

~FAST, FASTING (668)

.. Four Annual Fasts Of The Jews

.. Christian Counsel On Fasting

- **Abstinence from all food for a limited period. Rightly motivated fasts were to show godly sorrow and repentance concerning past sins.**
- **So they were collected together at Mizpah, and they went drawing water and pouring it out before Yehowah and kept a **fast** on that day. And they began saying there; We have sinned against Yehowah. And Samuel took up judging the sons of Israel in Mizpah. (1 Samuel 7:6)**
- **And now also, the utterance of Yehowah is, come back to me with all your hearts, and with **fasting** and with weeping and with wailing. (Joel 2:12)**
- **And rip apart your hearts, and not your garments, and come back to Yehowah your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, and he will certainly feel regret on account of the calamity. (Joel 2:13)**
- **Who is there knowing whether he will turn back and actually feel regret and let remain after it a blessing, a grain offering and a drink offering for Yehowah your God? (Joel 2:14)**
- **Blow a horn in Zion, O men. Sanctify a time of **fasting**. Call together a solemn assembly. (Joel 2:15)**
- **And the men of Nineveh began to put faith in God, and they proceeded to proclaim a **fast** and to put on sackcloth, from the greatest one of them even to the least one of them. (Jonah 3:5)**
- **They were also fitting in the face of great danger, when in sore need of divine guidance, while enduring tests and meeting temptations, or when studying, meditating, or concentrating on God's purposes.**
- **At that Jehoshaphat became afraid and set his face to search for Yehowah. So he proclaimed a **fast** for all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:3)**

- Then I proclaimed a **fast** there at the river Ahava, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him the right way for us and for our little ones and for all our goods. (**Ezra 8:21**)
- And in all the different jurisdictional districts, wherever the king's word and his Law were reaching, there was great mourning among the Jews, and **fasting** and weeping and wailing. Sackcloth and ashes themselves came to be spread out as a couch for many. (**Esther 4:3**)
- Go, gather all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan and **fast** in my behalf and neither eat nor drink for three days, night and day. I too with my young women, I shall fast likewise, and upon that I shall come in to the king, which is not according to the law, and in case I must perish, I must perish. (**Esther 4:16**)
- Then Jesus was led by the spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. (**Matthew 4:1**)
- After he had **fasted** forty days and forty nights, then he felt hungry. (**Matthew 4:2**)
- **Fasting** was, not a self-inflicted form of punishment, but a humbling of oneself before Yehowah.
- Then I proclaimed a **fast** there at the river Ahava, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him the right way for us and for our little ones and for all our goods. (**Ezra 8:21**)
- And at the grain offering of the evening I stood up from my humiliation, with my garment and my sleeveless coat torn apart, and I proceeded to kneel upon my knees and spread out my palms to Yehowah my God. (**Ezra 9:5**)
- And it came about that as soon as Ahab heard these words, he proceeded to rip his garments apart and to put sackcloth upon his flesh, and he went on a **fast** and kept lying down in sackcloth and walking despondently. (**1 Kings 21:27**)
- And Yehowah's word came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying; (**1 Kings 21:28**)
- Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself on my account? For the reason that he has humbled himself because of me, I

shall not bring the calamity in his own days. In the days of his son I shall bring the calamity upon his house. (**1 Kings 21:29**)

- Jesus **fasted** 40 days, as did Moses and Elijah, both of whom appeared in a visionary way with Jesus at his transfiguration.
- Six days later Jesus took Peter and James and John his brother along and brought them up into a lofty mountain by themselves. (**Matthew 17:1**)
- And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant as the light. (**Matthew 17:2**)
- And, look! There appeared to them Moses and Elijah, conversing with him. (**Matthew 17:3**)
- Responsively Peter said to Jesus; Lord, it is fine for us to be here. If you wish, I will erect three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. (**Matthew 17:4**)
- While he was yet speaking, look! A bright cloud overshadowed them, and, look! A voice out of the cloud, saying; This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved, listen to him. (**Matthew 17:5**)
- At hearing this the disciples fell upon their faces and became very much afraid. (**Matthew 17:6**)
- Then Jesus came near and, touching them, said; Get up and have no fear. (**Matthew 17:7**)
- When they raised their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus himself only. (**Matthew 17:8**)
- And as they were descending from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying; Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man is raised up from the dead. (**Matthew 17:9**)
- And he continued there with Yehowah forty days and forty nights. He ate **no bread and he drank no water**. And he proceeded to write upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Words. (**Exodus 34:28**)

