

(4) 8:9-15 stresses the importance of how much better life has been since the work of God was begun anew (v. 9) and promises an increase in these conditions as God is progressively honored.

(5) 8:16-17 reminds the nation that the Word of God given to the fathers is still in force, a citation much like 7:9 and that there must be a continued application of the visions.

(6) And, when this is done, the previous fasts for the loss of the city will become occasions of joy in the fullness of what God wants. Make sure that both fasting and eating are done for the Lord and that the words of the prophets are honored...these other matters will then attend to themselves.

(7) And that brings us to the solution as stated earlier...a blunt and forthright proposition but couched on the basis of an understanding of God's established dealing with this people.

4. Resolution of the difficulty

No one is told whether to continue the fasts or discontinue them. All are told to hear the Word of God first, make sure all they do is for Him, and know in time that His blessing will remove any remorse or grief that might be current.

F. Hebrew notes on these two chapters:

- 7:2 אָנִי note the footnote and variations
 פָּתִילֵי אֵת Piel verb "to entreat favor of"
 7::3 הִתְנַחֲמָה from נָחַם "weep"
 הִתְנַחֲמָה from נָחַם "devote" "dedicate"
 7:5 צָמָה "fast" root.. צ-מ-ה
 וְנָחַם "wail" "lament" נ-ח-ם
 7:6 Note the interrogative construction and the temporal use of the particle .