

Justice

Zechariah 7:8-14

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A. The Mindset (vs. 8-10):

1. The word of the Lord – The One who has all authority and power and persistently sought to establish a relationship with Israel. God is always seeking our attention, preacher after preacher, radio, TV, and other media outlets to win our hearts and lives to Himself just like He did for Israel.
2. Came – The prophetic revelation that came to Zechariah was revealed and will remain the same forever.
3. To Zechariah saying – This message could not be misinterpreted because it came directly to Zechariah from the Lord.
4. Thus has the – The way this is worded means that all that the Lord is saying to Zechariah was a complete message, so nothing needs to be added.
5. Lord of host – It is important to notice that the Lord represents Himself as a mighty warrior and all-powerful King who sovereignly addresses this issue of injustice through Zechariah. The people are described by Him as stubborn, and the Lord describes Himself as the Lord of Host. Because they are stubborn and must listen, God is prepared to fight for them (1 Peter 5:5; Proverbs 13:13).
6. Dispense; Judge - The Lord of host commands them to organize an administrative process that delivers the people from oppression so that they live in peace. God is holy and therefore, just as with His people, He expects to function as salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13).
7. Truth justice - They were commanded to litigate each case based on a faithful execution of the laws of God (a commitment to truth rather than falsehood) so that every decision made was administered in accordance with God's governing structure. This was not to be out of political biases or personal convictions.
 - a) *Justice* - The proper ordering of all society (cf. 8:16; Isa. 42:1,4; Mic. 6:8).
8. Practice, act in kindness - They have an ethical obligation to obey the commands of the

Lord of host and to remain steadfastly loyal to each other by generously maintaining the rights and obligations they have to each other. Kindness is one of the Fruit of the Spirit so it implied that we execute justice in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

a) The Hebrew word *chesed* here translated kindness was particularly associated with loyalty to the obligations accepted when a person entered a covenant relationship. [\[1\]](#)

9. Compassionate - Generously love each other with sensitivity being given to each other's needs.

a) Mercy - Or "faithful Love" (Hos. 10:12; 12:6).

10. Each to his brother – Each person is a brother not white, black, or brown (1 John 2:9-10).

11. Do not oppress - They must continuously not defraud, extort, or exploit the widows or the orphans, the stranger or the poor.

a) *Oppress* - Oppression is denounced frequently in OT (Am. 2:6-8; 4:1; 5:11-12,21-24; 8:4-6).

b) Widow...fatherless...alien...poor - For the Biblical concern for such people see, e.g., Dt. 10:18; Isa. 1:17 and ote; Her. 5:28; Jas. 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:16-18.

12. Do not devise evil - The Lord of host tells them to continuously not create skillful ideas of how they can, with a negative attitude, purposefully violate the standards of God creating pain and unhappiness for others who are their brothers.

13. Heart – By stating “evil in your heart” the Lord is saying that they must not create in themselves the mind or will to live in violation of God's standards as they relate to each other (Amos 5:14-15).

B. Must Listen (vs. 11):

1. They refused - The people of Israel continuously rejected what the Lord of host said refusing to obey the will of God.

2. Pay attention – They literally had no desire to concentrate on what was being communicated. It is no different than if a person speaking to someone who looks right at them and walk away.

3. Turn a shoulder; given you – They not only give no mental fortitude to what was being said, but their body language was continuously decisively demonstrating their lack of interest.
 - a) Stubbornly they turned their backs - Dt. 9:6,12, 27.
 - b) It is developed by three more statements (two in this verse and one in the next), each using a different metaphor or picture to illustrate the people's rejection of God's message. The first metaphor is drawn from the situation of an ox struggling to avoid having a yoke put on it. As the ox resists the yoke, so the people turned a stubborn shoulder (compare Jeremiah 2:20; 5:5; Hos 4:16). ^[2]

4. Stopped their ears from hearing – They purposefully decided to not seek to gain any information in an effort to understand anything that was being said.
 - a) Stopped up their ears - Ps. 58:4; Isa. 6:10 and note; Isa. 33:15.
 - b) The picture here is that people putting something into their ears so that they would no longer even hear the message of the prophets (compare Isa 6:10; Acts 7:57). This picture is not limited to Hebrew culture, and many translators will be able to retain it. TEV uses a somewhat different picture that sounds more natural in English, and says, "They closed their minds."^[3]

5. They made their hearts – They purposefully put it in their minds to force themselves to completely not even try to come to an understanding of what the Lord of host was saying through His prophet Zechariah.