- When I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant that Yehowah had concluded with you, and I kept dwelling in the mountain forty days and forty nights, I neither ate bread nor drank water. (**Deuteronomy 9:9**)
- Later the angel of Yehowah came back a second time and touched him and said; Rise up, eat, for the journey is too much for you. (**1 Kings 19:7**)
- So he rose up and ate and drank, and he kept going in the power of that nourishment for forty days and forty nights as far as the mountain of the true God, Horeb. (**1 Kings 19:8**)
- The Mosaic Law does not use the term **fast**, but in connection with the Day of Atonement it does command, you must afflict your souls.
- And it must serve as a statute to time indefinite for you people: In the seventh month on the tenth of the month you should afflict your souls, and you must not do any work, either the native or the alien resident who is residing as an alien in your midst. (**Leviticus 16:29**)
- For on this day atonement will be made for you to pronounce you clean. You will be clean from all your sins before Yehowah. (**Leviticus 16:30**)
- It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you must afflict your souls. It is a statute to time indefinite. (**Leviticus 16:31**)
- However, on the tenth of this seventh month is the day of atonement. A holy convention should take place for you, and you must afflict your souls and present an offering made by fire to Yehowah. (**Leviticus 23:27**)
- And on the tenth of this seventh month you should hold a holy convention, and you must afflict your souls. No sort of work must you do. (**Numbers 29:7**)
- This is generally understood to mean **fasting**, and this view is supported by;
- For what reason did we **fast** and you did not see, and did we afflict our soul and you would take no note? Indeed you people

- were finding delight in the very day of your **fasting**, when there were all your toilers that you kept driving to work. (**Isaiah 58:3**)
- Should the **fast** that I choose become like this, as a day for earthling man to afflict his soul? For bowing down his head just like a rush, and that he should spread out mere sackcloth and ashes as his couch? Is it this that you call a fast and a day acceptable to Yehowah? (**Isaiah 58:5**)
 - As for me, when they became ill, my clothing was sackcloth, with **fasting** I afflicted my soul, and upon my bosom my own prayer would return. (**Psalms 35:13**)
 - (**Isaiah Chapter 58**) deals with a time when the sins of the Jews were heavy, yet they did not sincerely repent, though they made a pretense of worshiping Yehowah, giving him lip service and performing religious acts or practices for show. **Fasting** was one such practice, and they thought it should gain them divine notice and favor.
 - This failing, they asked in apparent bewilderment; For what reason did we **fast** and you did not see, and did we afflict our soul and you would take no note?
 - Yehowah told them why. Even during the **fast**, while asking for his righteous judgments and acting as if they carried on righteousness itself, they were pursuing their own pleasure and business, indulging in strife, oppression, and violence, they showed none of the godly sorrow and repentance associated with sincere fasts.
 - Their fast was not such as to make their voice heard in heaven, though their showy wailings were noisy indeed. Yehowah denounced the hypocritical act they put on. Should the **fast** that I choose become like this, as a day for earthling man to afflict his soul? For bowing down his head just like a rush, and that he should spread out mere sackcloth and ashes as his couch? Is it this that you call a **fast** and a day acceptable to Yehowah?
 - Call out full-throated; Do not hold back. Raise your voice just like a horn, and tell my people their revolt, and the house of Jacob their sins. (**Isaiah 58:1**)
 - Yet day after day it was I whom they kept seeking, and it was in the knowledge of my ways that they would express delight, like a nation that carried on righteousness itself and that had not left

the very justice of their God, in that they kept asking me for righteous judgments, drawing near to God in whom they had delight. (**Isaiah 58:2**)

