

## The Effect of False Religion (Zechariah 7)

### I. The Definition of False Religion (1-7)

#### A. False Religion is Brought To Light (1-3)

##### 1. The Jews Ask About Keeping Their Fast on 5<sup>th</sup> Month(3)

###### a. The Jewish Exiles kept Four Fasts Regarding Jerusalem's Fall

i. 9<sup>th</sup> day of 4<sup>th</sup> Month – Mourned breach of city walls

ii. 18<sup>th</sup> day of 5<sup>th</sup> Month – Mourned burning of Temple and city

iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> Month – Mourned murder of Gedaliah the governor and massacre of 80 men (Jer. 41:1-10)

iv. 10<sup>th</sup> day of 10<sup>th</sup> Month – Mourned the day of Nebuchadnezzar setting up his siege around city

###### b. The Jews Saw the Temple Being Restored

###### c. The Jews Saw the Priests and Prophets back in the Land

###### d. The Jews Wanted to Discontinue Their Fast

i. The 5<sup>th</sup> Month was mourning the loss of the Temple

ii. Since the Temple was being restored – they had no need to fast

#### B. False Religion is Reprimanded (4- 12a)

##### 1. False Religion Is Regretful Not Repentant (4-5)

###### a. The Jews Fasted For the Wrong Reason

i. Their Religion Was Hypocritical

ii. Their Mourning was For the Consequences Not the Sin

- They mourned God's Judgment falling  
The Temple, Exile, etc.

- They did not mourn their sin which caused it

###### b. Modern Religion is Often for the Wrong Reason

i. Men desire God's Blessing Not God Himself

ii. Men Mourn the Consequences Not the Sin

iii. Men Use God For Their Own Ends

iv. Men View the Gospel as "get out of jail free card"

##### 2. False Religion is Self-Centered (6)

###### a. Their Religious Observances Were Self-Centered

i. Their Fasting and Mourning was Self-Pity

ii. Their Religion was To Make Them Feel Better

iii. Their Religion was to Gain Favor from God

iv. Their Religion was about their emotional needs and their religious experience

###### b. Religion Must Be Centered On God

i. Religion is a vital Relationship with God

ii. Religion is only Through The Mediation of Christ

iii. Religion is vain if not for God's pleasure, glory, service, and love

iv. Are you concerned about sin – or the consequences of sin?

3. False Religion Rejects God's Word (7)

a. God Gave them His Word Through Prophets

b. God's Word Was not obeyed

i. Men "Seek" God in dire positions, looking for a "new" word or instruction

ii. Men have God's infallible Word in Scripture

iii. Men Reject the Revelation they have already Received

4. False Religion Fails To Follow and Represent God (8-12a)

a. God Told the People the Evidence of True Religion (9-10)

NOTE: Not working for true religion but

The Spirit of God working in the believers

i. Representation of the Attributes of God

- Exercise True Judgment – (Micah 6:8)

- Show brotherhood and compassion to one another (John 13:35)

- Do not oppress the needy (James 1:27)

- Do not Harbor evil against another (1 John 2:9-11; Matt. 5:44)

ii. God's Spirit Accomplishes This in Believers

- Speaks of Lifestyle not Perfection

- Disobedience without chastisement is not possible (Heb. 12:8; Rev 3:19)

b. The People Rejected God's Instruction (11-12a)

i. They Refused to Pay Attention

ii. they stubbornly Turned Away

iii. They stopped up their ears

iv. They hardened their hearts

- They trusted their own evidence

- They refused to heed the warnings of God

- They "followed their hearts"

- They refused to accept the evidence of their life

- Today it is the same way

- As long as we affirm certain truths, we think our lives don't matter (1 John 3:9-10)

- God calls us to live it, not agree with it

II. The Consequences of False Religion (12b-14)

A. False Religion Receives the Passive Judgment of God (12b-13)

1. The People Received God's Wrath (12b)

a. Because They would not listen When God cried out (13)

b. God would not listen When they Cried out

2. God Turned them over to the consequences of their actions

3. God would not hear when they finally cried out to Him

4. God Gave them Over (Romans 1:25)

- a. Here His wrath is Passive in that He simply refuses to hear their cries

B. False Religion Receives the Active Judgment of God (14)

1. God must finally punish rebellion
2. God will “sweep them away in a storm”
3. God caused them to be taken into exile
4. God caused their land to become desolate
  - a. God will punish all sin
  - b. God will never leave justice undone
  - c. Man may escape immediate justice for a time
  - d. Man will not escape justice forever
  - e. Judgment is coming
5. Punishment will either be poured out on the sinner or on the Savior in place of the sinner.