6. Flint - Flint implies that their hearts became impenetrable due to its extreme hardness.

7. They could not hear the law – Because their hearts were impenetrable, they had no desire to intelligently provide their undivided attention to understand or even comprehend the instruction about the regulations of the Lord whether they were civil, moral or ceremonial laws of God.

8. And the words – Not only did they not want to hear the teachings concerning the laws of God, but they also had no interest in the prophetic revelation being spoken to them by former prophets.

9. Lord of host – Zechariah is careful to mention again not just the Lord, but the Lord of host signifying that their hard heartedness is being challenged by the mighty warrior and all-powerful King who reigns. They need to listen because He's "got the power".

10. Sent His Spirit – In the midst of this kind of resistance to the Lord's message, the Lord of

Host, the mighty warrior, puts into action the “powerful divine influence” of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of former prophets. Still, there was no movement to surrender to the Lord.

11. Wrath came from the Lord of host - The Lord became continuously angry because of their unwillingness to submit to His will and was determined to strive against them as the mighty warrior and all-powerful King who reigns.

C. The Avenger (vs. 12):

1. And just as He - The Lord of Host endlessly tried to get their attention.
2. Called – The Lord, through many prophets, loudly sought to get the complete attention of Israel.
3. You will not listen – They were totally committed to not provide their undivided attention to understanding what the Lord of host was saying to them through His prophets.
4. So they called – Israel continuously, loudly sought to get the Lord of host attention.
5. I would not listen – The Lord of host had determined to endlessly not provide to Israel His undivided attention to understanding what their needs were.
 - a) The wrath of God expresses itself in Zechariah in three ways: (a) in God’s withdrawal, “They will call and I will not answer”; (b) in exile for the people, “and I will blow them away among all nations”; (c) and in the beautiful land becoming a waste and desolation without inhabitants.^[4]
6. Says the Lord of host - The One who has all authority and is the mighty, holy warrior who reigns as the most powerful King verbally communicated to all of Israel that He was completely committed to not listening to their prayers (John 15:1-11).
7. I scattered them - The Lord of host could not be overcome by the attitude displayed by Israel, so Israel as a nation was scattered “with a storm wind among all the nations” (vs. 13).
 - a) Scattered them - One of the curses for covenant disobedience (Dt. 28:36-37,64-68; Dt. 28:64).

8. Know, teach – The nations the Lord of host scatters Israel to are nations they have not been to before, so they have no experience of how these nations operate.
9. Desolated - The Lord of host is going to use His mighty power to make sure the land between the unfamiliar nation and the homeland is completely desolate which prevents them from traveling back and forth.
10. Desolated - It is Israel's stubborn attitude which caused the desolation.
 - a) In either case the sense is clear, namely, that they would fall into the hands of those who being total strangers were less likely to show compassion.^[5] They choose to be unjust, so now they are at the mercy of strangers.

^[1] Clark, D. J., & Hatton, H. A. (2002). *A handbook on Zechariah* (p. 190). New York: United Bible Societies.

^[2] Clark, D. J., & Hatton, H. A. (2002). *A handbook on Zechariah* (p. 191). New York: United Bible Societies.

^[3] Clark, D. J., & Hatton, H. A. (2002). *A handbook on Zechariah* (p. 191). New York: United Bible Societies.

^[4] Smith, R. L. (1984). *Micah–Malachi* (Vol. 32, p. 227). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

^[5] Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., & Chambers, T. W. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Zechariah* (pp. 57–58). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.