

POSTEXILIC PROPHETS

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

COVENANT^{EFC}

2026

OUT

STUDY 5

DEAD DRUDGERY OR JOYFUL OBEDIENCE?
(Zechariah 7-8)

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CRY



WELCOME

Ice-breaker Activity

Talk about something or an activity that "sparks joy" in your life. It may be something that you like to do – no one has to tell you to do it, you just do it because you love it.

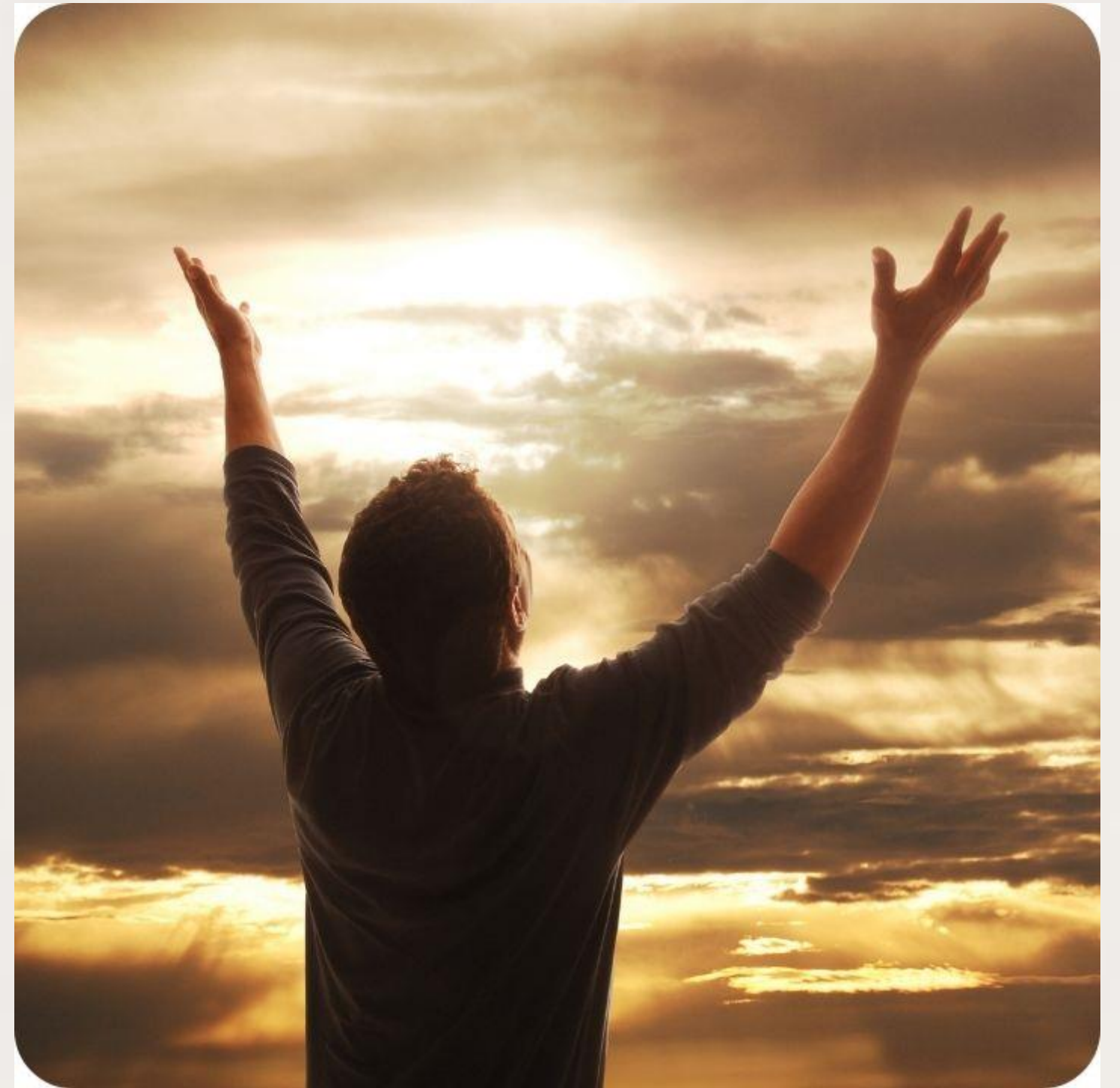




WORSHIP

Focus on the goodness of God

- Goodness of God (Bethel Music)
- Hymn of Heaven (Phil Wickham)
- Is He Worthy? (Chris Tomlin)
- By Faith (Keith & Kristyn Getty)





