

TRADITIONS OF MEN OR TRUE WORSHIP

--ZECHARIAH 7:1-14--

INTRODUCTION:

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus often confronted the Pharisees for elevating the traditions of men above the Word of God. It was a problem that Moses warned against in the Law, it was a problem that the prophets repeatedly warned the people about and then telling them what it was the Lord considered true worship. It was a problem in Zechariah's day and in this morning's passage he confronts it head-on with messages given to him from the LORD of hosts.

- I. SELF-RIGHTEOUS RITUALS (Zechariah 7:1-3)
 - a. Zechariah begins this chapter by giving us a time stamp of the _____ year of King Darius, on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Chislev.
 - b. There was a danger, however, that would come with the _____ of the temple.
 - c. This seems to have come about because of a delegation of men who had come from the city of _____.
 - d. This delegation came to worship the Lord and make an inquiry about a certain _____ that was observed annually.
 - e. This fast is not a requirement that is found in the _____ or commanded by God.
- II. FALSE WORSHIP (Zechariah 7:4-7)
 - a. The Lord answered this question posed by the delegation from Bethel, but His response was not only for them but all _____.
 - b. Yahweh of hosts response begins by mentioning two _____, one in the fifth month and one in the seventh month.
 - c. When the people practiced this ritualism they were missing what God _____.
 - d. God then showed them their hypocrisy and insincerity when He declared, "...*was it actually for _____ that you fasted?*" (Zechariah 7:5d, NASB95)

- e. Yahweh continued, "*When you eat and drink, do you not eat for _____ and do you not drink for yourselves?*" (Zechariah 7:6, NASB95)
- f. _____ false worship and ritualism carry heavy consequences.
- g. The scene in Zechariah's time was completely _____. (Jeremiah 22:21)
- h. Zechariah through Yahweh's revelation was demonstrating that such empty ritualism and false worship were not _____. (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17)

CONCLUSION:

As those last two verse show, God's standard is the same today as it was in Zechariah's day, the same as it was in Samuel's day and in Isaiah's, Jeremiah's, and Joel's day. The Lord is immutable, which simply means He does not change, He is still warning us to be on guard against empty ritualism and false worship. I think we sometimes come down a little harsh on the Israelites for their failures, but it is important that when we do think or talk that way, that we stop and examine our own hearts to make sure that we are not doing the very same things that we are criticizing the Israelites for doing. The same is true when we look at brothers and sisters in Christ and begin even in our minds to list their short comings or where they could be more devoted or involved without first looking at our own lives and our own shortcomings or our own lack of devotion or involvement. When we do this with the eyes of our Savior it might or it should drive us to our knees in repentance. We as believers need to be constantly checking our own hearts to make sure that our worship isn't just going through the motions to get it done and checked off my list for this week, but that it truly is from the heart to the glory of God. The Lord Jesus is our supreme example of One who was so devoted to giving His Father glory that He lived in complete obedience to His Father, even going to the cross and dying for sinful mankind who in no way deserved the salvation and reconciliation that His death and resurrection secured for us.