

## *Fasting Part 2*

### **Fasting With A Purpose**

*"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord God, and made my confession...."*  
**(Daniel 9:34)**

#### **Purpose:**

*Hebrew* ~ `etsah (ay-tsaw'): plan or advice

*Greek* ~ prothesis- 1) the setting forth of a thing, or 2) a purpose

*Webster* ~ something set up as an object or end to be attained

### **I. The Tradition of Fasting**

#### **a. Established in the Old Testament**

##### *i. For Direction*

1. Deut 9:9-11 "When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant."

##### *ii. In Destitution*

1. **Deut 9:18-19** "*And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.*"

2. II Chronicles 20 (Jehosaphat proclaimed a fast)

#### **b. Ordained By Christ in the New Testament**

- i. Not required of the disciples while Jesus was with them.

1. **Matthew 9:14 (Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33)** "*Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the*

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*bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."*

- ii. Required in order to be victorious in certain circumstances
  - 1. **Matt 17:21** "*Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*"

## **II. The Tempo of Fasting**

### **a. Humility & Secrecy**

- i. **2 Chr 7:14** "*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*"
- ii. **Matthew 6:16-18** "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret ..."
- iii. **Luke 18:9-14** "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray. . . The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . . I fast twice in the week, I give tithes . . . And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to this house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

### **b. Prayer, Worship & Study of God's Word**

- i. I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18, etc. "And her adversary . . . provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? ... Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him . . ."
- ii. Nehemiah 1:4 ". . . when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven."
- iii. Nehemiah 9: 1-3 ". . . the children of Israel were assembled with fasting . . . and stood and confessed their sins . . . and read in the book of the

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law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God."

- iv. Joel 2:12 ". . . turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."
- v. Jonah 3:8, etc. "For word came unto the king ... and he caused it to be proclaimed and published ... saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God ... Who can tell if God will ... turn away from his fierce anger ... And God saw ..."
- vi. Luke 2:37 "And she was a widow of about 44 years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."
- vii. Acts 10:30 "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing."
- viii. I Corinthians 7:5 ". . . that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer . . ."

#### **c. Absolute or Partial.**

##### *i. Examples of absolute (complete) fasts:*

1. **Deuteronomy 9:9, 18** ". . . **40 nights**, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."
2. **Ezra 10:6** "Ezra. . . did eat not bread, nor drink water: for he mourned . . ."
3. **Esther 4:16** "Go, gather together all the Jews . . . and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink **three days, night or day** . . ."
4. **Acts 27:33** ". . . This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing."

##### *ii. Examples of partial fasts (abstinence from certain foods only):*

1. **I Kings chapter 17**
2. **Daniel 10:3** "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

#### **d. Corporate or Individual**

- i. Corporate fasts:

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1. I Samuel 7:5-6 "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel ... and they gathered... and fasted ... "
2. Ezra 8:21-23 "Then I proclaimed a fast ... So we fasted and besought our God ..."
3. Nehemiah 9:1-3 " ... the children of Israel were assembled with fasting ..."
4. Jonah 3:5-10 "the people ... proclaimed a fast ... from the greatest of them even to the least"

#### ii. Individual fasts:

1. II Samuel 12:15-16, 22-23 "... and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth."
2. I Kings 21:27-29 "When Ahab heard those words, he... fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly."

## **III. The Test of Fasting**

### **a. A Sincere Heart**

- i. Joel 2:12, 13 "Rend your heart, and not your garments ..."
- ii. Romans 14:6, 17
- iii. I Corinthians 15:50

### **b. Pure Motive**

- i. Isaiah chapter 58 "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? ... Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure ... ye fast for strife and debate ... ye shall not fast as ye do this day ... Is it such a fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands ... to undo the heavy burdens ... to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ..."
- ii. Zechariah 7:5-6 "... When ye fasted and mourned ... those 70 years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?"

### **c. Wisdom & Temptation**

- i. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:9), and we are to care for them as such (v. 20).
- ii. It may indeed be profitable for a season for us to exercise severe discipline, to "keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Corinthians 9 :27), to be "temperate in all things" (I Corinthians 9 :25), but we must also realize that "that which is flesh is flesh," and we

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cannot produce spiritual results –however sincere our intentions – from that which is purely flesh.

- iii. To deny the flesh of its natural desires may cause us to be more "in tune" to hear the voice of the Lord (Deuteronomy 9:18, 25, etc.), but it also places us in a realm more easily prone to the attack of the enemy. **It was when Jesus had been fasting for 40 days that He was faced with the greatest Satanic attack** (Matthew 4:1-3; Luke 4:1-2).
- iv. Scripture warns that in the last days there will be many "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats," etc. (I Timothy 4:1-3). We are to test the spirits, to see whether they be of God (I John 4:1)

## **IV. The Timing of Fasting**

- a. Bible personalities fasted and sought God diligently until they obtained from God what they desired (see the examples of Hannah, I Samuel 1:6-8, 17-18; and Paul, Acts 9:9,17-19) – or until the Lord made it evident that what they requested simply would not be obtained (as in the case of David, II Samuel 12:15-23).
- b. Time Examples & Scripture References
  - i. ***One night.*** ~ Daniel 6:18
  - ii. ***One day.*** ~ I Samuel 7:6, II Samuel 1:12; 3:35, Judges 20:26
  - iii. ***Three days and three nights.*** ~ Esther 4:16, Acts 9:9, 17-19
  - iv. ***Seven days.*** ~ I Samuel 31:13, II Samuel 12:16-23
  - v. ***Fourteen days.*** ~ Acts 27:33-34
  - vi. ***Twenty-one days.*** ~ Daniel 10:3-13
  - vii. ***Forty days.***
    - 1. Moses (at two different times). Exodus 24:18; 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9, 18, 25-29; 10:10
    - 2. Elijah. ~ I Kings 19:8
    - 3. Jesus. ~ Matthew 4:2 (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2)

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<b><u>Occasions For Fasting &amp; Fasting Types</u></b>		
<b><u>Direction</u></b>	<b><u>Destitution</u></b>	<b><u>Scriptures</u></b>
Ordinations		Acts 13:3, 14:23
Intercession	Intercession	Exodus 24:18, Deuteronomy 9:8-9, 12-20, 23-27, Ezra 10:6, Daniel 9:3-4, Joel 2:12-14, 17-18, Jonah 3:5-10
Humbling & Chastening	Humbling & Chastening	I Kings 21:27-29; Psalms 35:13; Psalms 69:10
Seeking the Lord	Seeking the Lord	Judges 20, II Chron. 20, Ezra 8:21-23
	Repentance & Confession	Ezra 10:6, Daniel 9:3-5
	Healing	Isaiah 58:8
	God to withhold His hand in judgment	Deuteronomy 9:18
To Receive God's Word		Isaiah 58:9
	Deliverance	Mark 9:29
	Fear	II Chron. 20:3
	Mourning	II Sam 1:12
	Material Provision	II Corinthians 11:27