

in the fifth month, but you read in the eighth chapter it was also a matter of weeping in the third month, fifth month, seventh month, ninth month, eleventh month and what they were saying was, Should we keep the fast which we have brought to ourselves in Babylon during the 70 years captivity. No doubt while they were down in Babylon, they instituted some new practices and among them, fast and sorrow for Jerusalem and for the loss of the country. And now they come to the prophets and they say, we started these fasts in Babylon. Is it right that we should continue them now? Is it right that we should still hold to this tradition? Is it right that we should still maintain these practices? What I always remind myself of with regard to this matter is that these things were not commanded in the book of ^{the} law. There is only one fast commanded for Israel in the book of the law and that was a brief one on the day of atonement, if you will remember, in Leviticus 23. These fasts were fasts that they had added to themselves, brought upon themselves. And now they come to the house of God and say, is it right that we should do them? Nothing wrong in this question. In fact, it's the way we ought to review all of the acts of our lives. Is it right that we should continue particular practices? But the answer of God to them is tremendously revealing. In verse 4, the word of the Lord of Hosts came unto me saying, speak unto all the people of the land and to the priests saying this, when you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, just two mentioned here, many more mentioned in Chapter 8, when you did these things even those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto Me? Question: when you were in Babylon, fasting and mourning and weeping in the fifth and the seventh months, did you do it unto Me? And then in the next verse, God goes ahead with the
