

From Fasting to Feasting

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Text: Zechariah 7.1 – 8.23

Introduction:

- I. I learned a long time ago that when people ask you biblical questions, sometimes they don't want answers. When people discover that I'm a preacher, they'll sometimes start asking me about religious or biblical issues that trouble them. When I attempt to give them careful and solid biblical answers, they simply blow them off and proceed to the next question. They've got questions, but they're not looking for answers.
- II. This isn't a new phenomenon. The Bible records instances where people supposedly sought the Lord's will on a matter, then promptly ignored it.
 - A. Jehoshaphat and Ahab's battle with the Arameans (2 Kings 22.1-40).
 - B. King Zedekiah's misguided inquiries (Jeremiah 37.1-10).
 - C. Jeremiah's fellow citizens who debated whether to stay in Jerusalem or go to Egypt (Jeremiah 42-43).
 - D. Those in Paul's day who were "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3.7).
- III. For me then, it's refreshing when someone genuinely wants to know and do God's will.
- IV. Our text seems to deal with this latter category of people. They were Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile during the time of Zerubbabel. It seems that they genuinely wanted to know about God's will regarding a long-standing custom. God answers them accordingly.
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Body:

I. CONTEXT

A. Historical Context

1. The chronology of the post-exilic period is reasonably well-established because of the synchronisms within the relevant texts.
 - a. 539 BC – Cyrus conquers Babylon.
 - b. 538 BC (1st [regnal] year of Darius) – Zerubbabel leads almost 50,000 Jews back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1.1).
 - c. 536 BC (2nd year after arrival) – Zerubbabel and the exiles begin rebuilding the temple (Ezra 3.8).

- d. 536-520 BC – Work on the temple ceases for about 16 years until the 2nd year of Darius (Ezra 4.24).
 - e. 520 BC – (2nd year of Darius) The prophets Haggai and Zechariah exhort the people to resume their work of reconstructing the temple (Ezra 4.24 – 5.1).
 - 1) 520 BC – August 21 (6th month [Elul], 1st day) – Haggai’s first oracle (Haggai 1.1).
 - 2) 520 BC – September 21 (6th month [Elul], 24th day) – temple work resumes (Haggai 1.15).
 - 3) 520 BC – October 17 (7th month [Tishri], 21st day) – Haggai’s second oracle (Haggai 2.1).
 - 4) 520 BC – October/November (8th month [Marchesvan]) – Zechariah’s first oracle (Zechariah 1.1).
 - 5) 520 BC – December 17 (9th month [Chislev], 24th day) – Haggai’s third and fourth oracles (Haggai 2.10, 20).
 - 6) 519 BC – February 15 (11th month [Shebat], 24th day) – Zechariah’s night visions (Zechariah 1.7 – 6.8).
 - 7) 518 BC – December 7 (9th month [Chislev], 4th day) – Zechariah’s response to the question about fasting (Zechariah 7.1).
 - f. 516 BC – March 12 (6th year of Darius; 12th month [Adar], 3rd day) – temple reconstruction completed (Ezra 6.15).
2. In terms of the sequence of events, Chapter 7 begins about 2 years after his first oracle, and about 2 years ahead of the completion of the temple.
 3. It’s also almost 70 years since the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC (7.3, 5).

B. Literary Context

1. Zechariah 7-8 is the literary center of the book and serves as a transition between the two halves of the book. (Klein 207)
 - a. Chronologically, it’s the last dated text in the first half of the book. The second half of the book is undated.
 - b. In terms of chapter count, this unit straddles the center of the book (14 chapters total). Similarly, this unit straddles the center point in terms of word count. The ESV has 2209 words in chapters 1-6, 1101 words in chapters 7-8, and 2830 words in chapters 9-14. The midpoint is in chapter 8.
 - c. As noted above, chapters 1-6 deal primarily with present concerns, while occasionally looking to the past and to the future. Chapters 9-14 deal primarily with future concerns. The content of chapters 7-8 mirror the macrostructure of the book. Chapters 7-8 begin with a present concern regarding fasting (v. 1-3). In the Lord’s answer, he addresses their concerns, while looking both to the past (v. 4-14), present (8.13), and future (8.1-23). Chapters 7-8 move the focal point forward, preparing the reader for the vision of the future in chapters 9-14.
2. The vocabulary of chapters 7-8 in relationship to chapters 1-6 and 9-14.
 - a. Chapters 7-8 share numerous verbal links with chapters 1-6. (Boda NICOT 20, Kindle Ed.)
 - 1) “Wrath” (*qetseph*) – 1.2; 7.12

- 2) “Wrath” (*qatsaph*) – 1.2, 15 (2x); 8.14 (2x)
 - 3) “These seventy [or many] years” – 1.12; 7.3, 5
 - 4) “Former prophets” – 1.4; 7.7, 12
 - 5) “Pay attention” (*qashab*) – 1.4; 7.11
 - 6) “Hear” (*shama* ‘) – 1.4; 3.8; 6.15; 7.11, 12, 13; 8.9, 23
 - 7) “Purposed” (*zamam*) – 1.6; 8.14, 15
 - 8) “Behind” (*’achar*) – 1.8; 2.8; 7.14
 - 9) “Back and forth” – 1.8; 2.8; 7.14
 - 10) “Jealous” (*qana* ‘) – 1.14; 8.2 (2x)
 - 11) “Evil” (*ra’ah*) – 1.15; 7.10; 8.17
 - 12) “Compassion” (*racham*) – 1.16; 7.9
 - 13) “Midst” (*tawekh*) – 2.4, 5, 10, 11; 5.4, 7, 8; 8.3, 8
 - 14) “Dwell” (*shakan*) – 2.10, 11; 8.3, 8
 - 15) “Inherit” (*nachal*) – 2.12; 8.12
 - 16) “Vine” (*gephen*) – 3.10; 8.12
 - 17) “These words” – 4.6; 7.7; 8.9
 - 18) “Wings [garment]” (*kanaph*) – 5.9 (3x); 8.23
 - 19) “Temple” (*heykal*) – 6.12, 13, 14, 15; 8.9
- b. Other links: (Boda NICOT 425-431, Kindle Ed.; cf. Klein 209)
- 1) Challenge to the present generation: compare 1.3 with 7.5-6.
 - 2) Reminder of the message of the former prophets: compare 1.4a with 7.7-10.
 - 3) Response of the earlier generation: compare 1.4b with 7.11-12b.
 - 4) God’s punishment: compare 1.5-6a with 7.12c-14.
 - 5) Nations coming to Jerusalem: compare 2.11 and 6.15 with 8.3, 7-8, 21-23.
 - 6) Rebuilding the temple: compare 6.12 with 8.3, 9.
- c. Chapters 7-8 also have numerous verbal links to chapters 9-14.
- 1) “House of YHWH” – 7.3; 8.9, 11, 13; 14.20, 21
 - 2) “Mourn” (*safad*) – 7.5; 12.10, 12
 - 3) “Eat” (*’akal*) 7.6 (2x); 9.4, 15; 11.1, 9, 16; 12.6
 - 4) “drink” (*shatah*) – 7.6 (2x); 9.15
 - 5) “Negeb” (*negeb*) – 7.7; 14.4, 10
 - 6) “Filled” (*male* ‘) – 8.5; 9.13, 15
 - 7) “Those days” – 8.6, 9, 10, 15, 23; 9.12
 - 8) “Save” (*yasha* ‘) – 8.7, 13; 9.9, 16; 10.6; 12.7
 - 9) “East” (*mizrach*) – 8.7; 14.4
 - 10) “Strong” (*chazaq*) – 8.9, 13, 23; 14.13

- 11)“Wage” (*sakar*) – 8.10 (2x); 11.12 (2x)
- 12)“House of Judah” – 8.13, 15, 19; 10.3, 6; 12.4
- 13)“Fear” (*yare*’) – 8.13, 15; 9.5
- 14)“Gates” (*sha’ar*) – 8.16; 14.10 (3x)

C. Theological Context

1. I would argue that chapters 7-8 function as the theological center of the book.
2. Reasons:
 - a. The verbal and thematic ties between chapters 1-6, chapters 7-8, and chapters 9-14 suggest a deliberate presentation with chapters 7-8 acting as a literary fulcrum.
 - b. Chapters 7-8 serve to move the focal point from a primarily present horizon in chapters 1-6 to a primarily future horizon in chapters 9-14.
 - c. Within this middle unit, what begins as a present concern (7.1-3) is viewed through the lens of Israel’s past (7.4-14) as well as her future (8.1-23), which mirrors the overall movement of the book.
 - d. Within this middle unit, there’s a strong emphasis on their motives and ethics (7.4-7, 8-10; 8.16-17). The vocabulary of these texts is absent elsewhere in Zechariah. Outside this central unit, the primary ethical text is 1.1-6.
 - e. The final paragraph (8.20-23) ties together several grand Old Testament themes, including the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12.1-3), the reversal of the confusion of Babel (Genesis 11.1-9), and the coming of nations to Jerusalem (Isaiah 2.1-5; Psalm 47.1, 7-9). (Klein 247-249)
 - f. The questions in 7.5-7 are intended to direct their thoughts from self to God. It’s not their name or glory that is at stake, it’s God’s. In essence, Zechariah has put the issue of God’s glory in the very center of the book.

