

## WHEN RELIGIOUS RITUAL REPLACES REALITY

(Zechariah 7)

### I. Introduction

### II. Zechariah's Opening Address (1:1-6)

### III. The Eight Night Visions (1:7-6:8)

### IV. The Coronation of Joshua the High Priest (6:9-15)

### V. The Question and Answer Concerning Fasting (7:1-14)

#### A. The Question from the People (7:1-3)

1. From the date given (Dec. 7, 518 BC), we know that nearly \_\_\_\_\_ years had passed since the Night Visions had been received and recorded by Zechariah and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ had resumed. (v. 1)
2. A delegation of men came from Bethel asking (what appeared to be innocent) \_\_\_\_\_ of the priests and prophets in Jerusalem— if they should continue to observe days of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which they had been doing since the destruction of Solomon's temple. (vv. 2-3)

#### B. The Rebuke from God (7:4-7)

1. Instead of giving them a direct answer, the Lord sharply \_\_\_\_\_ the delegation and the nation as a whole; because He saw these rituals as nothing more than \_\_\_\_\_, an outward \_\_\_\_\_ with no real heart or meaning. (vv. 4-5a)
2. The Lord asked challenging questions, "Whether fasting or eating and drinking, did you really do it for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_?" The real answer is \_\_\_\_\_! (vv. 5b-6)
3. Another biting question, "Back before the exile, when Israel was prosperous, should the people have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the prophets?" The anticipated answer is \_\_\_\_\_! (v. 7)

### C. The Warning from the Past (7:8-14)

1. Preexilic Israel had failed in four areas...
  - a. to dispense \_\_\_\_\_ justice
  - b. to exercise \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to each other
  - c. to \_\_\_\_\_ the weak and vulnerable among them
  - d. to \_\_\_\_\_ evil against each other
  
2. Zechariah reminded the people of the way their forefathers routinely practiced their “outward religion,” he uses a variety of expressions (vv. 11-12) ...
  - a. they “\_\_\_\_\_ *their shoulders*”
  - b. they “\_\_\_\_\_ *their ears*”
  - c. they “\_\_\_\_\_ *their hearts like flint*”
  
3. When the Babylonian invasion finally did come, \_\_\_\_\_ the people cried out to God, but He \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ to them. (v. 13)
  
4. In v. 14 the Lord described what happened to the \_\_\_\_\_ - they were \_\_\_\_\_ among the \_\_\_\_\_. (v. 14a)
  
5. God also described what happened to the \_\_\_\_\_ - it became \_\_\_\_\_, a byword to those who passed through it. (v. 14b, cf. 1 Kings 9:7-9)

\* Can we apply the same warnings about religious ritualism in our own day?