

## The Fast God Chooses

**Isa 58:3-8** 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exploit all your laborers. Indeed you fast for strife and debate, and to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high. Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

**Matt 6:16-18** **Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites**, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

**Zech 7:5-6** Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me-- for Me? 'When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink for yourselves?

### The Fast God Chooses Will:

1. **Loosen the Bonds of Wickedness:** Bringing freedom from addictions and bondages (bonds); things that cause people to be under the power of wickedness
2. **Undo Heavy Burdens:** A burden is a weight or obstacle; it is the lifting of the load or barrier-> it is a way to spiritually address problems in our life
3. **Let The Oppressed Go Free:** The oppressed are those that are without Christ and without God in this world... those oppressed by the devil. For revival and soul winning.
4. **Break Every Yoke:** A yoke is designed to steer or control livestock... it sets their direction. Our minds are the focal point of where "yokes" are put on us from the spiritual realm. We can conquer mental and emotional problems through God's power.
5. **Give Bread to the Hungry:** Meet the humanitarian needs of others.
6. **Allow Peoples Light to Break Forth:** Light dispels darkness and causes understanding of a situation to come forth. We need not walk in darkness. We need insight to decisions. Light allows a clear perspective on a dark situation.
7. **Cause Their Health to Spring Forth Speedily:** Fasting has many health benefits.
8. **Cause Their Righteousness to go Before Them:** Our testimony and our witness for Christ should go before us. We should live with the ability for the Holy Spirit to impact others through our words and deeds.
9. **Cause The Glory of the Lord to be their Rear Guard:** Protection from the evil one.

Why Fasting?

- 1) Bondage to demonic powers by BELIEVERS
- 2) Solutions to complex problems
- 3) Desperate need of revival
- 4) People of character and integrity—the world is crying out for them
- 5) North American believers are insulated from the pains of the REST of the world
- 6) The media has our national attention--- and even believers operate according to principles foreign to the will of God
- 7) People are not healthier
- 8) Believers are entangled in economic and social pursuits
- 9) The growing influence of demonic influences—we need protection from the evil one

The Foundations of Fasting

**John 3:30** "He must increase, but I must decrease.

**1 Cor 3:7** So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

**Col 2:19** and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

### **The Bridegroom Fast**

**Matt 9:14-15** Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not **fast**?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom **mourn** as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and **then they will fast.**

**Mark 4:24-25** Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. "For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

**Matt 11:12** And from the days of John the Baptist until now **the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.**

**Matt 11:13-19** For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear! But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, and saying: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.' For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

**John 3:29** "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

### **Fasting out of Spiritual Lovesickness:**

- 1) Is an invitation to greater realms of power, but is FAR MORE than just that
- 2) Is used by the Holy Spirit to unlock deep places of our hearts in spiritual intimacy
- 3) Enables us to see things in the spirit that we normally would not see
- 4) Is not an IMMEDIATE result, but rather a lifestyle and long-term commitment
- 5) Increases the tenderizing of our hearts by removing the spirit of dullness
- 6) Allows us to FEEL more of the presence of God than we do now
- 7) Helps protect us from discontentment, coveting, and fleshly cravings when done in fellowship with the Holy Spirit
- 8) Leads to a change of your emotional chemistry: your desires for certain things will change over time
- 9) Intensifies our detachment from worldly concerns
- 10) Requires doing NOTHING instead of doing SOMETHING for God
- 11) Will help insulate us from complaining and griping and decrease areas of compromise
- 12) Begins to unlock and release negative feelings that rule our hearts and ultimately rule us
- 13) Helps to strengthen our spiritual identity in God and weakens our fleshly identity
- 14) Releases more of the presence of God in our life and helps to break bondages of self-absorption
- 15) Allow an opportunity for God to warm our cold hearts in front of the bonfire of the Word of God

Fasting should be done only when 2 things are in place:

- 1) We know God Loves Us
- 2) We want our hearts to receive more of Him

That is grace-empowered fasting.

Spiritual Violence:

- 1) A pursuit of God that often is disruptive to the way that we spend time, money, and talents
- 2) Spiritual intensity that disrupts our lives, our status quo, our circle of Christian friends, and the pace of spiritual growth at which we move
- 3) As you press into spiritual violence, you may be considered weird
- 4) The spiritual reality of being a "friend of the bridegroom" is the reality you must have before a fasted lifestyle makes sense
- 5) Voluntarily entering into the loving embrace of the violent One is the dance of the Lord
- 6) The violent lover is the One who violently laid aside the form of God and gave up all of His rights to bear pain and suffering of others
- 7) Fasting and the fasted lifestyle can expand our hearts to receive more from God, quicker
- 8) It is an invitation to deeper levels of intimacy with God

- Phil 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. (NKJ)
- John 1:16 For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. (NAS)
- Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.
- Acts 14:3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
- Acts 14:26 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.
- Acts 15:11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."
- Acts 18:27-28 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.
- Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
- Acts 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- Rom 1:5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,
- Rom 3:21-24 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
- 1 Cor 1:4-8 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 3:6-7 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

### **Four Types of Fasting:**

There are many different ways to fast: all suggestions are exactly that—suggestive. There are as many ways to fast as there are to pray... the key is finding the right mix that help you in your walk with the Lord.