II. STRUCTURE

A. Outline of Zechariah

1. Part 1 (Chapters 1-8): *Immediate Concerns*
 - a. Introduction (1.1-6): *Return to Me*
 - b. Night Visions (1.7 – 6.8)
 - 1) Four riders & horses (1.7-17)
 - 2) Four horns & craftsmen (1.18-21)
 - 3) Measuring line (2.1-13)
 - 4) Joshua cleansed (3.1-10)
 - 5) Temple & Spirit (4.1-14)
 - 6) Sinners cursed (5.1-4)
 - 7) Basket of iniquity (5.5-9)
 - 8) Four chariots (6.1-8)
 - c. Symbolic Act (6.9-15): *Crowning of Joshua*
 - d. Question of Fasting (7.1 – 8.23)

2. Part 2 (Chapters 9-14): *Future Concerns*
 - a. Against the nations (9.1 – 11.17)
 - b. Concerning Israel (12.1 – 14.21)

B. Observations on the Structure of Zechariah

1. Zechariah is a carefully structured book that employs three methods of organization: introductory oracular formulas, synchronisms, and subject matter.
2. Zechariah's prophecy consists of two large sections, chapters 1-8 and chapters 9-14, which "focus on different temporal horizons: 1-8 is concerned with issues of immediate interest to the restoration community, whereas 9-14 reflect more apocalyptic and eschatological imagery." (Longman & Dillard 487; Dorsey 318)
3. Chapters 1-8: *Immediate Concerns*
 - a. Chapters 1-8 consist of four units marked off by similar introductory formulas. (Boda NICOT 415-416, Kindle Ed.)
 - 1) 1.1-6: "The word of YHWH came... saying" (1.1).
 - 2) 1.7 – 6.8: "The word of YHWH came... as follows" (1.7).
 - 3) 6.9-15: "The word of YHWH came... saying" (6.9).
 - 4) 7.1 – 8.23: "The word of YHWH came..." (7.1).
 - b. Three of the units are marked off by both a synchronism and an introductory oracular formula.
 - 1) 1.1-6: "*In the eighth month of the second year of Darius*, the word of the LORD came... saying" (1.1).
 - 2) 1.7 – 6.8: "On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came... as follows" (1.7).
 - 3) 7.1 – 8.23: "In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came" (7.1).
 - c. The "Night Visions" unit is further divided by references to the prophet's seeing or being shown details of the visions.
 - 1) 1.7-17: "I saw at night, and behold... Then I said" (1.8-9).
 - 2) 1.18-21: "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold... So I said" (1.18-19).
 - 3) 2.1-13: "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold... So I said," (2.1-2).
 - 4) 3.1-10: "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. ² The LORD said to Satan..." (3.1-2).
 - 5) 4.1-14: "He said to me, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I see, and behold..." (4.2).
 - 6) 5.1-4: "Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold..." (5.1).
 - 7) 5.5-9: "Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth" (5.5).
 - 8) 6.1-8: "Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold..." (6.1).

- d. The “Crowning of Joshua” (6.9-15) appears to be a distinct unit.
 - 1) It begins with the formula, “The word of the LORD also came to me, saying,” which is the same formula that begins the larger units in chapters 1-8.
 - 2) A similar formula occurs at 4.8 in the middle of the “Night Visions” that doesn’t begin a new unit. However, there is a clear change of subject matter in 6.9-15.

4. Chapters 9-14: *Future Concerns*

- a. Chapters 9-14 contain two units, each of which is marked off by an introductory formula.
 - 1) 9.1 – 11.17: “The burden (*masa*) of the word of the LORD” (9.1).
 - 2) 12.1 – 14.21: “The burden (*masa*) of the word of the LORD” (12.1).
- b. These two units have distinct subject matter.
 - 1) 9.1 – 11.17 is an oracle against the nations.
 - 2) 12.1 – 14.21 is “concerning Israel” (12.1).
- c. It is possible that 11.4-17 is a separate unit.
 - 1) It begins with another introductory oracular formula, “Thus says the LORD my God” (11.4).
 - 2) The content is different from the previous section. Whereas 9.1 – 11.3 address the future judgment of foreign nations, 11.4-17 picks up the reference to shepherds (11.3) and develops it further.
 - 3) The literature also shifts from poetry to prose.
 - a) 9.1 – 11.3 is a lengthy poetic section (NASB, NIV, ESV, CSB, JPS).
 - b) 11.4-17 is prose with a short poetic stanza at the end (v. 17).
 - c) 12.1 – 14.21 is primarily prose with a brief poetic stanza in the middle (13.7-9).
- d. There are no synchronisms in the second part of the book, although the reference to Greece at 9.13 may affect the date of the prophecy.

C. Structure of Zechariah 7-8

- 1. Chapters 7-8 in Zechariah are clearly a unit as evidenced by the introductory oracular formula, the subject matter, the structure of the text, the use of “YHWH of hosts,” and the vocabulary.
- 2. Chapter 7 begins with a dated oracular formula, “In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev.”
 - a. This same type of formula occurs only at 1.1, 7, which mark the beginning points of the first two major sections in the book.
 - b. The next major unit begins at 9.1 with the formula, “the oracle of the word of YHWH,” which marks the beginning of the next major unit.
- 3. Chapters 7-8 address a question regarding fasting.

- a. 7.1-3 introduces the subject of fasting in the form of a question posed to the priests in Jerusalem.
 - b. 7.4-7 gives YHWH's initial answer regarding fasting.
 - c. 8.18-19 gives YHWH's final answer regarding fasting.
4. Chapters 7-8 exhibit a chiasmic structure. With slight adaptation, I prefer the version given by Goldingay and Scalise. (Baldwin 150-165; Dorsey 319-320; Goldingay & Scalise 246)
- A – Men come to Jerusalem to entreat YHWH (7.1-3).
- B – Fasting – what YHWH says (7.4-7).
- C – What YHWH desires (7.8-10)
- D – Ancestors refused to obey and were scattered (7.11-14).
- E – YHWH will save the city (8.1-8).
- E* – YHWH will save the nation (8.9-13)
- D* – Ancestors refused to obey and were punished (8.14-15).
- C* – What YHWH desires (8.16-17)
- B* – Fasting – what YHWH wants (8.18-19).
- A* – Men will come to Jerusalem to entreat YHWH (8.20-23).
5. Chapters 7-8 employ the divine title “YHWH of hosts” more than any other place in Zechariah.
- a. “YHWH of hosts” appears as early as 1 Samuel, but its use dramatically increases from the 8th century BC onward. The five books that use it most are Jeremiah (71x), Isaiah (49x), Zechariah (53x), Malachi (24x), and Haggai (14x). The remaining 35 books of the Old Testament use the title a total of 28x. (Boda NICOT 74-75 Kindle Ed.)
 - b. Chapters 7-8 use the title 24x, almost half the uses in Zechariah. It's clear that this title is of central importance to this unit.
6. Chapters 7-8 use over 60 words and phrases words found only in these two chapters.
- a. Words found only in chapter 7 (23 words and phrases):
 - 1) 7.3 – “weep” (*bakah*), “abstain” (*nazar*)
 - 2) 7.5 – “fasted” (*tsum*) 3x
 - 3) 7.6 – “eat and drink”
 - 4) 7.7 – “prosperous” (*shalew*), “foothills” (*shephelah*)
 - 5) 7.9 – “kindness” (*chesed*), “brother” (*'ach*)
 - 6) 7.10 – “oppress” (*'ashaq*), “widow” (*'almanah*), “orphan” (*yatom*), “stranger” (*ger*)
 - 7) 7.11 – “refused” (*ma'an*), “stubborn” (*sarar*), “shoulder” (*hashab*), “stopped” (*kabed*), “ears” (*'ozen*)
 - 8) 7.12 – “flint” (*shamir*), “law” (*torah*)
 - 9) 7.14 – “scattered... storm wind” (*sa'ar*), “desolated” (*shamem*), “pleasant” (*chemdah*), “desolate” (*shammah*)
 - b. Words found only in chapter 8 (32 words and phrases):

- 1) 8.2 – “wrath” (*chemah*)
 - 2) 8.3 – “City of Truth”, “Holy Mountain”
 - 3) 8.4 – “old men”, “old women”, “streets” (*rechob*), “staff” (*mish‘enet*), “age”
 - 4) 8.5 – “streets” (*rechob*) 2x, “boys and girls”, “playing” (*sachaq*)
 - 5) 8.6 – “difficult” (*pala’*), “remnant (*se‘eriyt*) of this people”
 - 6) 8.7 – “west” (*mabo*)
 - 7) 8.8 – “righteousness” (*sedaqah*)
 - 8) 8.10 – “enemies” (*tsar*)
 - 9) 8.11 – “remnant (*se‘eriyt*) of this people,” “former days”
 - 10) 8.12 – “seed” (*zera’*), “fruit” (*periy*), “produce” (*yebul*), “dew” (*tal*), “remnant (*se‘eriyt*) of this people”
 - 11) 8.13 – “curse” (*qelalah*), “house of Israel”, “blessing” (*berakah*)
 - 12) 8.14 – “harm” (*ra‘a’*)
 - 13) 8.15 – “do good” (*yatab*)
 - 14) 8.17 – “perjury” (*shebu‘ah sheqer*), “hate” (*sane*)
 - 15) 8.19 – “fast” (*tsom*) 4x, “joy” (*sason*), “gladness” (*simchah*), “feasts” (*mo‘ed*)
 - 16) 8.22 – “mighty” (*atsum*)
 - 17) 8.23 – “Jew” (*yehudiy*)
- c. Words found only in chapters 7 & 8 (6 words and phrases):
- 1) “seek favor” (*chalah peneh*) – 7.2; 8.21, 22
 - 2) “dispense” (*shaphat*) – 7.9; 8.16
 - 3) “true” (*‘emet*) – 7.9; 8.3, 8, 16 (2x), 19
 - 4) “justice” (*mishpat*) – 7.9; 8.16
 - 5) “devise” (*chashab*) – 7.10; 8.17
 - 6) “hearts” (*lebab*) – 7.10; 8.17