- For what reason did we **fast** and you did not see, and did we afflict our soul and you would take no note? Indeed you people were finding delight in the very day of your fasting, when there were all your toilers that you kept driving to work. (**Isaiah 58:3**)
- Indeed for quarreling and struggle you would **fast**, and for striking with the fist of wickedness. Did you not keep **fasting** as in the day for making your voice to be heard in the height? (**Isaiah 58:4**)
- Should the **fast** that I choose become like this, as a day for earthling man to afflict his soul? For bowing down his head just like a rush, and that he should spread out mere sackcloth and ashes as his couch? Is it this that you call a **fast** and a day acceptable to Yehowah? (**Isaiah 58:5**)
- To be acceptable, the **fast** must be accompanied by a correction of past sins. Through his prophet Isaiah, Yehowah made known what he considered to be a real fast, saying; Is not this the **fast** that I choose? To loosen the fetters of wickedness, to release the bands of the yoke bar, and to send away the crushed ones free, and that you people should tear in two every yoke bar?
- Is it not the dividing of your bread out to the hungry one, and that you should bring the afflicted, homeless people into your house? That, in case you should see someone naked, you must cover him, and that you should not hide yourself from your own flesh?
- Is not this the **fast** that I choose? To loosen the fetters of wickedness, to release the bands of the yoke bar, and to send away the crushed ones free, and that you people should tear in two every yoke bar? (**Isaiah 58:6**)
- Is it not the dividing of your bread out to the hungry one, and that you should bring the afflicted, homeless people into your house? That, in case you should see someone naked, you must cover him, and that you should not hide yourself from your own flesh? (**Isaiah 58:7**)

.. Four Annual Fasts Of The Jews

- The Jews established many **fasts**, and at one time had four annual ones, evidently to mark the calamitous events associated with Jerusalem's siege and desolation in the **Seventh Century B.C.E.**
- This is what Yehowah of armies has said; The **fast** of the fourth month, and the **fast** of the fifth month, and the fast of the seventh month, and the **fast** of the tenth month will become for the house of Judah an exultation and a rejoicing and good festal seasons. So love truth and peace. (**Zechariah 8:19**)
- The four annual **fasts** were;
- The **fast** of the fourth month apparently commemorated the breaching of Jerusalem's walls by the Babylonians on **Tammuz 9, 607 B.C.E.**
- And the city came to be under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. (**2 Kings 25:2**)
- On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was severe in the city, and there proved to be no bread for the people of the land. (**2 Kings 25:3**)
- And the city got to be breached, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the double wall that is by the kings garden, while the Chaldeans were all around against the city, and the king began to go in the direction of the Arabah. (**2 Kings 25:4**)
- So the city came under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. (**Jeremiah 52:5**)
- In the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine also got to be severe in the city and there proved to be no bread for the people of the land. (**Jeremiah 52:6**)
- Finally the city was broken through, and as regards all the men of war, they began to run away and go forth from the city by night by the way of the gate between the double wall that is by the kings garden, while the Chaldeans were all around against the city, and they kept going by the way of the Arabah. (**Jeremiah 52:7**)

- It was in the fifth Jewish month Ab that the temple was destroyed, and evidently the **fast** of the fifth month was held as a reminder of this event.
- And in the fifth month on the seventh day of the month, that is to say; the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the chief of the bodyguard, the servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. (2 Kings 25:8)
- And he proceeded to burn the house of Yehowah and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem, and the house of every great man he burned with fire. (2 Kings 25:9)
- And in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, that is, in the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the chief of the bodyguard, who was standing before the king of Babylon, came into Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 52:12)
- And he proceeded to burn the house of Yehowah and the house of the king and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great house he burned with fire. (Jeremiah 52:13)
- The **fast** of the seventh month was apparently held as a sad remembrance of Gedaliah's death or of the complete desolation of the land following Gedaliah's assassination when the remaining Jews, out of fear of the Babylonians, went down into Egypt.
- As for the people left behind in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had left behind, he now appointed over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan. (2 Kings 25:22)
- When all the chiefs of the military forces, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, they immediately came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, that is, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and Johanan the son of Kareah and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite and Jaazaniah the son of the Maacathite, they and their men. (2 Kings 25:23)
- Then Gedaliah swore to them and their men and said to them; Do not be afraid of being servants to the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. (2 Kings 25:24)

- And it came about in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama of the royal offspring came, and also ten men with him, and they got to strike down Gedaliah, so that he died, and also the Jews and the Chaldeans that happened to be with him in Mizpah. (2 Kings 25:25)
- After that all the people, from small to great, and the chiefs of the military forces rose up and came into Egypt, for they had become afraid because of the Chaldeans. (2 Kings 25:26)
- The **fast** of the tenth month may have been associated with Jerusalem had fallen;
- At length it occurred in the twelfth year, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month of our exile, that there came to me the escaped one from Jerusalem, saying; The city has been struck down! (Ezekiel 33:21)
- Or it may have commemorated the commencement of Nebuchadnezzar's successful siege against Jerusalem on the tenth day of that month, in 609 B.C.E.
- And it came about in the ninth year of his being king, in the tenth month on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came, yes, he and all his military force, against Jerusalem and began camping against it and building against it a siege wall all around. (2 Kings 25:1)
- In the ninth year of Zedekiah the king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and all his military force came to Jerusalem and began to lay siege to it. (Jeremiah 39:1)
- Finally it came about in the ninth year of his being king, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came, he and all his military force, against Jerusalem, and they began to camp against her and to build against her a siege wall all around. (Jeremiah 52:4)
- When certain Jews asked: Shall I weep in the fifth month, practicing an abstinence, the way I have done these O how many years? By means of Zechariah, Yehowah answered; When you **fasted** for seventy years, did you really fast to me, even me?

