

God Will Administer Justice

International Bible Lesson

Zechariah 7:8-14

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“Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 7:12—KJV).

“They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry” (Zechariah 7:12—NIV).

What are some of the behaviors that make God angry? The prophets listed them many times: plotting evil and oppressing the poor, widows, orphans, foreigners, the needy and the weak. When God sent prophets to correct people’s behavior and command them to “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another,” the people refused (Zechariah 7:9). Instead of thanking God for His love, mercy, and patience with them, God said that they refused to listen to him; they turned their backs; they covered their ears, and they made their hearts like solid stone against him. To correct their behavior and administer justice, what more could God do except punish His people in order to stop them from afflicting others and teaching their children how to abuse others in even more destructive ways? In the days of Jeremiah, to change His people the only thing left for God to do was destroy Jerusalem and Solomon’s temple, and then lead His people into exile in Babylon for seventy years. God did not forsake His people, but God had to punish them to correct their behavior. Toward the end of their time in exile, God sent Zechariah and other prophets to help His people return to the Promised Land, rebuild their cities, replant their fields, and live and worship according to His laws. God has not changed. Mistreating others and plotting evil still makes God angry. God will administer justice, and God will show mercy and compassion to the victims of injustice. — © Copyright 2015 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. Give some reasons for a study of Zechariah.
2. How can we administer true justice with kindness or mercy and compassion?
3. What are some of the sins that other prophets condemned as well as Zechariah? How serious do you think God considers these sins?
4. How did the ancestors of Zechariah’s listeners respond to the words of God spoken through His true prophets?
5. Name one way the punishment of the Kingdom of Israel differed from the Kingdom of Judah.