III. EXEGESIS OF ZECHARIAH 7-8

A. NOTE: The Use of “YHWH of Hosts”

1. “Hosts” (*tsaba’*) is the most common appellation added to YHWH in the OT. (Boda NICOT 74 Kindle Ed.)
2. “Hosts” may refer to:
 - a. Heavenly bodies – Genesis 2.1; Deuteronomy 4.19; Judges 5.20; Isaiah 40.26
 - b. Angelic beings – Joshua 5.14-15; Psalm 148.2
 - c. An army – Genesis 21.22; Exodus 14.4; 1 Samuel 17.20; Psalm 33.16; Proverbs 30.31
 - d. Armies of Israel – 1 Samuel 17.45
 - e. All creatures – Genesis 2.1

- f. A great crowd –Exodus 6.26; 7.4; 12.17; Psalm 68.11; Obadiah 20
3. Notice how it's translated in the NASB. Of its 482 occurrences in the OT, it's rendered as:
 - a. Host(s) 323x
 - b. Army or armies 105x
 - c. War or warfare 36x
 - d. Service 10x
 - e. 1x each as battle, combat, conflict, forced to labor, hardship, most, struggle, and trained
 4. Not counting its translation as “host(s),” it is used in a militaristic sense over 130x.
 5. This is conjecture on my part, but I wonder if by this point in Israel's history, she had come to realize that her only hope for protection and intervention was from YHWH of hosts. In view of the political upheaval in the Ancient Near East from the 8th century BC onward, and in view of Israel's corresponding loss of power, wealth, and prestige, perhaps they came to see YHWH of hosts as the One who was sovereign in the heavens, on the earth, among the nations, and over Israel. Only YHWH of hosts *could* save them and was *willing* to save them.
 - a. “Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle” (Zechariah 14.3).
 - b. “...it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths” (Zechariah 14.18b).
 - c. “For the kingdom is YHWH's and he rules over the nations” (Psalm 22.28).
 - d. “God is king of all the earth... God reigns over the nations, God sits on his holy throne” (Psalm 47.7-8).

A. Men from Jerusalem Entreat YHWH (7.1-3): Shall we continue?

1. Setting (v. 1)
 - a. December 7, 518 BC – “Fourth year of King Darius... fourth day... ninth month (Chislev)”.
 - b. This is approximately two years since his first oracle, and about two years prior to the completion of the temple
2. Querists (v. 2-3a)
 - a. From Bethel
 - 1) One of Jeroboam's sites of calf worship (1 Kings 12.28-29), whose altar was eventually destroyed by Josiah (2 Kings 23.15).
 - 2) It had most recently been rebuilt and resettled by some of the returning exiles (Ezra 2.28; Nehemiah 7.32)
 - b. Two delegates, both of whom have foreign names, indicating that they probably were born in Babylonian captivity.
 - 1) Sharezer – an Assyrian name (2 Kings 19.37; Isaiah 37.38)
 - 2) Regemmelech – possibly a Babylonian name (1 Chronicles 2.47)
 - c. “Seek the favor of YHWH”

- 1) This expression literally means to “seek (*chalah*) the face (*peneh*) of YHWH.”
 - 2) The Hebrew word *chalah* is used 17x in the Old Testament. It means to entreat, implore, seek favor, or intercede. It always occurs as a piel stem verb. (TWOT 287; TLOT 427)
 - a) In three places, it means to seek human favor (Job 11.19; Psalm 45.12; Proverbs 19.6).
 - b) All other occurrences refer to seeking divine favor (Exodus 32.11; 2 Kings 13.4; 2 Chronicles 23.12; Psalm 119.58; Jeremiah 26.19; Daniel 9.13; Zechariah 7.2; 8.21, 22; Malachi 1.9).
 - c) In only two places does it carry a negative connotation.
 - 3) Since this expression is used positively at 8.21, 22, and since that paragraph (8.21-23) corresponds to the opening paragraph of this unit (7.1-3), I would understand this inquiry in a positive way.
 - d. “Speaking to the priests... and to the prophets”
 - 1) Priests functioned as teachers of the Law (Leviticus 10.10-11; Deuteronomy 17.8-13; 2 Chronicles 17.7-9). It may be that they sometimes acted as intermediaries in some situations (Jeremiah 36.11-19).
 - 2) Inquiring of YHWH through his prophets was commonplace (1 Samuel 9.9; 1 Kings 22.5-8).
3. Question (v. 3b)
- a. “Weep” (*bakah* = to weep, wail, sob, cry) and “abstain” (*nazar* = to separate or consecrate oneself; related to the word “Nazarite”)
 - 1) These two words describe fasting, as is evident from v. 5 and 8.19.
 - 2) The noun *tsom* and verb *tsum* are the normal Hebrew words for fasting. *Nazar* never occurs with either of these, but *bakah* occurs six times with them (Judges 20.26; 2 Samuel 1.12; Judges 12.21-22; Psalm 69.11; Nehemiah 1.4).
 - b. “Fifth month”
 - 1) They ask about a particular fast in the fifth month (Ab). YHWH mentions an additional fast in the seventh month (v. 5), and then adds two more in the fourth and tenth months (8.19).
 - 2) Each of these was a voluntary fast that commemorated some aspect of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem, and the resulting exile.
 - a) Fourth month (Tammuz) = when the wall of Jerusalem was breached (2 Kings 25.3; Jeremiah 39.2; 52.6-7).
 - b) Fifth month (Ab) = when the temple was burned (2 Kings 25.8-9; Jeremiah 52.12-13).
 - c) Seventh month (Tishri) = when Gedaliah was murdered (2 Kings 25.25; Jeremiah 41.1-2).
 - d) Tenth month (Tebet) = when Jerusalem was besieged (2 Kings 25.1; Jeremiah 39.1; 52.4).
 - 3) It may be that they ask only about the fast of the fifth month because of the progress on the reconstruction of the temple.

- c. “These many years”
 - 1) YHWH says, “seventy years” (v. 5, cf. 1.12), which makes it clear that this fast (and the others mentioned later) were related to the fall of Judah and the Babylonian captivity.
 - 2) The reckoning of the seventy years is most likely the period from the destruction of the temple in 586 BC to its reconstruction in 516 BC. This seems to fit this context the best.

B. Fasting – YHWH’s First Answer (7.4-7): Why did you fast?

1. Their fasting (v. 5a)
 - a. YHWH uses the verbs “fasted” (*tsum*) and “mourned” (*safad* = beat the breast, mourn, lament, weep) in reference to their actions.
 - b. The only required fast under the Law of Moses was on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16.29-31; 23.27-29; Numbers 29.7).
 - 1) On this day, Israelites were to “humble” (*‘anah*) themselves.
 - 2) The word *‘anah* meant to humble or afflict and wasn’t specifically about abstaining from food.
 - 3) However, five texts explicitly connect it with fasting: Psalm 35.13; Isaiah 58.3, 5; Daniel 10.12 (v. 2-3); Acts 27.9.
 - c. It seems that fasting was the accepted expression of *‘anah*. Hartley observes that “*‘anah* is used in the place of *tsum*, ‘fast’, in order to communicate that more than not eating is required.” (Hartley 242; see also Rooker 223)
2. Their motive (v. 5b)
 - a. Was it for God or for self? Whose glory was being sought?
 - b. The language used here resembles several Pauline texts.
 - 1) Here (added emphasis is mine, cls):
 - a) “Was it actually *for me [the Lord]* that you fasted?” (v. 5)
 - b) “When you eat and drink, do you not eat *for yourselves* and do you not drink *for yourselves*?” (v. 6)
 - 2) In Paul (added emphasis is mine, cls):
 - a) “He who observes the day, observes it *for the Lord*, and he who eats, does so *for the Lord*.” (Romans 14.6a)
 - b) “For not one of us lives *for himself*, and not one dies *for himself*.” (Romans 14.7)
 - c. Fasting for YHWH was done in dedication to him, for his glory. Since it was an act of humility (*‘anah*), the participants should have been mourning their sins and those of the nation (Matthew 5.4).
 - d. If this was truly for YHWH’s sake, his glory was paramount. Again, to borrow from Paul:
 - 1) “So that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15.6).
 - 2) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10.31).

