

Zechariah 7:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

Analysis

And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying—A new oracle begins, continuing the theme of obedience versus ritual. The formula *vayəhī dəḇar-Yahweh 'el-Zəḵaryāh lē'mōr* (וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־זְכַרְיָה לֵאמֹר, 'and the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying') marks transition. This isn't Zechariah's opinion but divine revelation. The following verses (7:9-14) will specify what the 'former prophets' preached: justice, mercy, and faithfulness toward the vulnerable.

The repetition of divine word-formulas throughout Zechariah emphasizes prophetic authority. God speaks directly, authoritatively, repeatedly to ensure the message penetrates. The structure mirrors ancient Near Eastern treaty documents that reiterated obligations to emphasize importance. God doesn't merely suggest or advise but commands as covenant Lord. The introduction prepares for specific ethical imperatives (v. 9-10) and historical warning (v. 11-14). Zechariah functions as God's spokesman, channeling heaven's perspective on ritual versus righteousness, a theme Jesus would later amplify (Matthew 23:23).

Historical Context

Zechariah prophesied during the Second Temple rebuilding (520-518 BC). The delegation's question about fasting (7:1-3) prompted God's extended response about true versus false religion. This oracle (7:8-14) grounds the answer in Israel's tragic history: ignoring justice brought exile; heeding justice enables restoration. The word came to Zechariah specifically, but its content echoes all the former

prophets—a unified biblical testimony that God desires mercy not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God use repetitive formulas ('the word of the LORD came') to emphasize prophetic authority?
2. How does recognizing Scripture as 'the word of the LORD' rather than human opinion change your response to it?
3. What specific 'word of the LORD' have you been avoiding that this formula calls you to heed?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	וַיְדַבֵּר	יְהוָה ה	אֵל	זַכְרְיָה ה	לֵאמֹר:
H1961	And the word	of the LORD	H413	came unto Zechariah	saying
	H1697	H3068		H2148	H559

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