

Zechariah (NKJV) 7:

1 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass that the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Chislev,

This was (according to Daat Mikra) two years before the Completion of the building and Dedication of the Second Temple.

2 when the people sent Sherezer, with Regem-Melech and his men, to the House of God, to pray before the LORD, 3 and to ask the Priests [Cohanim] who were in the House of the LORD of Hosts, and the Prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month and fast as I have done for so many years?

to the House of God. In Hebrew "Beth-El" meaning literally "House of God" but according to Daat Mikra it does not mean the Temple in this case but rather it is the name of a person or of a place. He gives examples where the term "Beth-el" is so used.

4 Then the word of the LORD of Hosts came to me, saying, 5 Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me?

The Fast of the 5th month is that of the month of Av when the Temple was destroyed. **The Fast of the 7th month** is that of Tishrei when after the destruction of the Temple Nebuchadnessar appointed Gedaliah as governor over what remained of the Kingdom of Judah. Gedaliah was assassinated (2-Kings 25: 25) and the few Jews that had still remained in Judah fled to Egypt. This was considered a National Disaster of great proportion. The Fast of Av and the Fast of Gedaliah are still kept as fast days by Religious Jews until this day.

6 When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink

for yourselves? 7 Should you not have obeyed the words which the LORD proclaimed through the former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and the South and the Lowland were inhabited?

This reminds as of the old song, "You never know what you have until you lose it."

Nevertheless, one can always make things better.

They may not get back to how they were but one good thing leads to another and the situation will improve.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying,

9 Thus says the LORD of Hosts:

Execute true justice,

Show mercy and compassion

Everyone to his brother.

10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,

The alien or the poor.

Let none of you plan evil in his heart

Against his brother.

Do good and good will come to you. Good should preferably be done for its own sake but even if it is in the hope of reward it is still good.

11 But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. 12 Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of Hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of Hosts. 13 Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen, says the LORD of Hosts. 14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate.