3. Reminders (v. 7)
 - a. “Former prophets” – i.e., what God was telling them now wasn’t new. It was the same message given to earlier generations.
 - b. The reference to Jerusalem’s former prosperity emphasizes that if obedience was required in the best of times, how much more so in times of distress, as in the present situation (1.17).

C. What YHWH desires (7.8-10): Justice, Kindness, Compassion

1. Zechariah shifts from fasting to social justice. Fasting (humbling oneself) is pointless if not accompanied by concern for others (Isaiah 58.1-14). He then tells them what they must do, first positively (v. 9), then negatively (v. 10). Both personally and judicially, they must be concerned with even handed justice in the land.
2. What they must do (v. 8-9): Positively.
 - a. “Dispense” (*shaphat*) is to judge or execute judgment (Exodus 18.13, 16, 22; Numbers 25.5; Psalm 2.10). It’s sometimes used in the sense of appropriating justice for the oppressed (Isaiah 1.17, 23; 11.4; Jeremiah 5.28).
 - b. The cluster of words that follow are, by themselves, the great words for social justice in the Old Testament.
 - 1) “Justice” (*mishpat*) is justice, or the laws, regulations, or ordinances designed to bring it about (Exodus 21.1; 23.6; Leviticus 19.15, 35, 37; Psalm 89.14; Isaiah 1.17).
 - 2) “Kindness” (*chesed*) is lovingkindness, unfailing love, loyal love, which may include kindness shown because of an existing covenant or prior relationship (Genesis 24.27; Exodus 15.13; 34.6-7; 2 Samuel 10.2; Psalm 89.49; etc.). (See the discussions in TWOT 305-307; TLOT 449-264)
 - 3) “Compassion” (*racham*) is compassion, mercy, or pity, almost always in reference to God’s mercies (1 Chronicles 21.13; Psalm 41.1; 145.9).
 - 4) Zechariah 7.9 is the only place where all three occur together. Elsewhere, they occur in pairs only occasionally.
 - a) *Mishpat* and *chesed*: Jeremiah 9.24; Hosea 12.6; Micah 6.8; Psalm 89.14; etc.
 - b) *Chesed* and *racham*: only at Isaiah 54.8, 10; Lamentations 3.22
 - c) *Racham* and *mishpat*: only at Isaiah 30.18; Jeremiah 30.18
3. What they must not do (v. 10): Negatively
 - a. “Oppress” (*ashaq*) is to oppress by mistreatment, fraud, or extortion (Leviticus 6.2, 4; 19.13; Deuteronomy 24.14). Scripture warns against oppressing others and reminds us of God’s special care for the oppressed (Psalm 103.6; Proverbs 14.31).
 - 1) Those affected are described by four stock words frequently associated in the Old Testament affliction: the widow, orphan, stranger, and poor.
 - a) This is the only OT text that groups all four, although Deuteronomy combines the “alien.. widow... and orphan in several places (10.8; 14.29; 16.11, 14; 24.17, 19-21; 26.12-13; 27.19).
 - b) Each of these words is occasionally connected with *mishpat*, the stock word for justice or vindication (see v. 9; cf. Deuteronomy 10.18; 14.29)

- 2) “Widow” (*’almanah*), symbolic of a frequently exploited class of adults. In a strongly patricentric culture, women were often exploited, especially when no husband was present.
 - 3) “Orphan” (*yatom*) is one who is parentless. Paired with “widow” in 25 Old Testament verses, they epitomize the antithesis of a blessed family life.
 - 4) “Stranger” (*ger*) is a foreigner, an alien in a foreign country, without the standing, rights, and protections of a native. It’s paired with “widow” in 16 Old Testament texts, with “orphan” in fifteen places, and with “poor” three places.
 - 5) “Poor” (*’aniy*) are the impoverished and needy, hence oppressed, lacking the resources to provide for themselves. Grouped with aliens (Leviticus 19.10; 23.22), orphans (Job 24.9; 29.12; Psalm 82.3), and widows (Isaiah 10.2). It’s one of the words used to describe Messiah (Zechariah 9.9).
- b. “Devise” (*chasab*) to plot, plan or purpose, often in the sense of planning to harm someone (Psalm 10.2; 21.11; 35.4; Proverbs 16.30; Jeremiah 18.18).
- 1) Here, they devise “evil” (*ra’ah*) in their “hearts” (*lebab*), where such plans originate (Genesis 6.5; Proverbs 6.18; 12.20; Jeremiah 4.14, 18).
 - 2) The evil is directed against “one another” (v. 10), i.e., their fellow Israelites, their brethren. Their failure wasn’t against society in general, but against their own people, their own family.

D. Refusal of Ancestors to Obey YHWH (7.11-14): Calling & Not Listening

1. Zechariah shifts from the present situation to past examples of disobedience. “They” are apparently the forefathers (1.2-6). He’s warning them not to be like their ancestors. It was their ancestors’ sins that brought destruction and exile. To repeat such wickedness will result in the same.
2. Their obstinance (v. 11-12)
 - a. “Refused” (*ma’an*) is to refuse or reject. It always occurs in the piel stem, which suggests strong, stubborn refusal (Genesis 37.35; 39.8; Exodus 7.14; Esther 1.12; Jeremiah 5.3; 8.5).
 - b. “Pay attention” (*qashab*) is to listen, heed, pay attention to. Here, it echoes the same sentiment about their fathers as 1.2-6.
 - c. “Stubborn shoulder” pictures someone turning away or pulling away from another. It’s the same phrase as in Nehemiah 9.29, which describes the disobedient ancestors of the post-exile generation.
 - d. “Stopped their ears from hearing” begins with *kabed* (related to “glory”) and is used elsewhere in the sense of Pharaoh and others hardening their hearts against God (Exodus 8.15, 32; 9.7, 34; 10.1; 1 Samuel 6.6).
 - e. “Hearts like flint” where *shamiyr* indicates a hard substance like flint, emery (Ezekiel 3.9), or diamond (Jeremiah 17.1). Whereas the heart is normally pliable and receptive, theirs had become “hard as a rock.”
 - f. The consequence for them was an unwillingness or even an inability to “hear” God’s message and messengers. To refuse them is to invite “great wrath” from YHWH (Deuteronomy 29.28; 2 Kings 3.27; Zechariah 1.2, 15; 8.2, 14).
3. The consequences (v. 13-14)
 - a. First, God, like his people, refused to listen.

- 1) “Call” (*qara* ‘) and “hear” (*shama* ‘) occur together frequently when people call out to God and he hears (Numbers 21.3; 2 Samuel 22.7; Isaiah 65.24; Jeremiah 29.12; Jonah 2.2; Psalm 4.1, 3; Daniel 9.18 etc.). The phrase also refers to when God calls to Israel, and they refuse to hear him (Isaiah 65.12; 66.4; Jeremiah 7.13; Zechariah 1.4).
- b. Second, since Israel wouldn’t listen, he scattered them to the wind.
 - 1) “Scattered with a storm wind” (*sa ‘ar*) denotes a raging storm. Here, their exile is described as the scattering of debris in a severe windstorm (Isaiah 54.11; Hosea 13.3; Jonah 1.11, 13).
- c. Third, since the land was empty of people, it became desolate.
 - 1) “Desolated” (*shamem*) and “desolate” (*shammah*) both denote devastation, desolation, horror, ruin, and laying waste.
 - 2) See Leviticus 26.31-32; 2 Chronicles 36.21; Job 16.7; Psalm 69.25; etc.
4. **NOTE:** Chapter 7 begins with a question about fasting (v. 1-3). YHWH’s answer only touches on the subject briefly (v. 4-6), but only for the purpose of probing their motives. He then moves to the subject of social justice among the Israelites. Personal devotions like fasting have their place, but if they don’t affect how we treat others, if our devotions don’t affect our ethics, they’re of no value.

E. YHWH Will Save the City (8.1-8): Zeal for Zion

1. **NOTE:** Chapter 8 uses the phrase “Thus says YHWH” ten times (8.2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 19, 20, 23), each time followed by a statement of blessing.
 - a. These ten sayings are seen as “A Decalogue of Promise”. (Smith 181, 220; Lewis 78)
 - b. Several scholars view the bulk of chapter 8 as fragments of earlier oracles, drawn from the corpus of Zechariah’s previous sermons. (Baldwin 158-159; Smith 231)
 - c. These ten sayings should not, however, alter the primary structure of the chapter, which is governed by the two primary oracular formulas (v. 1, 18), as well as the correspondences between chapter 8 and chapter 7.
2. Divine jealousy (v. 1-2)
 - a. In contrast with YHWH’s wrath against the nation (1.12; 7.12), Zechariah now affirms YHWH’s zeal for his people.
 - b. “Jealous” (*qana* ‘) can be either positive, in the sense of zeal, or negative, in the sense of jealousy or envy.
 - c. With respect to God, “jealousy” emphasizes the exclusive nature of his love for Israel (1.14). He won’t tolerate any efforts to lure her away from himself (Exodus 20.3). Now, his wrath has turned away from Israel toward any potential rivals.
3. Divine indwelling (v. 3)
 - a. Ezekiel had portrayed the withdrawal of YHWH’s glory from the land and city (Ezekiel 9.3; 10.4, 19; 11.22). Here is the promise of return.
 - b. Zechariah has already seen a vision depicting a multitude of people in the city with God in her midst (2.1-13).
4. Divine Peace (v. 4-5)
 - a. Whereas the destruction of the city would have been hard on the elderly and children, when YHWH returns to Zion, it will be a haven of safety.

