Zechariah 7:1-7

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 7:1–7***In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of YHWH came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech and their men to entreat the favor of YHWH, saying to the priests of the house of YHWH **tseva’ot** and the prophets, “Should I weep and abstain in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?” Then the word of YHWH **tseva’ot** came to me: “Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted? And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? Were not these the words that YHWH proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?”

1. When does YHWH speak these words to Zechariah in relation to the when the previous eight visions took place? What year was this according to our calendar today?
2. Look Ezra 6:15. When did Zerubbabel actually complete temple reconstruction? So at the time of the events of Zech 7 had the temple been completed yet?
3. Is there anything special about the date that Scripture mentions: day 4 month 9 ? Why do you think this date is specifically mentioned?
4. Where is Bethel located in relation to where Zechariah was?
5. Sharezer and Regem-melech were sent from Bethel. Do we know anything about these men? What do their names mean? Can we infer anything about these men based on their names?
6. Where were the men going? Why would they be going there, in view of your answer to question #2 above?
7. The men were going to “entreat the favor of YHWH”. What does this mean? Note that the same phrase is used in Zech 8:21, 22; 1 Sam 13:12; and Mal 1:9.
8. What was the question they wanted to ask YHWH? What happened in the fifth month that they were weeping and abstaining” about? Look at 2 Kings 25:8-9. Why were they asking this particular question at this time?
9. What does this tell you about the progress being made in rebuilding the temple? From this, would you think that the previous visions communicated by Zechariah 2 years earlier had any impact?
10. YHWH spoke his answer through Zechariah. He mentions two fasts… one in the fifth month and also one in the seventh month. What was the fast in seventh month? See Lev 23:27. Also see 2 Kings 25:25 for a less likely possibility.
11. It seems like the word of direction from YHWH, given to Zechariah to communicate to the people from Bethel, was in the form of a rhetorical question. What was YHWH really saying to them?
12. Compare this message to that of the prophet Isaiah 200 years earlier. Look at Isaiah 1:11-17 and Isaiah 58:3-6. What is being communicated about the worship and fasting of God’s people in these passages?
13. Given the content of this message from YHWH, why do you think YHWH introduced the fast of the seventh month? Remember the question had only to do with the fast of the fifth month, but in the answer from God, He brings in the seventh month as well. Why?? What happened on Yom Kippurim and was that day supposed to represent?
14. In Zech 7:6, YHWH goes on to ask another rhetorical question, this time not about fasting, but about eating and drinking. This probably hints at feasting rather than fasting. Given the context of YHWH referring to the fast of one of the appointed times, Yom Kippurim, what may he be referring to here? Look at the rest of Lev 23, and specifically Lev 23:6 and Lev 23:34. What is YHWH saying, and how does this tie in with the previous verse (Zech 7:5)?
15. What is YHWH saying in Zech 7:7 ? What Scriptures might He be referring to?
16. Given these words from YHWH, what can we now conclude about the response of the people to Zechariahs visions and prophesies two years earlier?
17. How are you living this same way? What is the Father wanting to say to your heart through this message?