

## **Zechariah 8:14-23 – Fasts Turned to Feasts**

Chapters 7 and 8 of Zechariah are about God's response to a delegation from Bethel. They wanted to know if they could stop fasting in the fifth month in remembrance of the destruction of the temple. The 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was just a little over two years from being completed. Good progress had been made. The seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah were almost complete. The delegate's characterization of the fast as being for "so many years" revealed their attitude toward the fast. They were tired of it. In the final verses of this section God said that their fasts would become cheerful feasts.

### **Read Zechariah 8:14-17.**

Verses 14-17 are the final verses of the first section of chapter 8 which starts with "And the word of Yahweh of hosts came". Verses 14-17 start with the key phrase "thus says Yahweh of hosts." In verse 14 what had God purposed to do because of the sins of their fathers? (8:14)

In verse 15, what did God purpose to do "in these days"? What did God tell the people to do at the end of verse 15? (8:15)

In verse 16, what did God require his people to do? This is somewhat similar to Zechariah 7:9-10 which described what God told the people to do before the exile. Of course their fathers did not obey God's commands. (8:16)

In verse 17, what did God tell the people not to do? What was the reason for these prohibitions? (8:17)

### **Read Zechariah 8:18-23.**

Verses 18 through 23 contain the final section of God's response to the Bethel delegation. The section begins with "and the word of Yahweh of hosts came". These verses contain three parts introduced by "Thus says Yahweh of hosts". (8:18)

In verse 19, God specifically addressed the delegation's question about the fast of the fifth month. What did God say about their fasts? (8:19)

In verse 19, God mentioned three other fasts besides the fast of the fifth month. The fast of the tenth month is thought to be for the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. See Jeremiah 52:4. The fast of the fourth month is thought to be for the breach in the wall of Jerusalem. See Jeremiah 52:5-11. The fast of the fifth month was for the destruction of the temple. See Jeremiah 52:12-13. The fast of the seventh month is thought to be for the death of Gedaliah. See Jeremiah 41:1-2. (8:19)

At the end of verse 19, what were the people to do because of the fasts being turned to feasts? (8:19)

In verse 20, where were these people going? Were “the inhabitants of many cities” just Jews or did this number include Gentiles? (8:20)

In verse 21, what would people say to one another during this time of God’s favor? How would these words be an encouragement to those who were working on the temple? Recall that in Zechariah 7:2 the Bethel delegation came to Jerusalem to “entreat the favor of Yahweh”. (8:21)

In verse 22, are the “many peoples and strong nations” referring to Gentiles? What would these peoples and nations do? (8:22)

What is described in verse 23? “The nations of every tongue” definitely refers to Gentiles. What would these Gentiles do? What was their motivation? (8:23)

Were verses 20-23 fulfilled before the birth of Christ? If not, are these verses fulfilled by the growth of the church or do they await a future fulfillment?