

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH
THE PROBLEM OF DISOBEDIENCE
PT 2-CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSEQUENCES OF REBELLION
ZECHARIAH 7:7-14

Introduction

Last week we saw four **COMMANDS** or **TESTS OF SPIRITUAL REALITY** that the **LORD** gave the **PEOPLE** in *verses 9 and 10*.

- I. *THEY WERE TO EXECUTE TRUE JUDGMENT!*
(Or, *EXECUTE JUDGMENT BASED ON THE TRUTH!*)
 - II. *THEY WERE TO SHOW MERCY AND COMPASSION TO THEIR BRETHREN!*
 - III. *THEY WERE NOT TO OPPRESS OTHERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE MORE VULNERABLE!*
 - IV. *THEY WERE NOT TO IMAGINE EVIL AGAINST A BROTHER!*
- TRUE MORALITY** proceeds from **RIGHT MOTIVES** of the **HEART** that show up both in one's **THOUGHTS** and **DEEDS!**

The clear inference here is that even though the **CAPTIVITY** had ended and this **REMNANT** of the **PEOPLE** had been restored to the land, there was still a need for many of them to **REPENT**.

They desperately needed to **CHANGE** both their way of **THINKING** and their way of **LIVING**. They needed to begin to practice from the **HEART** the **ETHICAL TEACHING** we saw last week! That would turn their **FASTING** from mere **FORMALISTIC LEGALISM** and **HYPOCRISY** into **SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD**. **EMBRACING TRUTH** in one's **INWARD** life will be **MANIFESTED OUTWARDLY** to those about us.

Next, we see in *Vs. 11-12* the **LORD** points them back to **ISRAEL'S** past!

I. WE SEE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REBELLION OF THEIR ANCESTORS.

A variety of expressions are used here to convey this thought of what eventually became an **OBSTINATE REBELLION**.

The three **INDICTMENTS** of *vs 11* together with *vs 12* show a

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STRONG PROGRESSION OF EVIL!

This shows the **DOWNWARD DESCENT** of their **ANCESTORS** is what eventually led to their **CAPTIVITY**. And it all began with an improper **ATTITUDE** of the **PEOPLE** of **ISRAEL** regarding the **MINISTRY** and **MESSAGES** of the **LORD'S** **PROPHETS**

A. We See A First Characteristic Of Their Rebellion!
Vs 11a—"But they refused to hearken..."

We read in **SCRIPTURE** of how the **LORD** had repeatedly sent **HIS** **PROPHETS** to **HIS** **PEOPLE** prior to the **BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**.

Through the **PROPHETS** they were warned to **FORSAKE THEIR SIN!** They were **ENTREATED TO TURN BACK TO THE LORD!** But, there was a continual **REFUSAL** to **HEAR** and **OBEY** the word as *vs.11* states—
"But they refused to hearken..." (i.e. prick up the ears)

i.e. They acted as if they had not been spoken to. When they were bidden by the **LORD'S** servants to do something they simply **REFUSED TO OBEY**.

Not only did they persist in their **WICKEDNESS** and **INJUSTICE** but they **REFUSED** the frequent **ADMONITIONS** and **EXHORTATIONS** given to them by the **LORD!**

It was a **DELIBERATE ACT** on their part, not only of not giving attention to the **MESSAGES** that were being presented, but **REFUSING TO ACT** on what was said.

Understand that the **WORD OF THE LORD** by the mouth

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of **HIS PROPHETS** was available, but they **DELIBERATELY DECIDED NOT TO PAY ATTENTION**. They **REFUSED TO LISTEN** to the **LORD'S WORDS**, and thereby **REFUSED TO MEND THEIR WAYS AND REPENT!**

*Jeremiah 5:3—“O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but **they have refused to receive correction**: they have made their faces harder than a rock; **they have refused to return.**”*

*Jeremiah 8:5—“Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by **a perpetual backsliding**? they hold fast deceit, **they refuse to return.**”*

*Jeremiah 11:10—“They are **turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words**; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah **have broken my covenant** which I made with their fathers.”*

- B. We See A Second Characteristic Of Their Rebellion!**
Vs 11b—“...and pulled away the shoulder...”
Instead of **RECEIVING GOD'S WORD** and **SERVING HIM** with joyful and glad hearts, they **TURNED FROM IT!**

The picture in the language used here is of an animal **refusing to be bound by the constraint of a yoke and continually rebelling** against indicated directions.

The **LORD'S PEOPLE** constantly **REFUSED TO GIVE HEED TO HIS WORD** being rebellious against its

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CONTROL and **AUTHORITY** over their lives!

- C. We See A Third Characteristic Of Their Rebellion!**
Vs 11c—“...and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.”