WORD

STRUCTURE OF ZECHARIAH



PRELUDE:
“Return to Me”
(1:1-6)



**ZECHARIAH’S
VISIONS**
(1:7 - 6:15)



**ZECHARIAH’S
MESSAGES**
(7 - 8)



**ZECHARIAH’S
ORACLES**
(9 - 14)

Source: adapted from Andrew E. Hill
(Tyndale Old Testament Commentary)

The context of Zechariah 7-8

- Almost two years have passed since Zechariah received the 8 night visions
- He receives another word from the Lord (Zechariah 7:1).
- This is the fourth year of Darius' reign (December of 518 B.C.)*
- Work on the temple resumed a little more than two years ago, but was not completed.

The context of Zechariah 7-8 (cont'd)

- A delegation comes to Jerusalem to ask the priests whether they needed to continue fasting in the fifth month (Zechariah 7:3)
- They had been fasting in the fifth month for many years to mourn the destruction of Solomon's temple in the fifth month of 586 B.C.
- So now that the temple was being rebuilt, they asked the priests: *Is this fast still needed?* It was a **practical** question.
- They were about to get profoundly **spiritual** answer from God in Zechariah 7-8 ...

Overview of Zechariah 7-8

- It's a long text so here is the big-picture structure of the two chapters, provided by Bryan Gregory.*
- Scholars call this ***chiastic* structure** - a "mirrored" structure with a **central focal point**. That central focal point (e.g. the point in green below) is usually the most important.

A. A Question about Fasting (7: 1– 3)

B. A Sermon against Hypocrisy (7: 4– 14)

C. The Lord's Promise to Transform Jerusalem (8: 1– 8)

B' A Sermon on Sincere Obedience (8: 9– 17)

A' The Answer: Fasting Will Turn to Feasting (8: 18– 23)

*Bryan R. Gregory. Bryan Gregory - Longing for God in an Age of Discouragement (2017) (Kindle Location 2050). Kindle Edition.

Activity 1: Read & Discuss

Read Zechariah 7:4-14 and answer the following questions:

1. Does the LORD answer their question about fasting directly in verses 4-7? What is the deeper issue that the LORD is getting at?
2. The LORD instructed them to repent by acting with justice and mercy (Zech 7:8-10). What was their response (see Zech 7:11-14)? How might their response be a warning for us?

Activity 2: Read & Discuss

Read Zechariah 8:1-8 and answer the following questions

3. How does the LORD promise to renew and transform Jerusalem?
4. Pause to think about what this means for you: do God's promises toward Jerusalem resonate with you and give you hope and joy?

Activity 3: Read & Discuss

Read Zechariah 8:14-17 and answer the following questions

5. The LORD's promise comes with a command and instruction. What does the LORD call his people to do? Read Zech 8:14-17 together with Zechariah 7:9-10 (the commands are similar).
6. In what ways have you seen someone live out the King's justice and mercy? How might you also live this out?

“

Many believe that the job of the church is not to do justice at all, but to preach the Word, to evangelize and build up believers. But if it is true that justice and mercy to the poor are the inevitable signs of justifying faith, it is hard to believe that the church is not to reflect this duty corporately in some way. And as soon as you get involved in the lives of people—in evangelism as well as spiritual nurture—you will come upon people with practical needs. **You can't love people in word only (cf. 1 John 3:16–17) ... without meeting practical and material needs through deeds.**

- Keller, Timothy. *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (Law, Justice and Power) (p. 135). John Murray Press. Kindle Edition.