#### Normal Fast

Going without food for a definite period during which you only ingest liquids (water and/or juice). The duration can be 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 1 month, or 40 days. Extreme caution and care should be taken with longer fasts, which should be only attempted after medical advice from a physician.

#### Absolute Fast:

Allows no food or water at all. This type should always be short in duration. Moses fasted for 40 days—but he was in the direct presence of the God of Life as well. 40 days without food and water would KILL anyone without supernatural intervention, and should never be attempted today. Be sure to test the spirit that tries to talk you into a 40-day fast, even if it includes liquids.

- ◆ Jesus: was tempted AFTER His 40 days of absolute fasting in the wilderness
- ◆ Moses: actually did 2 back-to-back 40 day total fasts
- ◆ Elijah: went in the strength of an angel's food on absolute fast to Mt. Carmel

#### Partial Fast:

Omitting certain foods or creating a schedule of limited eating. It may consist of omitting one meal a day. Eating only fresh vegetables for several days is also a good partial fast.

- ◆ John Wesley ate only bread (whole grain) and water for many days.
- ◆ Elijah practiced partial fasts at least twice
- ◆ John the Baptist and Daniel w/ three friends participated in partial fasts

People who have hypoglycemia or other diseases might consider this kind of fast.

#### Rotational Fast:

Consists of eating or omitting certain families of foods for designated periods. Grains, for example, being eaten only every fourth day. The various food family are rotated so that some food is available each day.

## **The Disciple's Fast**

### Purpose

"To loose the bands of wickedness" (Isaiah 58:6) Freeing ourselves and others from addictions to sin.

### Key Verse

Matt 17:21 "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (NKJ)

### Background

Jesus cast out a demon from a boy whom the disciples had failed to help. Apparently they had not taken seriously enough the way Satan had claws set in the youth. The implication is that Jesus' disciples could have performed this exorcism had they been willing to undergo the discipline of fasting. Modern disciples also often make light of "besetting" sins that could be cast out if we were serious enough to take part in such a self-denying practice as fasting..

Fasting can release people from the bondage of sin.

**Heb 12:1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight<sup>2139</sup>, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (NKJ)

2139 euperistatos- **skillfully surrounding, that is, besetting**

Besetting sins:

- ◆ Not common sins of neglect or momentary lapses
- ◆ Not sins of rebellion – "Thou shalt not!" "Yes I will!"
- ◆ Habitual sins of behaviors or attitudes that victimize and enslave someone
- ◆ Makes you a slave and takes away your will

These sins cause us to be helpless and broken before God... not having a clenched fist in His face. You cry out "I can't help myself!"

"I am forced to play a game where I always lose, and I can't quit playing. I hate the game.. I hate playing.. and I hate life."

Jesus died on the cross for ALL sins: including besetting ones.

**The substitutionary blood atonement of Jesus Christ is the most powerful thing on earth because it destroys sin, and delivers from death and hell.**

**John 10:10** The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (NKJ)

**I Jn 3:5** And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. (NKJ)

**I Jn 3:7-9** Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (NKJ)

**Rom 6:14** For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (NKJ)

**1 Cor 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (NKJ)

### Why are in Bondage to Sin?

**John 8:44** "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (NKJ)

Satan lies to us about sin and we believe him instead of God.

In besetting sins, satan gets us to believe one of the following three lies (otherwise known as "compulsions"):

- 1. I tried before, and can't break it.**
- 2. I don't want to do this, but can't help it.**
- 3. I need an answer, but can't find it.**

Because we believe Satan's lie, we cannot see that there is a WAY of escape. We have surrendered our wills to satan and not to God.

Satan's lies convince us that we have NO power against sin. But take hope:

**Rom 7:19** For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. (NKJ)

If satan can control our thoughts, he can control our lives.

**2 Tim 2:24-26** And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and **that they may come to their senses** and escape the snare of the devil, **having been taken captive by him to do his will.** (NKJ)

### The Power of the Disciple's Fast

**Matt 17:14-21** And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast him out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (NKJ)

We do not understand that our problems are EXTERNALLY controlled and not INTERNALLY directed.

