ISRAEL'S SELF-IMPOSED FASTS IN EXILE

Tenth month (Jan. 10) –the day the siege of Jerusalem began, 588 BC

Fourth month (July 9) –Babylon breached Jerusalem's wall, 586 BC

Fifth month (August 10) –Jerusalem destroyed and burned, 586 BC

Seventh month (October 1) –Gedaliah, the new governor, also slain, 586 BC

(See Jeremiah 52:4-12 and 41:1.)

"The question raised in Zechariah 7-8 was whether those fasts should be continued, inasmuch as they had returned to rebuild the temple. The Lord's answer provided two clarifications concerning fasting (cf. Isaiah 58:4-8):

- a. Fasting was designed for God's glory, not for man's merit. Self-abnegation easily becomes self-pity and an empty ritual of self-worship. (7:5-6)
- b. Fasting is worthless unless it is accompanied with acts of justice, kindness, and compassion toward one's neighbors (7:9-10). Israel's lack of these brought the Lord's judgment of destruction and desolation (7:11-14).

ZECHARIAH 7-8: INTERLUDE

The question concerning fasting 7:1-3

FOUR MESSAGES, introduced by "Then the word of the

LORD came to me, saying," (or very similar phraseology)

MESSAGE ONE 7:4-7

MESSAGE TWO 7:8-14

MESSAGE THREE 8:1-17

MESSAGE FOUR 8:18-23

The Question concerning fasting Zechariah 7:1-3
Message ONE A matter of motivation Zechariah 7:4-7
The LORD's answer in a word:
God tells Zechariah to ask all of the people of the land 3 questions:
1 did you really fast for Mefor Me? (motivation)
2 do you not eat and drink for yourselves? (accusation)

3. . . should you not have obeyed My words (earlier)? (accusation)

A matter of obedience Message TWO 7:8-14

The LORD's requirements: 7:9-10

(positive) Execute true justice Show mercy & compassion (positive)

to your brother

(negative) Do not oppress the

widow fatherless foreigner poor

Do not plan evil against a brother

(negative)

The people's response: 7:11-12a

- --refused to heed
- -- gave a stubborn shoulder
- --made their ears heavy
- --made their hearts like flint
- --refused to hear the law and the prophets

The LORD's judgment 7:12b-14

- --great wrath from the LORD of hosts
- --He would not listen to their cries for help
- --He scattered the nation with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known

722 BC

586 BC

--their pleasant land became desolate

Message THREE A matter of blessing Zech. 8:1-17

The LORD's jealousy for His people 8:1-2

<u>Jerusalem the Blessed</u> 8:3-6

Return of the Remnant 8:7-10

Blessings for the Remnant 8:11-15

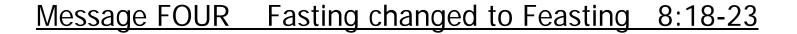
The LORD's requirements for His people 8:16-17

(positive) Speak truth to each other

Give (righteous) judgment (positive)
for truth
justice
peace

(negative) Think no evil against a neighbor

Do not love a false oath (negative)



Fasting is changed into feasting for God's people (Judah) 8:19

Many peoples from all nations will seek the LORD in Jerusalem 8:20-23

Prayer will be offered in worship of the one true God, the LORD of hosts 8:21-22