

Zechariah Perek 7

A word on the history to make this perek more understandable:

Most meforshim explain that the reason that most of the Jews in Bavel didn't return to Eretz Yisrael with Zechariah, Chaggai and Malachi is that they were skeptical of the permission Koresh had given to build the second Beis Hamikdash. They were sure that the enemies of Yisrael would destroy it.

The Jews in Bavel were also cautious because seemingly none of the prophecies regarding the final redemption and Mashiach were happening. Therefore they saw no reason to move back to Eretz Yisrael.

Also news sources then were not as accurate as they are now. Therefore, when they heard that the second Beis Hamikdash was almost completed, the Jews in Bavel devised a plan to be sure that the news that they were hearing about the construction of the second Beis Hamikdash was accurate. Their plan was to send a halachic question to the halachic authorities in Yerushalayim about whether or not they should fast in the ninth of Av. The answer to this question would indeed indicate whether or not the ultimate redemption was occurring and they should leave their homes and return to Eretz Yisrael.

Zechariah received a prophecy on the fourth of Kislev during the fourth year of the reign of King Darius. Two residents of Bavel, Sharetser and Regem-Melech, sent a question to Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi:

"Should we still fast on the ninth day of Av, which commemorates the destruction of the first Beis Hamikdash since the second one is currently being built?"

Zechariah's answer was, "If you would actually do teshuvah you would no longer need to fast!"

Hashem says, "Act with justice and be kind to one another. Do not oppress the widow or orphan. Treat the poor fairly. And stop the evil in your hearts. Just as I called out to you and you didn't listen, so, too, you will call out to Me and I won't listen. By not returning to Me, you turned Eretz Yisrael, which is the most desirable land of all, into something undesirable. "