■ The father did not know his son had a demon.

The disciple's were unable to break the boy's bondage.

- Some people are unable to quit smoking or break homosexual relationships
- You can weep, cry, pray sincerely and seek deliverance, but yet still remain in bondage.

You are wrestling for CONTROL of your life when you enter into the Disciple's Fast.

By controlling what you eat, you determine that you WILL control your life for God's purposes.  
Making a vow and reinforcing it with fasting moves you into the strength of decision making.

Making a choice to fast will strengthen you to stand against a force that has enslaved your spiritual appetite.

You control your physical appetite so that you can strengthen your spiritual appetite.

Here are the steps:

1. Make a life freeing choice to be delivered
2. Understand the SOURCE of the problem: the true enemy. Recognize an EXTERNAL power is responsible for your bondage.
3. Confess your previous lack of faith.
4. Specifically state your besetting sin.

#### Life Freeing Choices

God may not INSTANTANEOUSLY take away desires for sin. Can will not DO IT ALL.

God only works in PARTNERSHIP with a human bride.

God will not "zap" us .. not the way He works.

He wants us to look within, so WE MAKE the DECISION to follow Him.

God does not want people to be robots controlled by switches He presses to force them to give up sin.

We must LOVE good voluntarily and we must QUIT SINNING voluntarily.

We do not demonstrate our commitment in one big "quick change".. rather by making choices and acting on those choices.

#### External Power Control

Does not mean we have demons... but it does mean we are being controlled EXTERNALLY.

Some believe they are alcoholics because their fathers were....

Some believe they have been homosexual since they were born...

The causes of these problems are EXTERNAL, but the suffering is always INTERNAL.

DEPRESSION: "I am worthless." And they give up....

#### Lack of Faith

Being strong require embracing weakness.

Before running the marathon, the runner must realize the physical need to practice, exercise, and build up the physical body!

The disciples did not realize their need in the face of the demonic power in the boy.

It is a statement of faith to recognize what God can do.

It is also a statement of faith to recognize what a person cannot do.



Stating your Sin

Faith-purpose statement:

- 1) You strengthen your will by stating what you want.
- 2) You focus your energies on the problem.
- 3) You build up anticipation to break the problem.
- 4) You build up your faith in God to expect an answer.

**Matt 17:20** So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. (NKJ)

You don't have to state specific sin(s)... it's the PRINCIPLE you are after.

Fast Repeatedly UNTIL you get breakthrough.

The verb action is CONTINUOUS... by prayer and fasting.

Continuously ASK until you get POWER over the sin.

Ask... and KEEP asking

Knock... and KEEP knocking

Seek... and KEEP seeking

**2 Cor 10:4-6** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (NKJ)

## The Ezra Fast

### Purpose

"To undo the bands of the yoke" (Isaiah 58:6) Solving a problem by fasting.  
to undo the bands of the yoke  
untie the cords of the yoke  
to undo the heavy burdens  
to undo the thongs of the yoke

### Key Verse

Ezra 8:23 " So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer." (NKJ)

### Background

We will ALL have problems in this world... it is a natural consequence of living in a fallen world. Seeking God's counsel and wisdom can help us solve those problems. The book of Ezra tells the story of the Jews traveling back from captivity in Persia. King Cyrus of Persia gave them permission to return in 538 BC, and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. First, Zerubbabel led the people back to begin work on the Temple. The surrounding nations caused trouble, so the work went slowly, even stopping for several years. The Temple was finally finished in 515 BC. Ezra, a priest, attempted to lead a second group of people back to Jerusalem. He gathered them on the banks of the Ahara River, but then realized he had a major problem.

Job 14:1 Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Job 5:7 Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

We should not be surprised when we have problems....

- 1) Why me?
- 2) Why now?
- 3) Why this?

Three Wrong Attitudes:

- 1) You are unusual
- 2) You are unspiritual
- 3) God has forsaken you

IN ALL things vs FOR ALL things

Three Problem Solving Attitudes:

- 1) You cannot run from problems
- 2) You cannot keep problems from happening
- 3) You can solve your problems

Ezra:

- 1) Put on the spot: need protection.. crossing the "badlands"
- 2) The risk of theft: not only returning home, but carrying LOTS of treasure
- 3) Ezra called a fast about the problem

Ezra 8:15-31

- 15 Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the sons of Levi there.
- 16 Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding.
- 17 And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia-- that they should bring us servants for the house of our God.
- 18 Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men;
- 19 and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men;
- 20 also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.
- 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions.
- 22 For I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is upon all those for good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath are against all those who forsake Him."
- 23 So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.
- 24 And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests-- Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them--
- 25 and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel who were present, had offered.
- 26 I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, silver articles weighing one hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold,
- 27 twenty gold basins worth a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold.
- 28 And I said to them, "You are holy to the LORD; the articles are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers.
- 29 "Watch and keep them until you weigh them before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and heads of the fathers' houses of Israel in Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD."
- 30 So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.
- 31 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road.