- 1) The elderly will grow old, and it will be safe for them to sit in the streets. They won't die violently or prematurely. The children will be able to play in safety without fear of want.
 - 2) Contrast this with the image of the city before and after its fall in 586 BC (Jeremiah 6.11; Lamentations 2.10, 11-12, 21; 4.10; 5.13-14).
 - b. The blessing and ideals of old and children within the family will be restored (Proverbs 3.2; 9.10-11; Psalm 127.3; 128.3-4, 5-6).
5. Divine Power (v. 6)
- a. Twice in one sentence, YHWH declares that nothing is too difficult for him. While the remnant may think this restoration of the temple is too hard (v. 6a), he assures them (by way of a rhetorical question) that it's not too hard (v. 6b).
 - b. For almost identical expressions, see Genesis 18.14; Jeremiah 32.17, 27.
6. Divine Summons (v. 7-8)
- a. First, there is the summons from their dispersion. This had already begun in Zerubbabel's day (Ezra 2; 8; Nehemiah 7).
 - b. Second, there was the renewal of the covenant relationship, promised repeatedly in the prophets (Jeremiah 24.7; 31.33; 38.38; Ezekiel 11.20; 14.11; 34.30; 37.23, 27).
 - c. Third, the renewed relationship is built upon the twin foundations of truth and righteousness (1 Kings 3.6; Psalm 45.4; 85.10-11; Proverbs 20.28; Isaiah 48.1; 59.14; Jeremiah 4.2).

F. YHWH Will Save the Nation (8.9-13): Let Your Hands Be Strong

1. This paragraph begins and ends with an exhortation to have "strong hands."
 - a. The phrase sometimes refers to the mighty acts of God (Deuteronomy 3.24; Nehemiah 1.10; 136.12).
 - b. Here, as in other places, it means to summon courage for something, whether good or bad (Judges 7.11; 2 Samuel 16.21; Jeremiah 23.14).
2. The audience is described as those "who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets who spoke in the day that the foundation of the house was laid." (Boda NICOT 491-493; Smith 236; Baldwin 16; Klein 239-240)
 - a. Notice:
 - 1) They were at the beginning, when temple reconstruction was begun (December 17, 520 BC; Haggai 2.18; Ezra 5.1-2).
 - 2) They heard "words from the mouth of the prophets who spoke" indicating that Zechariah includes what others said. The only prophets identified from that time period are Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 5.1-2; 6.14).
 - 3) Ezra 3.10 mentions the "sons of Asaph" who are elsewhere identified as prophets (2 Chronicles 25.1, 500 years earlier), but there is no indication that they are functioning as prophets on this occasion.
 - b. Here again is a reference to their "listening" (*shama*'), which should be understood positively here, in contrast to their ancestors (1.4; 7.11, 12, 13).
 - c. The point is that they've been around long enough to have heard consistent exhortations to resume reconstruction. They should act upon them.

3. Zechariah reminds them of the conditions that existed before temple reconstruction began (v. 10): “No wage... no peace” affecting both man and animal (Jeremiah 7.20; Ezekiel 14.13; Haggai 1.6-11; 2.15-19).
4. But however much they had struggled in the past, YHWH would reverse the fortunes of the remnant: from strife (v. 10) to peace (v. 12); from lack (v. 10; cf. Haggai 1.10-11) to abundance (v. 12); from [covenantal] curse (14.11; cf. Deuteronomy 28.37; Jeremiah 24.9; 25.18) to blessing (v. 13).

G. Refusal of Ancestors to Obey YHWH (8.14-15): From Harm to Good

1. Once more Zechariah points to the difference between past and present, between the forefathers and the post-exilic audience.
2. “Purposed” (*zamam*) means to determine, plan, plot, or intend. When it’s applied to God, it is used only in reference to the destruction of Judah and the exile (Jeremiah 4.28; 51.12; Lamentations 2.17; Zechariah 1.6; 8.14-15).
3. Whereas God had purposed “harm” (*ra‘a’*) i.e., distress, hostility, mistreatment, or evil upon disobedient ancestors, now he purposes “good” (*yatab*). Previous generations suffered this fate because they “provoked” God (*qatsaph*), 1.2; 7.12.
4. For the second time in this chapter, God tells them “Do not fear” (v. 13, 15; cf. Joshua 8.1; 10.8, 25; 11.6).

H. What YHWH Desires (8.16-17): Truth, Not Evil

1. After promising peace and abundance (v. 12), blessing and good (v. 13, 15), Zechariah returns to his call for social justice among the Israelites. This unit corresponds to 7.9-10 and calls for both personal and judicial integrity in their dealings with one another.
2. Positively (v. 16):
 - a. “Speak the truth”
 - 1) “Truth” (*’emet*) is one of the foundational traits of God’s kingdom (Psalm 89.14). It is likewise the cornerstone of personal character (Psalm 15.2). It shouldn’t surprise us then that it’s a necessary component to orderly society (Proverbs 14.25; 20.28; 29.14).
 - 2) In Zechariah, *’emet* occurs only in chapters 7-8 (7.9; 8.3, 8, 16 [2x], 19). If Jerusalem is to become “the City of Truth” (8.3) it requires that her citizens practice truth-telling “to one another.”
 - b. “Judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates”
 - 1) “Peace” (*shalom*) had been lacking in the past (8.10) but can be restored (v. 12). The essential ingredients are judgments based on truth (*’emet*) and justice (*mishpat*), Isaiah 16.5; Jeremiah 4.2; Psalm 89.14.
 - 2) “In the gates” reinforces the ideals of community in this ethical text, for it was “in the gates” of the city where local justice was dispensed between citizens (Amos 5.10, 15).
3. Negatively (v. 17a):
 - a. Do not “devise evil in your heart” is identical to the admonition at 7.10. “Against another” reminds them that evil doesn’t originate in institutions but in the hearts of people.

b. “Do not love perjury” is literally “false oaths” (*shebuah sheqer*), found only here in the Old Testament. It was aimed at any individual who would stoop to such tactics, and at any court that would permit or promote such.

4. Reason (v. 17b)

a. “For all these are what I hate, declares YHWH.”

b. To love perjury (v. 17a) is to hate YHWH (17b). You can’t love God and at the same time love sin.

c. This declaration gets to the center of biblical ethics. Loving what God loves and hating what God hates is the essence of determining and practicing righteousness.

I. Fasting – YHWH’s Second Answer (8.18-19): From Fasting to Feasting

1. This unit corresponds to 7.4-7 and brings us back to the original question about fasting and YHWH’s final answer. The intervening material has shown us that the issue of fasting is less about fasting than one’s motives and what results from that.

2. YHWH’s answer expands upon the original query (7.3). They asked about a fast in the fifth month, he includes fasts in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months. He doesn’t explicitly answer their question, but instead says that in the future these fasts will be replaced with feasts.

a. Festal descriptions:

1) “Joy” (*sason*): joy or jubilation (HALOT 1363); exultation, rejoicing (BDB 965); joy, gladness, rejoicing, mirth... “human happiness and abounding delight” (TWOT 873).

2) “Gladness” (*simchah*): joy or jubilation (HALOT 1336); joy, gladness, mirth (BDB 970); joy or mirth (TWOT 879)

3) “Cheerful feasts” (*mo’edim tobim*): festival, time of festivity, joyful celebration (HALOT 557-558); sacred season, usually a set feast or appointed season (BDB 417-418); set feast (TWOT 388-389)

4) Note:

a) Boda translates as, “jubilation, and gladness and merry festivals.” (Boda NICOT 507 Kindle Ed.)

b) Klein observes, “The term “joyful” (*śāsôn*) means “exultation or rejoicing,” especially in light of the Lord’s favor (see Ps 51:8). Likewise, the Hebrew term for “glad occasions” (*śimḥāh*) signifies “mirth.” This latter expression, when describing gladness in a social setting, may refer to the fellowship that family and friends share around a meal (see Gen 31:27). If this is the case, it presents a particularly pregnant connotation in light of Zechariah’s transformation from fast to feast. Last, the Hebrew phrase for “happy festivals” (*mō’ādīm*) does not occur elsewhere in the Old Testament, but the expression speaks of good or pleasant assemblies.” (Klein 246)

b. “Love truth and peace” – the conditions for attaining such joy. “Love focuses on the internal motivation necessary to sustain just actions within the community (8:15), and truth and peace are the key values which will typify the actions of a just community (8:14).” (Boda NICOT 510 Kindle Ed.)

