

Lessons from Zechariah 7:8-14

By David DeWitt

Verses 8-9—*Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah saying, “Thus has the Lord of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother.’”*

- God gives them some **things to do**: dispense true justice (judgment), practice kindness (agape) and compassion (mercy).

Verse 10—*‘and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’*

- **Things to not do**: oppress the widow, orphan, stranger, or poor, nor devise evil in your hearts (think evil in your mind) against one another.

Verses 11-12—*But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. They made their hearts like flint...*

- But the people refused to do what God told them to do and not to do (that is, obey). **1.** They turned a stubborn shoulder. **2.** They stopped their ears from hearing. **3.** They made their hearts like flint.

Verse 12—*so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore, great wrath came from the Lord of hosts.*

- Therefore, they could not hear the words of God which He sent through His Spirit through the prophets. Therefore, the wrath of God has come.

Verse 13—*“And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen,” says the Lord of hosts.*

- The practical result is that just as they would not listen when God called, now God would not listen when they called.

Verse 14—*“but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”*

- Instead, God will scatter them like a storm wind. That’s why the pleasant land is desolate. Therefore, they are the ones who made the land desolate because of their disobedience.
- The land of Israel is desolate today. Full of rocks and desert, very few trees, no water. In fact, the whole of creation is under a curse because of sin. Humans made the pleasant garden God created a desolate place.

Lessons:

1. **Dispense justice** (literally, “speak true judgment”). We should speak out with God’s perspective on the world around us to our extended family, friends, and disciples in casual conversation as well as formal teaching (7:9).
2. **Practice kindness and compassion.** Whereas justice is a response according to merit, compassion is a response which ignores merit. Compassion is a combination of mercy and pity (7:9).
3. **Don’t take advantage of poor or less fortunate people.** It is true that some are lazy or choose not to compete or contribute. But many are uninformed, desperate, and their life situation forces them to live for today—which causes them to remain unwise (7:10). Wisdom is only available to those who can think about tomorrow.
4. **Do not “imagine evil against you brother”** (KJV) (literally, “do not think evil”). So what if someone is evil? Answer: speak with God’s perspective, not your own. Never create an evil scenario of someone in your mind. Follow Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5 (7:10).

Application Question:

The best way for you and I to apply this message would be to:

- A. Be sure you understand God’s Word before you apply it (7:12).
- B. Dispense true justice and compassion on the orphans, strangers, and widows (7:9-10).
- C. If you do not listen to God, He will not listen to you (7:13).

Answer:

A is correct. The basic problem of this message is in verse 12: “They made their heart like flint so they could not hear the Law...” B and C are an application of correctly understanding the Word of God.