

# Zechariah 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

## Analysis

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God's challenging question about religious fasting: 'Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?' The fasts commemorated Jerusalem's destruction: fifth month (temple burning, 2 Kings 25:8-9), seventh month (Gedaliah's assassination, 2 Kings 25:25). For 70 years of exile they fasted, but God asks: was it for Me (haliy samtem tsam)? Or was it self-centered mourning for lost prosperity? True fasting seeks God and His purposes; false fasting is religious performance or self-pity. Isaiah 58:3-7 elaborates: fasting God honors involves loosening injustice's bonds and feeding the hungry. External ritual without heart transformation is meaningless (Matthew 6:16-18).

## Historical Context

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The question arose in 518 BC (Zechariah 7:1) when delegates asked if they should continue mourning fasts now that the temple was being rebuilt. Their fasts had become traditional rituals divorced from spiritual purpose. God's response (chapters 7-8) emphasizes that He desires justice, mercy, and obedience (7:9-10) more than ritual observance. Pre-exilic ancestors ignored this, bringing judgment (7:11-14). Post-exilic community mustn't repeat the error. The fasts would

eventually become feasts (8:19) when God fully restores His people. This teaches that religious practices must flow from genuine devotion and produce ethical transformation. Jesus later confronted similar hypocrisy in Pharisees (Matthew 23:23-28).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. Do my spiritual disciplines (fasting, prayer, worship) genuinely seek God, or are they performances or self-focused routines?
2. How can I ensure my religious practices produce the fruit God desires—justice, mercy, and humble obedience?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֵל	כָּל	עַם	הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵל	הַכֹּהֲנִים	
Speak	H413	H3605	unto all the people	H413	and to the priests	
H559			H5971	H776	H3548	
וְאֵל	כִּי	צִמְתָּ נִי	וְסָפַדְתָּ	בַּחֲמִישִׁי	וּבִשְׁבִיעִי	זֶה
Speak	H3588	When ye fasted	and mourned	in the fifth	and seventh	H2088
H559		H6684	H5594	H2549	H7637	
שָׁבַע יָמִים	שָׁנָה	צִמְתָּ נִי	צִמְתָּ נִי	אֲנִי:		
month even those seventy	years	When ye fasted	When ye fasted	H589		
H7657	H8141	H6684	H6684			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Zechariah 1:12** (Parallel theme): Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

**1 Corinthians 10:31** (Parallel theme): Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

**Zechariah 7:3** (Parallel theme): And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?

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