Dispense true justice
Practice kindness and compassion
Don't oppress those who are needy
Don't devise evil in your hearts against one another

Doesn't it make you long for a time when the world lives by these rules? No matter what the world looks like right now, there is a day coming. Christ will establish His kingdom and rule with a rod of iron. The lion will lay down with the lamb, and weapons will be beaten into plowshares. What a glorious time that will be.

DAY ONE

1. Observe Zechariah 7. As you read, mark the following and add them to your card:
   a. *fasting* (or anything that refers to not eating or drinking
   b. *the words of the Lord . . . came* (this will show segments in chapter 7 and 8)
   c. *listening or not listening* - mark *listening* in one way and in the same way and with the same color with a slash through it for *not listening*

2. When did the word of the Lord come to Zechariah?

DAY TWO

Today you are going to dig deeper into Zechariah 7. Begin with prayer, asking for guidance and understanding as you study.

1. What was the reason or occasion for the word of the Lord at this time?

2. Considering what you have learned about the time period when Zechariah was written and God's response, why do you think the people were fasting on the fifth and seventh month during the seventy years they were in captivity? Read the following verses and record what you learn.

   a. II Kings 25:8-10

   b. II Kings 25:22-26

3. Why might they have wondered if they needed to continue fasting?

4. The only time fasting was commanded by the Lord was on the Day of Atonement, once a year (see Leviticus 16:29, 31). The word "*fast"* is not used, but the idea of humbling or afflicting oneself shows inner pain of contrition, which was expressed through fasting — depriving the body. On the Day of Atonement, worshipers were to atone for their sins by suffering a loss in order to make payment and restore (reconcile) their relationship with God. One way they did this was by humbling

themselves through sacrifice — denying their bodies bread and water so they could focus on feasting on the Bread of Life and quenching their thirst with the Living Water. Read Psalm 35:13. Compare these Scriptures and record your thoughts.

5. Let's see what other Scriptures teach about fasting. What do you learn?

   a. Isiah 58:1-12

   b. Joel 2:12-21

   c. Daniel 9:1-22

   d. Matthew 6:1, 16-18

6. Read Zechariah 7:5-7. The Lord asked a question of the people. Do you understand the Lord's question? Give reasons for your answer.

7. Jesus said, ". . . when you fast,". This implies that we will fast. Have you fasted? Why? What prompted you to do that? When you fasted, what was your motive? What happened when you fasted?

DAY THREE

1. Prayerfully read Zechariah 7:8-14. What is the Lord saying? Ask the 5 W's and H.

2. Why is it so important to listen to God?
   a. Read Jeremiah 11:1-11. Record your thoughts.

   b. You marked *not listening* in Zechariah 7. What do you learn?

   c. What happens to people as a result of not listening? Don't miss anything —this is very important!

3. Is there a relationship between what the Lord says in these verses and what He said about fasting in the preceding verses? Be thorough in your answer. Keep in mind what you have learned about fasting, especially in Isaiah 58.

4. Read Zechariah 7:9-10. What did the Lord say to the people He eventually judged? What were they to do?

5. Do you think God still feels the same way about these issues, about this lifestyle? Examine your own life. Write down what God reveals to you.

6. Read through Zechariah 8. You aren't observing this today. Just read through it and see how it ties in with chapter 7. Write down your thoughts.

DAY FOUR

1. Observe Zechariah 8. Mark these words and add them to your card.
   a. *remnant* (with synonyms and pronouns)
   b. References to time
   c. *people* (mark the same way as *nations*)
   d. do not fear
   e. *truth* (you don't need to add this to marking card)

2. Read through chapter 8 again. Summarize each paragraph on your Observation Worksheets.

3. Check your theme for Zechariah 7 and 8 on your Observation Worksheets and on your "Zechariah at a Glance" chart, and determine whether you want to change it.

DAY FIVE

1. To whom is God speaking to in Zechariah 8 and how do you know?

2. Read Zechariah 8:1-8 out loud. Absorb the words; allow them to wash over you. This is the promised future for the people of God.
   a. Compare these verses to Zechariah 1:13-17. What do you observe?

   b. Do these verses offer you encouragement about your future? Why?

   c. Do you know anyone who needs an encouraging word?

3. Compare Zechariah 8:9-15 with Haggai 2:1-19.
   a. Note the timing of the events in these passages. Do you see any relationship?

   b. Why do you think God says what He does in Zechariah 8:9-15?

4. You know why they fasted in the fifth and seventh months, but what about the fourth and tenth months mentioned in Zechariah 8:19? Read II Kings 25:1-7 and see what you learn.

5. Compare the message of Zechariah 8 with the messages of the visions. What do you see?

6. What do you think Zechariah 8:20-23 means to Jews? Is this something that can be shared with a Jewish acquaintance? Most Jews don't know the content of the Prophets. You know the Branch; you know who is going to rule from Jerusalem. The prophets have much to say about the rule of the coming Messiah. Be prepared to share this with someone should you run into a Jewish person.

7. You can see what the commentaries have to say about Zechariah 7 and 8.