J. Men Come to Jerusalem to Entreat YHWH (8.21-23): We Have Heard

1. Thematically, this unit ends as it began, with men seeking divine favor (7.1-3). The use of plural nouns (e.g., peoples, inhabitants, cities, languages, nations), plus the adjectives “many” and “mighty” emphasize the vast scope of this prophecy.
2. This paragraph brings together multiple major Old Testament themes:
 - a. The promise of all nations seeking YHWH (8.23; cf. 2.11), and the promise of Israel becoming a blessing to the nations (v. 13) connect this text with YHWH’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12.1-3).
 - b. The promise of “all the tongues of the nations” (v. 23) seeking YHWH is a reversal of the Babel curse (Genesis 11.1-9).
 - c. The coming of nations to Jerusalem (v. 22) is consistent with this messianic ideal found elsewhere (Isaiah 2.1-5; Psalm 47.1, 7-9).
3. The cities come to Jerusalem (v. 20-21)
 - a. Whereas God had previously pronounced judgment against the nations (1.15-16, 21; 2.8-9), he now declares a time when all will seek him (cf. 2.11).
 - b. They’re described as “peoples” (*am*) and “inhabitants” (*yashab*) from “cities” (*iyr*). Presumably, the action of v. 21 precedes the action of v. 20 as these same inhabitants first invite one another on this urgent journey.
 - c. Their motives are two-fold: (1) to “entreat the favor of YHWH”, and (2) to “seek YHWH of hosts”.
 - 1) “Entreat” (*chalah*) is the same expression as at 7.2. Just as Israelites had sought out their God, one day all men would seek him.
 - 2) “Seek” (*baqash*) is to seek, search, or look for, and is often used of seeking YHWH (e.g., Deuteronomy 4.29; 2 Chronicles 15.4; Psalm 105.3).
4. The nations come to Jerusalem (v. 22)
 - a. Here, the scope of the ingathering grows from “peoples” (v. 20) to “many peoples”, from “many cities” (v. 20) to “mighty nations”.
 - b. Their purpose is the same: to seek and entreat YHWH.
5. The nations come with Jews (v. 23)
 - a. The imagery changes from “many” to “ten,” which may allude to the agreed upon number of people in Sodom whom God would spare for the sake of Abraham (Genesis 18.22). (Goldingay & Scalise 264)
 - b. The NASB says “men from all the nations.” Literally, the text says, “from all the tongues of the nations” (*mikol leshonot hagoyim*), which is preserved in the KJV, NIV, ESV, CSB, JPS, and most other English versions. This reinforces the notion that this is the reversal of the Babel confusion (Genesis 11.1-9).
 - c. The foreigners “grasp the garment [hem] of a Jew.” “The intensity of their desire for God is indicated by the verb *take hold of*, which occurs twice in the Hebrew (cf. AV, RV, NEB). It is used of Moses snatching the serpents by the tail (Exod. 4:4), and of David taking the lion by the beard (1 Sam. 17:35). They could not afford to let go! The spread *robe* was a symbol of the protection of marriage (Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8), while to clutch the robe of Samuel was for Saul a bid for reconciliation (1 Sam. 15:27). Evidently their intention was to be accepted in the covenant alongside the Jew.” (Baldwin 167)

- d. The basis of this approach assumes that (1) the foreigners recognize the unique status that the Jews had with YHWH, and (2) there is a mutual desire by both Jew and Gentile to approach YHWH.

IV. APPLICATIONS OF ZECHARIAH 7-8

A. Authority for the Additional Fasts

1. If God specified one fast per year for the Israelites on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16.29), was it wrong for later generations to add these additional fasts (Zechariah 7.3, 5; 8.19)? Is this a case where they added to God's law (Deuteronomy 4.2; 12.32), went beyond what was written (1 Corinthians 4.6)?
2. The only required fast under the Law of Moses was on the Day of Atonement in the 7th month of the year on the 10th day.
 - a. Leviticus 16.29-31: "This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute."
 - b. Leviticus 23.27-29: "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people."
 - c. Numbers 29.7: "Then on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall humble yourselves; you shall not do any work."
3. At issue is the meaning of the term "humble" (*'anah*), found in all three texts.
 - a. Leviticus 16.29 shifts the discussion about the Day of Atonement from the priestly role to that of the Israelites. It emphasizes their actions during this event. They must humble themselves, they must offer sacrifice, and they must rest.
 - b. The Hebrew word *'anah* means to humble or afflict and isn't specifically about the act of abstaining from food. In its 81 Old Testament occurrences, it's never translated as "fast".
 - 1) It may mean to afflict another person, Genesis 15.13; 16.6; Exodus 1.11-12; Psalm 88.7; 90.15.
 - 2) It may mean to afflict oneself, Exodus 10.3; Numbers 30.13; Daniel 10.12.
 - 3) However, there are four texts which plainly connect it with fasting.
 - a) Psalm 35.13: "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom."
 - b) Isaiah 58.3: "Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice? Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, and drive hard all your workers."
 - c) Isaiah 58.5: "Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the LORD?"

- d) Daniel 10.12: “Then he said to me, ‘Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words’” (v. 2-3, which refer to at least a partial fast by Daniel).
- 4) Note also that Luke equates the Day of Atonement with fasting: “When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them...” (Acts 27.9)
- c. Hartley’s observation seems correct: “‘*anah* is used in the place of *tsum*, ‘fast,’ in order to communicate that more than not eating is required.” (Hartley 242; see also Rooker 223)
- 1) Note that Psalm 35.13, which equates ‘*anah* with fasting, also mentions wearing sackcloth and prayer.
 - 2) Also, the Mishna (*m. Yoma* 8.1) required that “eating, drinking, anointing, putting on sandals, and marital intercourse are forbidden.” (Hartley 242)
4. It seems reasonable to conclude that fasting was the proper application of the Law. If that’s the case, and if the Law specified only one fast per year, were the additional fasts (Zechariah 7.3, 5; 8.19) unauthorized?
5. To put it on our own context, for example, since the New Testament demonstrates that the Lord’s Supper was observed only on the first day of the week (Acts 20.7; 1 Corinthians 16.2), would it be sinful for a congregation to include an additional observation on another weekday?
- a. By the way, I’m not at all proposing that we do this.
 - b. But I’m wondering if we’ve missed something in the Old Testament instructions about fasting, or if we’ve missed something in how we articulate or apply the principles of authority. It’s a question that’s at least worth considering.

B. The Relevance of Fasting Today

1. Setting aside the issue of fasting on the Day of Atonement, fasting in the Bible was either forced (by lack of food) or voluntary (by refusing to eat food). (Westminster 181)
 - a. Examples of forced fasting: Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34.28; Deuteronomy 9.9); Elijah on his journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19.8); Jesus during his temptation (Matthew 4.2, pars.); Paul (2 Corinthians 6.5; 11.27).
 - b. Examples of voluntary fasting: Samuel and the Israelites after the return of the Ark (1 Samuel 7.6); David awaiting the fate of his child (2 Samuel 12.22); Ezra and the exiles before traveling to Jerusalem (Ezra 8.21); Anna the prophetess (Luke 2.36-37); the Pharisees (Luke 18.12).
2. Jesus fasted when he was tempted for forty days at the outset of his ministry (Matthew 4.2; Luke 4.2). He didn’t require his disciples to fast in the way John the Baptist required of his disciples (Mark 2.18-20). He reasoned that his time with them resembled a wedding feast, but he also acknowledged that when he was taken from them, fasting would be appropriate. He once rebuked his apostles for being unable to cast out a demon (Matthew 17.14-18), adding that in severe cases, fasting was required (v. 19-21). He warned against impure motives in fasting (Matthew 6.16-18, cf. Luke 18.9-14).
3. In the Book of Acts, we find the Christians (or at least the leaders) in Syrian Antioch fasting as part of their ministry (Acts 13.1-2). In two places fasting relates to decision making and appointment to ministry (Acts 13.3; 14.23).

4. It seems clear that the New Testament puts far less emphasis on fasting than the Old Testament. It's never commanded, although Jesus seems to have assumed it would continue among his disciples (Matthew 6.16: "Whenever you fast..."). The presence of this instruction in a gospel written two or more decades after his ascension suggests that it continued to be a practice.
5. I'm unaware of any Christians of my acquaintance who fast regularly. That's not to say none of them do, only that I'm not aware of it. When I was younger, I fasted regularly at different times for different reasons. In recent years I haven't done so with any regularity.
6. I'm safe in saying that I'm not commanded to fast, but I wonder if it points to a lack of wisdom or at least a lack of discipline on my part. In view of Acts 13 and 14, I wonder if I should be embarrassed that I don't fast before making important spiritual decisions. I've served as an elder in two different congregations, and neither I nor my fellow elders have done this. What we usually do is go to a restaurant and fill our bellies when we need to make a big decision. That may explain a lot.
7. The decline of biblical spirituality in our culture, along with the noticeable increase of secularism may combine to create greater difficulties for Christians, even persecution. Maybe one effective way to combat it and prepare for hard times is to fast before the moment of crisis is reached. Even in calmer times, fasting might be a means for making more spiritually minded decisions, rather than making them while we feed the desires of the flesh.

