

A FAST COMMEMORATING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

Zech. 8:19 *“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.’*”

These fast days commemorated the taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. They were self-appointed times of mourning, which in and of themselves doesn't make them bad, but they had become mundane rituals and a way to get Adonai to do something for them. Adonai sees them suffering without food, Adonai feels sorry for them and owes it to the participants to grant their requests. But that is not how Yah works. The key, from Yah's point of view, on the fasts can be found in **Zech. 7:1-14**. I won't get into detail but the idea is that Yah was not concerned over whether they continued the practice of fasting, He never commanded them to begin with, but over the reality of why the destruction happened. It was an empty ritual void of any real repentance over the things that caused the Temple and the city to be destroyed in the first place. If repentance was there, then the Lord would have found value in their fasting. The people needed to remember why the Temple was destroyed and repent, not weep and fast over the loss of a building with an empty ritual. In 7:9 He tells them what they should have done to avoid the destruction of the city by the Babylonians, but they didn't do it. They hardened their hearts so that they would not hear the Torah or listen to the prophets (7:12). In Chapter 8:16 He told them what they should do instead of an empty, ritualistic fast. He then says in 8:19 that when genuine repentance is done, He is going to turn those fast days into days of feasting. This can be applied to us today in many ways. We tend to replace genuine repentance with traditions and rituals that make us feel like we are doing something or makes us feel good. Many fast for the same reason today, they feel that Adonai must respond to their suffering, or what they have given up when He doesn't have to respond to anything if He chooses not to.. These fasts would not even have been necessary had the people obeyed Yahveh in the first place. That should have been the conclusion the people reached. When we find ourselves in similar situations, go before the Yah and find out what went wrong so you can correct it. Sometimes fasting is necessary because it helps us focus on our Abba so He can speak to us about what the real problem is, but it should never be the main focus in and of itself.

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Bible Commentary Jerry Hennig (Dec 3/16)