- God showed that a real **fast** to him would have been accompanied by obedience and that what he required was truthfulness, judgment, peace, and a sincere heart.
- Then, instead of **fasting** mournfully and looking back into the past, they would be able to exult and rejoice in festal seasons with the blessings of restoration of true worship and ingathering of others to Yehowah's service.
- Saying to the priests who belonged to the house of Yehowah of armies, and to the prophets, even saying; Shall I weep in the fifth month, practicing an abstinence, the way I have done these O how many years? ([Zechariah 7:3](#))
- And the word of Yehowah of armies continued to occur to me, saying; ([Zechariah 7:4](#))
- Say to all the people of the land and to the priests; When you **fasted** and there was a wailing in the fifth month and in the seventh month, and this for seventy years, did you really **fast** to me, even me? ([Zechariah 7:5](#))
- And when you would eat and when you would drink, were not you the ones doing the eating, and were not you the ones doing the drinking? ([Zechariah 7:6](#))
- Should you not obey the words that Yehowah called out by means of the former prophets, while Jerusalem happened to be inhabited, and at ease, with her cities all around her, and while the Negeb and the Shephelah were inhabited? ([Zechariah 7:7](#))
- These are the things that you people should do; Speak truthfully with one another. With truth and the judgment of peace do your judging in your gates. ([Zechariah 8:16](#))
- This is what Yehowah of armies has said; The **fast** of the fourth month, and the **fast** of the fifth month, and the **fast** of the seventh month, and the **fast** of the tenth month will become for the house of Judah an exultation and a rejoicing and good festal seasons. So love truth and peace. ([Zechariah 8:19](#))
- This is what Yehowah of armies has said; It will be in those days that ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take

hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew, saying; We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people. (**Zechariah 8:23**)

• Christian Counsel On Fasting

- When Jesus was on earth he gave instruction to his disciples;
- When you are **fasting**, stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they are having their reward in full. (**Matthew 6:16**)
- But you, when **fasting**, grease your head and wash your face. (**Matthew 6:17**)
- That you may appear to be **fasting**, not to men, but to your Father who is in secrecy, then your Father who is looking on in secrecy will repay you. (**Matthew 6:18**)
- He alluded here to the insincere **fasting** of the Pharisees, which he mentioned in an illustration on another occasion.
- But he spoke this illustration also to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and who considered the rest as nothing. (**Luke 18:9**)
- Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (**Luke 18:10**)
- The Pharisee stood and began to pray these things to himself, O God, I thank you I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (**Luke 18:11**)
- I **fast** twice a week, I give the tenth of all things I acquire. (**Luke 18:12**)
- But the tax collector standing at a distance was not willing even to raise his eyes heavenward, but kept beating his breast, saying; O God, be gracious to me a sinner. (**Luke 18:13**)
- I tell you, this man went down to his home proved more righteous than that man, because everyone that exalts himself

will be humiliated, but he that humbles himself will be exalted.
([Luke 18:14](#))

- It was customary for the Pharisees to **fast** twice a week, on the second and fifth days of the week.
- I **fast** twice a week, I give the tenth of all things I acquire. ([Luke 18:12](#))
- A persons merely abstaining from food in a formalistic manner is described by Paul as subjecting oneself to decrees; Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch. And he says that those very things are, indeed, possessed of an appearance of wisdom in a self-imposed form of worship and mock humility, a severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in combating the satisfying of the flesh.
- If you died together with Christ toward the elementary things of the world, why do you, as if living in the world, further subject yourselves to the decrees. ([Colossians 2:20](#))
- Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch. ([Colossians 2:21](#))
- Respecting things that are all destined to destruction by being used up, in accordance with the commands and teachings of men? ([Colossians 2:22](#))
- Those very things are, indeed, possessed of an appearance of wisdom in a self-imposed form of worship and mock humility, a severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in combating the satisfying of the flesh. ([Colossians 2:23](#))
- **Fasting** has been enjoined on their members by some religious sects of Christendom, but the Bible itself gives no command to Christians to **fast**. When Jesus was talking to his disciples about **fasting**, as above
- When you are **fasting**, stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be **fasting**. Truly I say to you, they are having their reward in full. ([Matthew 6:16](#))
- But you, when **fasting**, grease your head and wash your face. ([Matthew 6:17](#))

