:14 (KJV) *But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.*

But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. – The Lord God used his servant

Nebuchadnezzar who came upon Jerusalem as a storm. He came with a mighty army with horses, chariots, and mighty men with swords speaking a strange language totally unknown to the Jews. God scattered them from their comfortable place to a place where people spake with a strange tongue – and where comfort and ease had long fled away. In that strange place, they remained for seventy long years while the land flowing with milk and honey enjoyed her sabbaths.

Thus the land was desolate after them; that is, the land of Judea was destitute of inhabitants, or had but few remaining in it, after the Jews were carried captive into Babylon; for the rest, after the death of Gedaliah, fled into Egypt:

that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate. – They did return from Egypt, nor from Babylon, until the seventy years of captivity were ended; nor indeed did any from other nations pass through and fro, or settle in it, during this time, according to the scripture. **for they laid the pleasant land desolate;** The inhabitants of Judah caused it by their iniquities; and the Babylonians, as the instruments of God's vengeance. This pleasant land is the land of Canaan, a land flowing

with milk and honey; the glory of all lands, for its great fruitfulness, and delightful situation; and especially for being the seat of the divine Majesty, and where his people dwelt, and where his temple was, and he was worshipped.

O, beloved, let us never purposely harden our hearts that we might not hear the precious word of God. His word keeps us from sin – and sin keeps us from His word.

Psalm 119:9-11 (KJV) BETH. *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

Psalm 119:67 (KJV) *Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*

Psalm 119:101 (KJV) *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*

Psalm 119:105 (KJV) NUN. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Even in times of testing and trials in this life, God's word is used to stay us up and keep us from sin. Consider Job's words during his great trial:

Job 23:8-12 (KJV) *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: 10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. 11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. 12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*

Matthew 4:4 (KJV) *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*