Activity 4: Read & Discuss

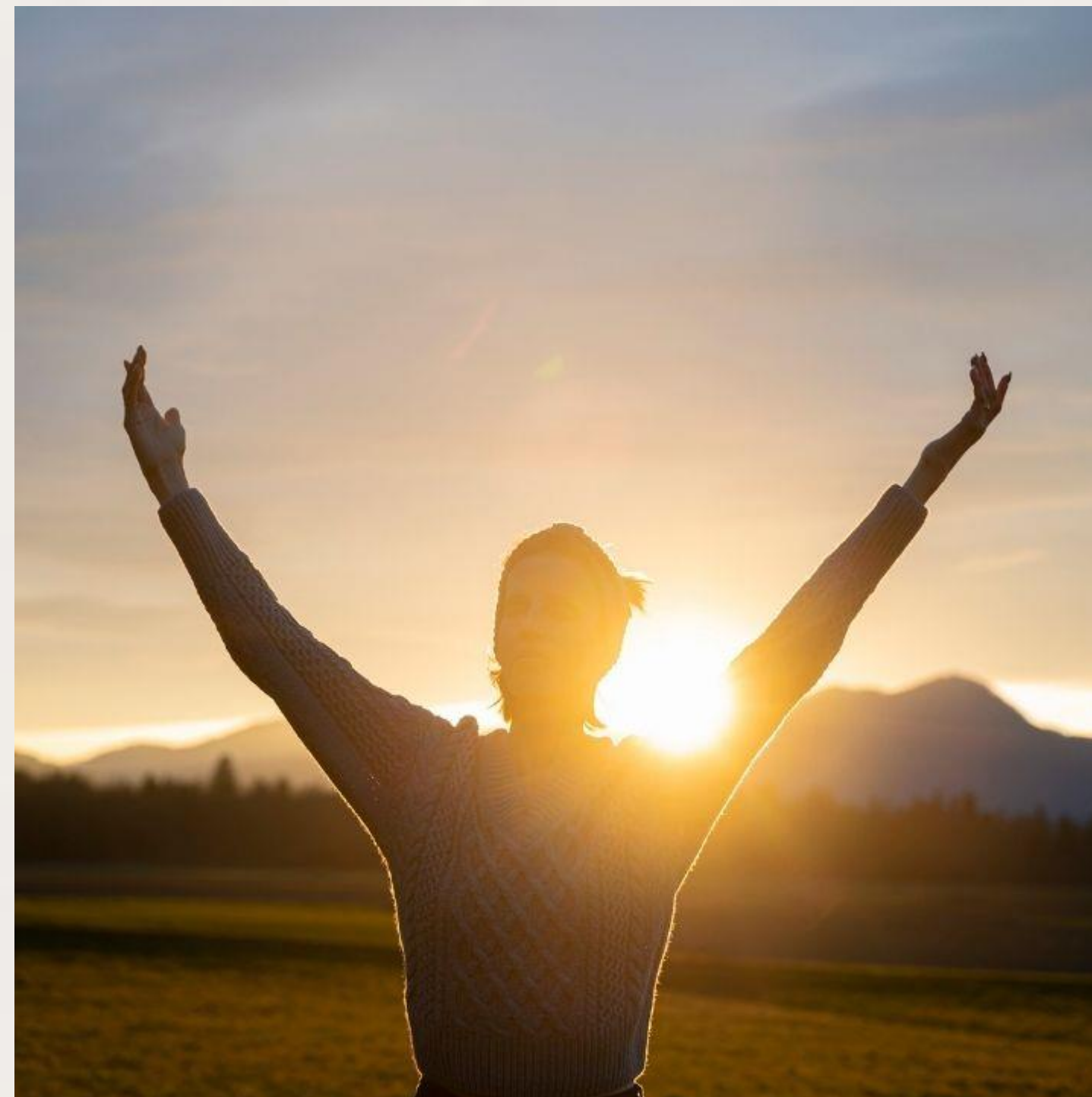
Read Zechariah 8:20-23 and answer the following question

7. When God's people obey Him wholeheartedly in loving relationship, we will have a tremendous influence and impact on the nations of the world! What is this influence, according to Zechariah 8:20-23?



Reflect and Pray Together

- Share with one another the key thing that God spoke to **you** about in Zechariah 7-8.
- Pray for one another, that we may be **cleansed** from **dead religious drudgery** and **freed** for **joyful obedience** to the Lord!





Next Steps

- Pray for non-Christians you know to be drawn to seek the Lord of Hosts (Zech 8:22), and that you might be a **witness** to them!
- Pray for a nation on the world that God is laying upon your heart. Pray that God's Spirit would sweep through that nation and draw many to Himself.





Additional Resources for Further Study

- Gregory, Bryan R. *Longing for God in an age of discouragement: the Gospel according to Zechariah*. P & R Publ., 2010.
- Anthony R. Petterson, ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham, vol. 25, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* (Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015)
- Andrew E. Hill, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 28, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2012)
- Mark J. Boda, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004)