- That you may appear to be **fasting**, not to men, but to your Father who is in secrecy, then your Father who is looking on in secrecy will repay you. (**Matthew 6:18**)
- He and his disciples were still under the Mosaic Law and observed the Day of Atonement and its **fast**.
- The text about **fasting** at;
- Appearing in the **King James Version**, is not contained in some of the most important ancient manuscripts. Likewise, although the **King James Version** mentions **fasting** at;
- And he said to them; This kind cannot get out by anything except by prayer. (**Mark 9:29**)
- Accordingly Cornelius said; Four days ago counting from this hour I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, when, look! A man in bright raiment stood before me (**Acts of Apostles 10:30**)
- Do not be depriving each other of it, except by mutual consent for an appointed time, that you may devote time to prayer and may come together again, that Satan may not keep tempting you for your lack of self-regulation. (**1 Corinthians 7:5**)
- According to such manuscripts these texts do not contain any references to **fasting**.
- Some have taken;
- At this Jesus said to them; The friends of the bridegroom have no reason to mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, do they? But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will **fast**. (**Matthew 9:15**)
- As a command for Christians to **fast**. In reality, Jesus was merely making a statement of what was going to happen when he died. While Jesus was with his disciples on earth, it was not appropriate for them to **fast**. When he died, they did mourn and **fast**. But they had no cause for mournful **fasting** after his resurrection and especially after the marvelous outpouring of Holy Spirit.
- Now John's disciples and the Pharisees practiced **fasting**. So they came and said to him; Why is it the disciples of John and

the disciples of the Pharisees practice fasting, but your disciples do not practice **fasting**? (Mark 2:18)

- And Jesus said to them; While the bridegroom is with them the friends of the bridegroom cannot **fast**, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot **fast**. (Mark 2:19)
- But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will **fast** in that day. (Mark 2:20)
- They said to him; The disciples of John **fast** frequently and offer supplications, and so do those of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink. (Luke 5:33)
- Jesus said to them; You cannot make the friends of the bridegroom **fast** while the bridegroom is with them, can you? (Luke 5:34)
- Yet days will come when the bridegroom will indeed be taken away from them, then they will **fast** in those days. (Luke 5:35)
- Certainly Christians were not under obligation to **fast** on the anniversary of the Lord's death, for the apostle Paul, correcting abuses in connection with the eating of supper at the congregations meeting place before the observance of the Lord's Evening Meal, said,
- Certainly you do have houses for eating and drinking, do you not? Or do you despise the congregation of God and make those who have nothing ashamed? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you? In this I do not commend you. (1 Corinthians 11:22)
- Consequently, my brothers, when you come together to eat it, wait for one another. (1 Corinthians 11:33)
- If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that you may not come together for judgment. But the remaining matters I will set in order when I get there. (1 Corinthians 11:34)
- While not **fasting** as a religious requirement, the early Christians did **fast** on special occasions. When Barnabas and Paul were sent on a special missionary assignment into Asia Minor, there was **fasting** as well as praying. Also, there was the offering of prayer with **fastings** when elders were appointed in a new congregation.

- As they were publicly ministering to Yehowah and **fasting**, the Holy Spirit said; Of all persons set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for the work to which I have called them. (**Acts of Apostles 13:2**)
- Then they **fasted** and prayed and laid their hands upon them and let them go. (**Acts of Apostles 13:3**)
- Moreover, they appointed older men for them in each congregation and, offering prayer with **fastings**, they committed them to Yehowah in whom they had become believers. (**Acts of Apostles 14:23**)
- Hence, Christians are neither under command to **fast** nor prohibited from doing so.
- One man judges one day as above another, another man judges one day as all others, let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. (**Romans 14:5**)
- He who observes the day observes it to Yehowah. Also, he who eats, eats to Yehowah, for he gives thanks to God, and he who does not eat does not eat to Yehowah, and yet gives thanks to God. (**Romans 14:6**)