- Step 1: Choose Those to Be involved: personal or corporate (Lev 23:32)  
Step 2: Share the problem (8:21)  
Step 3: Fast seriously (the cause was the problem, the effect was the adjustment)... it was a serious threat (8:21) - afflict ourselves  
Step 4: Fast before attempting a solution (8:15-20)  
1- He did not fast as he traveled  
2- He did not fast before they all gathered  
3- He did not try to solve the problem before fasting  
Step 5: Fast on Site with Insight (prayerwalking) (8:21)  
Step 6: Fast for step-by-step guidance  
Ezra called a fast to "seek of God a right way..."  
Many ways... one is probably best or better

Three Causes of Problems:

- 1) Change
- 2) Differences
- 3) Circumstances

Three Questions to Ask:

- 1) How big is the problem?
- 2) Who is involved in the problem?
- 3) What does the larger group think about the problem?

By the Ezra fast:

- 1) You are inviting God into the problem and asking for His solution
- 2) You are inviting everyone involved to be a part of the solution

Instead of fussing, fighting, or dying... try strategizing.

The Problem Solving Eyes:

- 1) Eyes to see the positive (problem-centered thinking)
- 2) Eyes to see the people
- 3) Eyes to see the facts.

The Ezra Fast:

- 1) Produces new vision to see what God can do
- 2) Gives you opportunity to pray with others
- 3) Allows you to seek Biblical solutions to your problem

Step-by-Step Problem Solving:

- 1) Get the facts
- 2) Establish biblical principles
- 3) Evaluate the facts
- 4) Determine the various solutions
- 5) Choose a solution

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

## The Samuel Fast

### Purpose

"To let the oppressed go free" (Isaiah 58:6) Fasting for revival and soul winning.  
to set the oppressed free

### Key Verse

1 Sam 6:7 "So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.." (NKJ)

### Background

The book of Judges tells how God's people kept rejecting Him and turning to idols. Each time, the Lord punished Israel by allowing the surrounding nations to attack and defeat them. And each time they were defeated, the Israelites turned back to the Lord and begged for His help. Finally, in answer to their prayers, the Lord sent special leaders called judges, who restored the people to righteousness, enabling them to defeat their enemies. Samuel was a prophet, priest, and the last judge to lead Israel before the nation chose a king. Samuel united the people by bringing the revival. Samuel initiated a nationwide revival through fasting, among other spiritual disciplines.

Jonathan Edwards: fasted 24 hours before preaching "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God"... many claimed this sermon sparked the First Great Awakening in New England

1859 Prayer Revival: attributable to three things

- 1) People of different denominations bound together by intercession
- 2) Revival came not through preaching, but by prayer
- 3) Revival was inspired not by clergy, but by "laity"

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

- 1) Revival is not an automatic experience. It is something to be desired and prayed for.
- 2) God is the source of revival. It comes from His presence
- 3) Refreshing results are experienced when revival comes.

Scripture ties fasting and revival.

Oppressed = bROKEN

Oppressed IN SPIRIT... broken BY SIN....

Injustice results in oppression.

The Samuel Fast... can be a tool for freeing those who are oppressed, and healing those who are broken by sin.

1 Sam 7:1-15

- 1 Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.
- 2 So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.
- 3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."
- 4 So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.
- 5 And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you."
- 6 So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the LORD. And they fasted that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.
- 7 Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.
- 8 So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."
- 9 And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.
- 10 Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel.
- 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car.
- 12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."
- 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.
- 14 Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.
- 15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.
- (NKJ)

Pre-Fast Preparation:

- 1) Recognize your bondage : solution is first recognition of need...
- 2) Pray for God's presence among His people
  - Recognize the NEED for God's presence (the ARK = God's Presence)
  - Assemble the people at GOD's place
- 3) Be sure God's leaders are in place

- Step 1: Call the Body Together
- Step 2: Demonstrate True Repentance (2 Chronicle 7:14)
- Step 3: Separate from Secret Sin
- Step 4: Have Corporate Confession of Sin (Dan 9:5, Neh 1:5)
- Step 5: Acknowledge the power of the Word
- Step 6: Get in touch with symbolic

Post-Fast

- 1) Attacks
- 2) Fasting as a process
- 3) Look for signs of victory
- 4) Victory as a process...
- 5) Celebrating with symbols of victory.. (Past, present, future)