C. Benevolence

1. Judging from the calls, visits, and mail I get at the church building, I've concluded that most people view the local church as little more than a welfare office, a place where you collect public assistance for meals, groceries, prescriptions, gasoline, rent, daycare, phone bills, electric bills, etc. I once had a man ask me if the church could help his daughter and son-in-law, neither of whom were Christians. He explained how bad things were for them by saying, "They've already lost their phone service, and they may lose their cable..."
2. Clearly one of the concerns of Zechariah is the just treatment of the oppressed. Like his fellow prophets, Zechariah instructs his audience to care for the widow and orphan, the stranger and poor (7.8-10; cf. Isaiah 1.17; Jeremiah 22.3; Malachi 3.5; etc.). Although the text of chapters 7-8 begins with a question about fasting, Zechariah shows that any devotion to YHWH must be demonstrated by our love for others. Isaiah shows the same relationship (Isaiah 58.1-14).
3. For Christians, benevolence is nonnegotiable. That doesn't mean that we become a welfare office. But it does demand three things: compassion, readiness, and wisdom.
4. There are three levels at which we practice benevolence:
 - a. Individual Christians must help whomever (Christians or non-Christians) as they have opportunity. See Luke 10.25-37; Ephesians 4.28-29; 1 John 3.17; Galatians 6.10; James 1.27.
 - b. Local churches must help their own members in times of crisis. See Acts 2.42-43; 4.32-35.
 - c. Local churches must help needy Christians in other places. See Acts 11.27-30; 1 Corinthians 16.1-4; 2 Corinthians 8.1-4.
5. Aside from these guidelines, there's no evidence that local churches were intended to give assistance to unbelievers. Nor is there any evidence that the purpose of the gospel was intended to effect sweeping societal reforms.

D. Seeking the Glory of God

1. All things exist for the glory of God, and that all we do should be done for his glory.
 - a. Isaiah 43.6-7: "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10.31: "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 4.6: "For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
2. That's clearly a practical concern for Zechariah. God, speaking through Zechariah, never calls into question the act of fasting, but the motive behind it.
 - a. "Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? 'When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves?'" (Zech. 7.5-6)
 - b. Whose glory was the object of their fasting?
3. This raises a question about our own practices. Is it possible that we may do things scripturally but without bringing glory to God? Is it possible that we do authorized activities but do them thoughtlessly or for the wrong reasons?
4. Examples:
 - a. A Christian may give on the first day of the week, and give generously, but for the purpose of impressing others with his generosity. See Acts 5.1-11.
 - b. A local church may exercise discipline upon ungodly members for valid reasons, and they may use Scriptural procedures. But rather than seeking the restoration of the sinner (i.e., reconciliation with God and man), it's done out of spite or animosity. See Galatians 6.1.
 - c. A local church may have a singing, and its members talk about it by emphasizing the quality of the singing, the ability of the song leaders, etc. Rather than making it about praising God, the emphasis falls on praising human talent.
 - d. In evangelism, churches and Christians may emphasize "our" distinctiveness above all else: We don't use musical instruments. We take the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. We don't contribute to colleges or orphan's homes. We're not Calvinists, or Premillennialists, or Charismatics, etc. We don't have women preachers or elders. We point to the fact that we're different from other religious bodies, as if that's sufficient reason to join our ranks. Yet we fail to show how this relates to glorifying God in Christ.
 - e. I've often heard public prayers that speak of "doing things in a manner well-pleasing" to God, or similar language. I rarely hear prayers that talk about glorifying God.
5. This doesn't mean that we choose between doing things scripturally and doing things to the glory of God. We do both, but with the understanding that obedience to the commands of God isn't the ultimate end. Obedience is how God is glorified.

E. Influence & Evangelism

1. The final paragraph of Zechariah 8 foresees a time when many people from many cities and nations will seek YHWH and his favor. Not only that, but these foreigners will seek out the people of God because of what God has done in them. It assumes both a favorable disposition toward God's people by the nations, and a willingness by God's people to lead the nations to YHWH. In short, it's about the nation's influence and their evangelism.
2. Verse 23 speaks first to our influence. People must see God working in us in a way that's appealing and inviting (Philippians 2.13).
 - a. They must see our holiness. Israel functioned as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19.6). Just as the sons of Levi were priests for the nation, the sons of Israel were priests for all the nations. The nations should have been able to see the holiness of YHWH in them. Likewise, we have become a holy and royal priesthood (1 Peter 2.5, 9) whose task it is to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
 - b. They must see our light in this world. Just as Israel was to be "a light to the nations" (Isaiah 42.5-6; 49.5-6), we are to be "the light of the world" (Matthew 5.14-16). In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, they must see something fundamentally different in us (Philippians 2.12-18).
 - c. They must see our good works (Matthew 5.14-16). Our influence isn't some vague aura that hovers above our heads like halos, but the tangible fruits of a life given to God. They take the form of deeds borne of love, mercy, compassion, kindness, and respect. They're done in such a way that they point the way to our heavenly Father.
 - d. They must see Christ living in us, an enlarged image of our Savior (Galatians 2.20; Philippians 1.20).
3. Verse 23 also speaks to our evangelism. When doors of opportunity are opened to us, we must be ready to speak in a compelling and persuasive way.
 - a. We must pray for doors of opportunity to be opened (Colossians 4.2-4) and that we have enough vision to see them as opportunities.
 - b. We must pray for wisdom to give prudent answers (Colossians 4.5-6).
 - c. We must prepare ourselves to properly handle Scripture (2 Timothy 2.15).
 - d. We must remember that evangelism is about persuasion (Act 17.1-4), not about winning arguments.
 - e. We must be prepared to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4.15).
4. I feel as if I'm insulting your intelligence by stating the obvious. Nonetheless I need to be reminded of this occasionally, and I suspect all of us do as well. We need to be reminded of the power of our influence.
 - a. Aristides, an Athenian philosopher, said to the Emperor Hadrian regarding Christians (c. AD 125): "They love one another, they never fail to help widows, they save orphans from those who would hurt them. If they have something they give freely to the man who has nothing. If they see a stranger they take him home and are happy as though he were a real brother. They do not consider themselves brothers in the usual sense, but brothers instead through the Spirit in God."
 - b. Commenting on this, Mark Boda observes, "We do not know whom Aristides was talking about. Faceless Christians, no superstars, but yet in one sense stars in Christ's universe. It was faceless acts of kindness to fellow humanity that was so astounding in a cold and ruthless Roman world. So also today, the world will

know of Christ's love as they see it demonstrated through a Christian community in deed as well as word." (Boda, NIVAC 407 Kindle Ed.)

Conclusion:

- I. Nobody likes to fast. Everybody loves to feast.
- II. One of the most beautiful metaphors for the Messianic kingdom is that of a banquet or feast. "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8.11).
- III. Matthew was using the same imagery as Zechariah, who said, "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'" (Zechariah 8.19).
- IV. A familiar song invites us to this feast: "All things are ready, come to the feast!"
- V. The feast is ready. The question is, are we?

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Appendix 1

Oracular Formulas in Zechariah

The Book of Zechariah uses a dozen different oracular formulas (with variations) a total of 70 times. Here's a list of occurrences with two summaries of the data.

Chapter 1 (14x)

- 1.1 – The word of YHWH came to Zechariah... saying
- 1.3 – Thus says YHWH
- 1.3 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 1.3 – Says YHWH of hosts
- 1.4 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 1.4 – Declares YHWH
- 1.6 – My words and my statutes which I commanded my servants the prophets
- 1.7 – The word of YHWH came to Zechariah saying
- 1.13 – YHWH answered the angel
- 1.14 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 1.16 – Thus says YHWH
- 1.16 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 1.17 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 1.20-21 – YHWH showed me... And he [YHWH] said

Chapter 2 (4x)

- 2.5 – Declares YHWH
- 2.6 – Declares YHWH
- 2.8 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 2.10 – Declares YHWH

Chapter 3 (5x)

- 3.2 – YHWH said to Satan
- 3.4 – He [YHWH] spoke and said... saying
- 3.7 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 3.9 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 3.10 – Declares YHWH of hosts

Chapter 4 (3x)

- 4.6 – This is the word of YHWH to Zerubbabel saying
- 4.6 – Says YHWH of hosts
- 4.8 – Also the word of YHWH came to me saying

Chapter 5 (1x)

- 5.4 – Declares YHWH of hosts

Chapter 6 (2x)

- 6.9 – The word of YHWH came to me saying
- 6.12 – Thus says YHWH of hosts

Chapter 7 (8x)

- 7.1 – The word of YHWH came to Zechariah
- 7.4 – Then the word of YHWH of hosts came to me saying
- 7.7 – These words which YHWH proclaimed by the former prophets
- 7.8 – Then the word of YHWH came to Zechariah saying
- 7.9 – Thus has YHWH of hosts said
- 7.12 – The law and the words which YHWH of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets
- 7.13 – He called
- 7.13 – Says YHWH of hosts

Chapter 8 (16x)

- 8.1 – Then the word of YHWH of hosts came saying
- 8.2 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.3 – Thus says YHWH
- 8.4 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.6 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.6 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 8.7 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.9 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.11 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 8.14 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.14 – Says YHWH of hosts
- 8.17 – Declares YHWH
- 8.18 – Then the word of YHWH of hosts came to me saying
- 8.19 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.20 – Thus says YHWH of hosts
- 8.23 – Thus says YHWH of hosts

Chapter 9 (2x)

- 9.1 – The oracle of the word of YHWH
- 9.12 – I am declaring

Chapter 10 (2x)

