

Zechariah: Chapters 7 & 8: Remembering Tragedy

When a family or a community or a nation commemorates a tragedy, how long is long enough to remember?

What tragedies do we remember from the distant or recent past?

Nearly two years have passed since the visions described in previous chapters. The people were hard at work rebuilding the temple. Although they were strengthened in hope as they anticipated the coming of their Savior, the memories of the past need resolution in the minds of many of the believers.

Here is a review of the events they commemorated.

Read 2 Kings 25: selected verses.

Part 1: Chapter 7 – Justice and Mercy, Not Fasting

***Read Zechariah 7:1-3. Inquiry from Bethel**

1. What manner of worship were the people of Bethel practicing?

***Read Zechariah 7:4-7. Motive for Fasting**

2. What was significant about the fifth month? How long ago did these events happen?
3. What happened in the seventh month?

Read Zechariah 1:2,4. A Lesson from the Forefathers

4. How did the people's forefathers contribute to the events described in 2 Kings 25?
5. What was wrong with the people's practice?

***Read Zechariah 7:8-10. Essence of Religion**

6. What directions did the Lord give for truly genuine worship?

***Read Zechariah 7:11-14. Forefathers Missed the Point**

7. How did the forefathers respond? What was the result?

Part 2: Chapter 8, verses 1-13 – The Lord Will Sow Peace

***Read Zechariah 8:1-13. Restoration has come. Motivation for the workers.**

8. What phrase is repeated over and over again in Chapter 8?

9. What does this demonstrate about Zechariah's message?

Exodus 20 contains the 10 commandments, given to the Israelites while they were in the wilderness.

Read Exodus 20:5-6.

10. Compare these verses to Zechariah 8:1-11. What actions are connected to God's jealousy in these readings?

11. What is meant by the "sowing of peace"?

Read Luke 2:4 and 19:38.

Read Ephesians 2: 13-18.

12. How does Jesus "sow the peace" on earth?

Part 3: Zechariah 8:14-23 -- How to Retain the Blessing

***Read Zechariah 8:14-17. Call for True Religion**

Read Luke 6:31.

13. What are the judgements that are "true and make for peace"? (verse 16) How do they relate to Jesus' exhortation in Luke?

***Read Zechariah 8:18-23. Joy of Observances, Future Restoration**

Zechariah addresses the practice of mournful fasts engaged in by the returned exiles. Refer to the verses from 2 Kings 25 at the beginning of the readings.

14. What happened in the ninth month?
15. What happened in the fourth month?
16. What practices does Zechariah suggest for remembering these events?

Read Jeremiah 31:13.

17. According to the prophesy in vv. 20-23, how will people of outside nations gain the Lord's favor?
18. What is God's true desire for all people? **Read Ezekiel 33:11.**

Remembering our past

19. What can we do to commemorate past tragedies?

Supplemental Readings

Please use your own Bible for readings from Zechariah 7 & 8. An asterisk marks each of these.

2 Kings 25: selected verses

In the ninth year of his reign, in the *tenth month*, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the *fourth month* the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. They captured the king...and they passed sentence on him. They bound him in chains and took him to Babylon. (vv. 1-4, 6,7)

In the *fifth month*, on the seventh day of the month – that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon – Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. And he burned the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem. (vv. 8-10)

And over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shapan, governor. Now when all the captains and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah governor, they came with their men to Gedaliah at Mizpah, And Gedaliah swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid because of the Chaldean officials. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and all shall be well with you. But in the *seventh month*, Ismael the son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck Gedaliah and put him to death along with the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. (vv. 22-25)

Zechariah 1:2,4

The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds." "But they did not hear or pay attention to me," declares the Lord.

Exodus 20:5-6

You shall not to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Luke 2:14 and 19:38

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!

Ephesians 2:13-18

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

Luke 6:31

And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Jeremiah 31:13

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

Ezekiel 33:11

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?