

Read Isaiah 58

Overview of the event in Zechariah 7-8:

First, the people are reminded that their fasting, like their feasting, had not been by divine commandment and was therefore devoid of spiritual meaning, in accordance with the teaching of the preexilic prophets (7:4–7).¹

In the second section Zechariah recalls what the commandments of the Lord had been when the land was inhabited and enjoying prosperity. They were not ceremonial, they were ethical; they required justice, mercy, and compassion on the poor. To the neglect of these ethical obligations the prophet traces the calamities of the Captivity and Exile (7:8–14).

The mood changes in the third section. The prophet gives a word of promise concerning the bright days of holiness and prosperity which are in store for Zion, in contrast with her earlier condition of distress. On the strength of these promises Zechariah urges the people to holy obedience (8:1–17).

Finally comes a prediction that the fasting of the people shall give way to joyous feasting, to which great multitudes shall throng from all over the land. Even the nations will join in the celebration . . . (8:18–23).²

1 William M. Greathouse, [“The Book of Zechariah,”](#) in *Hosea through Malachi*, Beacon Bible Commentary (Beacon Hill Press, 1966), Zec 7:1–8:23.

2 William M. Greathouse, [“The Book of Zechariah,”](#) in *Hosea through Malachi*, Beacon Bible Commentary (Beacon Hill Press, 1966), Zec 7:1–8:23.