Literally, they **made heavy their ears**. This refers to a **PERSISTENT REFUSAL TO HEED GOD'S WORD** so that **THE WORD SPOKEN OR PREACHED NO LONGER REACHED THEM!**

Matthew Henry is quoted as saying, “*There are none so deaf as those that will not hear!*”

They had hearts and minds filled with **prejudices** against the **WORD OF GOD** and so they **resolved in their hearts that nothing said to them would be considered.**

The phrase “*they stopped their ears*” implies that this was a **DELIBERATE REFUSAL TO LISTEN TO GOD** and so, they **personally bore the responsibility for their unresponsiveness!**

One of the worst consequences of men **TURNING AWAY FROM DOING THE WILL OF GOD** is that they **have ears**, but they **don't hear** and they **have eyes** but they **do not see** and yet **GOD will still hold them accountable** because of their own **stubborn unwillingness to hear and see!**

(Look at Isaiah 6:8-13)

- D. We See A Fourth Characteristic Of Their Rebellion!**
Vs 12a—“They made their hearts as an adamant stone.”

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This implies that they became so **hard-hearted** that they were **blocking out** whatever the **LORD** was saying to them!

Persistent rejection of GOD'S WORD eventually produces a **hardened, cold and unresponsive state of heart** described here.

Notice "*they made their hearts,*" so they were **morally responsible** for their state. Nothing is so hard or so inflexible as the heart of a presumptuous sinner and they can thank themselves for their condition.

The **PROPHET ZECHARIAH** warned these **JEWS** to learn from the past! The people who **GOD JUDGED** with captivity had **hardened their hearts** and **refused to listen to the WORDS of the LORD!**

The long-term **disobedience** could have only one result.
Therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of Hosts."

The people's **disobedience** to **REVEALED TRUTH** resulted in **DIVINE ANGER**. **GOD is PATIENT** and **HE is LONGSUFFERING**, but **HE WILL NOT BE MOCKED!**

2 Chronicles 36:14-20 is a summary of what God did.

WE SEE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REBELLION OF THEIR ANCESTORS.

II. WE SEE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE REBELLION OF THEIR ANCESTORS! (Vs 13-14)

Here **ZECHARIAH** tells several of the **RESULTANT**

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CALAMITIES that overtook that disobedient generation.

- A. They Reaped Powerlessness In Prayer. (Vs 13)**
Just as the **LORD** had cried unto them by **HIS PROPHETS** for so long, so often, and so patiently, yet they would not hear, so they cried unto **HIM** in their distress for deliverance and **HE** would not hear.

They had been forewarned that if the **LORD kept calling to them and they refused to listen**, then **they would keep calling and He would not hear!** That is a just retaliation!

Jeremiah 11:11—“ Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.”

Jeremiah 11:14—“Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.”

Jeremiah 14:12—“When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.”

Isaiah 1:15—“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”

Proverbs 1:22—“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

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Proverbs 1:28—“Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:”

Verse 13 says “Therefore it is come to pass”

i.e. What the **LORD** says He will do, He will do!

They Reaped Powerlessness In Prayer!

B. They Were Scattered Among The Nations! (Vs 14a)

Since they demonstrated **NO KINDNESS** or **COMPASSION**, **GOD** withdrew **HIS KINDNESS** and **COMPASSION**. Instead of **HEARKENING** to their **PRAYER**, **HE scattered them with the violence of a tornado among other nations.**

C. Their Land Was Laid Desolate! (Vs 14b)

The conclusion lays the guilt of the whole **DESOLATION** of the **LAND** upon their **DISOBEDIENT FOREFATHERS.**

Since they had **VIOLATED** all the **LAWS** of the **LORD** in their **LAND**, the **LORD** took away all the glories of it.

So we have this picture of **COMPLETE EMPTINESS** and **UTTER DESOLATION**. Even the roads were void of travelers for it was such a wasteland that no one passed through the land.

And the **JEWS** were to blame for it all because of their own **WICKEDNESS**. Their own **SIN** had **TRANSFORMED** the **PLEASANT LAND**, the **LAND OF DESIRE AND DELIGHT**, the **LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY**, into a **DESOLATE, DESERTED** and **EMPTY LAND.**

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The **HARDNESS** and **UNYIELDEDNESS** of their **HEARTS** turned the **LAND** into a **HARD and UNYIELDING PLACE!**

Conclusion

So, their **TRADITIONS** of **MOURNINGS** and **FASTINGS** were nothing to the **LORD** in and of themselves, so long as there was **NO REAL SORROW FOR THEIR SIN** nor a **HEARTFELT DESIRE TO DO HIS WILL** as expressed in **HIS WORD.**

Obedying the **WORD** of the **LORD** was and still is the most important issue that mankind faces!