- 10.6 – I will answer them
- 10.12 – Declares YHWH

Chapter 11 (5x)

- 11.4 – Thus says YHWH my God
- 11.6 – Declares YHWH
- 11.11 – It was the word of YHWH
- 11.13 – Then YHWH said to me
- 11.15 – YHWH said to me

Chapter 12 (3x)

- 12.1 – The oracle of the word of YHWH concerning Israel
- 12.1 – Declares YHWH
- 12.4 – Declares YHWH

Chapter 13 (5x)

- 13.2 – Declares YHWH
- 13.7 – Declares YHWH of hosts
- 13.8 – Declares YHWH
- 13.9 – I will answer
- 13.9 – I will say

Chapter 14 (0x)**Summaries of the Data****1. Totals by Chapter (# of occurrences in descending order)**

- a. Total = 70x
- b. 16x – chp. 8
- c. 14x – chp. 1
- d. 8x – chp. 7
- e. 5x – chp. 3, 11, 13
- f. 4x – chp. 2
- g. 3x – chp. 4, 12
- h. 2x – chp. 6, 9, 10
- i. 1x – chp. 5
- j. 0x – chp. 14

2. Totals by Oracular Formula (# of occurrences in descending order)

- a. [Thus] says YHWH [of hosts, or My God] (23x): 1.3 (2x), 4, 14, 16, 17; 2.8; 3.7; 4.6; 6.12; 7.13; 8.2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14 (2x), 19, 20, 23; 11.4
- b. Declares YHWH [of hosts] (19x): 1.3, 4, 16; 2.5, 6, 10; 3.9, 10; 5.4; 8.6, 11, 17; 10.12; 11.6; 12.1, 4; 13.2, 7, 8
- c. The word of YHWH [of hosts] [came] [saying] (11x): 1.1, 7; 4.6, 8; 6.9; 7.1, 4, 8; 8.1, 18; 11.11
- d. [Then or Thus] YHWH answered [or spoke or said] (7x): 1.13, 20-21; 3.2, 4; 7.9; 11.13, 15
- e. The oracle of the word of YHWH (2x): 9.1; 12.1
- f. I will answer (2x): 10.6; 13.9
- g. My words and statutes which I commanded (1x): 1.6
- h. The law and the words which YHWH of hosts had sent (1x): 7.12
- i. These words which YHWH proclaimed (1x): 7.7
- j. [YHWH] called (1x): 7.13
- k. I am declaring (1x): 9.12
- l. I will say (1x): 13.9

Appendix 2

Divine Names in Zechariah

The Book of Zechariah uses eleven different names for God a total of 141 times. Here's a list of occurrences with two summaries of the data.

Chapter 1 (21x)

1.1 – YHWH
 1.2 – YHWH
 1.3 – YHWH of hosts (3x)
 1.4 – YHWH of hosts (2x)
 1.4 – YHWH
 1.6 – YHWH of hosts
 1.7 – YHWH
 1.10 – YHWH
 1.11 – YHWH
 1.12 – YHWH
 1.12 – YHWH of hosts
 1.13 – YHWH
 1.14 – YHWH of hosts
 1.16 – YHWH
 1.16 – YHWH of hosts
 1.17 – YHWH of hosts
 1.17 – YHWH
 1.20 – YHWH

Chapter 2 (10x)

2.5 – YHWH
 2.6 – YHWH (2x)
 2.8 – YHWH of hosts
 2.9 – YHWH of hosts
 2.10 – YHWH
 2.11 – YHWH
 2.11 – YHWH of hosts
 2.12 – YHWH
 2.13 – YHWH

Chapter 3 (9x)

3.1 – YHWH
 3.2 – YHWH (3x)
 3.5 – YHWH
 3.6 – YHWH
 3.7 – YHWH of hosts
 3.9 – YHWH of hosts
 3.10 – YHWH of hosts

Chapter 4 (6x)

4.6 – YHWH
 4.6 – YHWH of hosts
 4.8 – YHWH
 4.9 – YHWH of hosts
 4.10 – YHWH

4.14 – Lord of the whole earth

Chapter 5 (1x)

5.4 – YHWH of hosts

Chapter 6 (9x)

6.5 – Lord of all the earth
 6.9 – YHWH
 6.12 – YHWH of hosts
 6.12 – YHWH
 6.13 – YHWH
 6.14 – YHWH
 6.15 – YHWH
 6.15 – YHWH of hosts
 6.15 – YHWH your God

Chapter 7 (10x)

7.1 – YHWH
 7.2 – YHWH
 7.3 – YHWH of hosts
 7.4 – YHWH of hosts
 7.7 – YHWH
 7.8 – YHWH
 7.9 – YHWH of hosts
 7.12 – YHWH of hosts (2x)
 7.13 – YHWH of hosts

Chapter 8 (24x)

8.1 – YHWH of hosts
 8.2 – YHWH of hosts
 8.3 – YHWH
 8.3 – YHWH of hosts
 8.4 – YHWH of hosts
 8.6 – YHWH of hosts (2x)
 8.7 – YHWH of hosts
 8.8 – God
 8.9 – YHWH of hosts (2x)
 8.11 – YHWH of hosts
 8.14 – YHWH of hosts (2x)
 8.17 – YHWH
 8.18 – YHWH of hosts
 8.19 – YHWH of hosts
 8.20 – YHWH of hosts
 8.21 – YHWH
 8.21 – YHWH of hosts
 8.22 – YHWH of hosts

8.22 – YHWH
 8.23 – YHWH of hosts
 8.23 – God

Chapter 9 (7x)

9.1 – YHWH (2x)
 9.4 – Lord
 9.14 – YHWH
 9.14 – Lord YHWH (i.e., Lord GOD)
 9.15 – YHWH of hosts
 9.16 – YHWH their God

Chapter 10 (7x)

10.1 – YHWH (2x)
 10.3 – YHWH of hosts
 10.5 – YHWH
 10.6 – YHWH their God
 10.7 – YHWH
 10.12 – YHWH

Chapter 11 (7x)

11.4 – YHWH my God
 11.5 – YHWH
 11.6 – YHWH
 11.11 – YHWH
 11.13 – YHWH (2x)
 11.15 – YHWH

Chapter 12 (8x)

12.1 – YHWH (2x)
 12.4 – YHWH
 12.5 – YHWH of hosts, their God
 12.7 – YHWH
 12.8 – YHWH (2x)
 12.8 – God

Chapter 13 (5x)

13.2 – YHWH of hosts
 13.3 – YHWH
 13.7 – YHWH of hosts
 13.8 – YHWH
 13.9 – YHWH my God

Chapter 14 (17x)

14.1 – YHWH
 14.3 – YHWH
 14.5 – YHWH my God
 14.7 – YHWH
 14.9 – YHWH (2x)
 14.12 – YHWH
 14.13 – YHWH
 14.16 – The King
 14.16 – YHWH of hosts
 14.17 – The King
 14.17 – YHWH of Hosts
 14.18 – YHWH
 14.20 – YHWH (2x)
 14.21 – YHWH of hosts (2x)

Summaries of the Data**1. Totals by Chapters (# of occurrences in descending order)**

- a. Total = 141x
- b. 24x – chp. 8
- c. 21x – chp. 1
- d. 17x – chp. 14
- e. 10x – chp. 2, 7
- f. 9x – chp. 3, 6
- g. 8x – chp. 12
- h. 7x – chp. 9, 10, 11
- i. 6x – chp. 4
- j. 5x – chp. 13
- k. 1x – chp. 5

2. Totals by Divine Name (# of occurrences in descending order)

- a. **YHWH** (73x; 11x in chp. 1): 1.1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 102, 13, 16, 17, 20; 2.5, 6 (2x), 10, 11, 12, 13; 3.1, 2 (3x), 5, 6; 4.6, 8, 10; 6.9, 12, 13, 14, 15; 7.1, 2, 7, 8; 8.3, 17, 21, 22; 9.1 (2x), 14; 10.1 (2x), 5, 7, 12; 11.5, 6, 11, 13 (2x), 15; 12.1 (2x), 4, 7, 8 (2x); 13.3, 8; 14.1, 3, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 13, 18, 20 (2x)

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- b. **YHWH of hosts** (53x; 18x in chp. 8): 1.3 (3x), 4 (2x), 6, 12, 14, 16, 17; 2.8, 9, 11; 3.7, 9, 10; 4.6, 9; 5.4; 6.12, 15; 7.3, 4, 9, 12 (2x), 13; 8.1, 2, 3, 4, 6 (2x), 7, 9 (2x), 11, 14 (2x), 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 9.15; 10.3; 13.2, 7; 14.16, 17, 21 (2x)
 - c. **God** (3x; 2x in chp. 8): 8.8, 23; 12.8
 - d. **YHWH my God** (3x): 11.4; 13.9; 14.5
 - e. **YHWH their God** (2x): 9.16; 10.6
 - f. **The King** (2x; both in chp. 14): 14.16, 17
 - g. **Lord of the whole [all the] earth** (2x): 4.14; 6.5
 - h. **YHWH your God** (1x): 6.15
 - i. **Lord** (1x): 9.4
 - j. **Lord YHWH** (1x): 9.14
 - k. **YHWH of hosts, their God** (1x): 12.5

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