

Prayer *and* Fasting

**THE
MASTER KEY
TO THE
IMPOSSIBLE**

Gordon Lindsay



PRAYER AND FASTING
THE MASTER KEY TO THE IMPOSSIBLE

by Gordon Lindsay

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CHAPTER I

PRAYER AND FASTING MASTER KEY TO THE IMPOSSIBLE

Fasting = Restoration

AS Adam and Eve's disobedience by eating the forbidden fruit was the original cause of man's losing his God-given dominion in the Garden of Eden, so Christ's fasting forty days and nights in the wilderness, there overcoming the fiercest onslaughts of the enemy, made possible the restoration of man's dominion. Luke 4:1-13.

Adam and Eve were given the Garden of Paradise as their home, with the instructions that they might partake freely of all the fruit of the Garden—except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. But when the woman saw that "the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes," she reached her hand and partook, her husband with her, and thereby ushered sin and sorrow into the world for herself and her descendants.

Christ, the Second Adam, on the other hand, by refusing to make bread at the devil's suggestion, completed His fast, and won back that which was lost by Adam and Eve. As we shall see, prayer and fasting was the master key that Christ used to make the impossible possible. It is also the master key, by which we too can meet the desperate needs of humanity, and make the impossible to become possible.

ESAU SOLD HIS BIRTHRIGHT FOR A MESS OF POTTAGE

As the appetite uncontrolled leads to spiritual barrenness and even disaster, so we shall see that true fasting and denying the appetite gives men a new grip on God. The case of Esau was similar to Adam, in that for a morsel of food he

sold his birthright. He was the elder of twins and rightfully, the inheritance belonged to him. He might have been the father of the chosen race instead of Jacob. But there was one fundamental difference between Esau and Jacob. The latter had faith and prized the birthright. Esau as a man of earth, thought only in terms of the earth. In an hour of temptation he was willing to give up his birthright for a mere mess of pottage.

"And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob." **Gen. 25:31-33.**

Esau by gratifying his appetite that day, forfeited the glory that might have been his. And when later he became remorseful for his act he found no place for repentance. Fasting reverses the order. It disciplines the soul, and in its abstinence from the earthly, it opens the door to the heavenly.

Again and again through the Scriptures we find men losing their place with God through failure to control temptations of the flesh. At the same time we find others who through the discipline of fasting overcame all obstacles and got answers from God that changed the destinies of kingdoms.

The children of Israel by lusting for the delicacies of Egypt lost the blessing of God. As the Psalmist says, they "lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls." **Psalm 106:14-15.** But Moses their leader, by his intercession and his fast of forty days saved them from destruction as a nation.

Eating and drinking are not wrong unless they become an end in themselves. But men living in the days of the Flood did that very thing. They were so given over to the satisfying of their appetites, that they were unaware of the gathering clouds of judgment, until suddenly they found themselves

Man lose
place w/ God
due to flesh

Prayer
Fasting

The Master Key to the Impossible

being carried away in the Flood.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark." Matt. 24:37-38

But as Christ related to His disciples the warning that they should not be like those who lived in the days of Noah, He also told them that through fasting and prayer they would overcome the powers of evil, they would cast out demons, yea, they would move the very mountains.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matt. 17:20-21

Thus did Christ show that prayer and fasting was the master key by which the impossible could be changed to the possible.

King Belshazzar of Babylon with his lords and ladies, indulged in an orgy of feasting, profaning the vessels of the house of God in a drunken revelry. But even as they did, the handwriting of doom came on the wall, and that same night Belshazzar was slain. Daniel, the man of God, who interpreted the handwriting, fasted twenty-one days, until the power of the prince of the kingdom of darkness was broken, and deliverance came to his nation. The prophet knew that the key to victory was the fasting prayer.

Herod the king, during an hour of feasting with his lords, made an oath that resulted in the beheading of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and of whom Jesus said there was none greater born of women. But before his death, John the Baptist by his fasting and self-denial had prepared for the coming of the Messiah.

Fasting will win the battle and put the enemy to flight, even though failure in the past may have been repeated

When
Bible

over and over. When Israel lost two great battles, and was humbled to the dust by the tragic loss of thousands of lives, she fasted and wept before the Lord. The next day defeat was turned into victory. Judges 20.

Jezebel
after
fasting

Jezebel fed the prophets of Baal from her sumptuous table, but in the end she and her prophets came under the judgment of God. Elijah the prophet of God who fled from the wrath of Jezebel, fasted forty days, until at Mt. Horeb he "heard the still small voice." He left Horeb with the mighty anointing of God to return to Israel and execute the judgments of the Lord. Never again did he flee from either man or woman. Faith so dominated his being that even death could not master him, and he was taken up by a chariot of fire into heaven.

160,000 souls
repented
in prayer &
fasting

Yet forty days and Nineveh was to be destroyed, so was the prophet's warning. But the king and his people heeding the warning, put on sackcloth and fell on their faces in fasting and repentance, and the great city of 160,000 souls was saved—the greatest mass repentance in Bible history.

All hope seemed gone from the Jews in the days of Esther, for the king had signed a document in which Haman's men had authority to destroy all who were of that race. But Esther and her maidens with Mordecai, fasted three days and nights and then, risking her own life, made the petition before the king. Not only were her people saved, but the wicked adversary Haman, was hanged on his own gallows that he had made for Mordecai.

Ezra, with a commission from the king to carry the gold and silver of the temple back to Jerusalem, knew the country he must traverse was infested with thieves and robbers, to whom the gold would be a rich prize. He and his companions fasted and prayed, and God took them safely to their destination.

→ The Philistines had humbled the children of Israel by a great defeat in which the Ark of God was taken. It seemed that Israel no longer had power to stand against this fierce enemy. Then Samuel and the people cried to God and fasted.

The Master Key to the Impossible

And lo, the Lord came on the scene, and thundered a great thunder, scattering the host of the enemy. Their defeat was so overwhelming that the Philistines came no more against Israel in the days of Samuel's judgeship.

Paul the apostle, once the bitter persecutor of the Christians was met by the Lord on the Damascus road. Arising from the earth and, being blinded by the vision, he was led into the city where for three days he prayed and fasted. Then God spoke to Ananias, who came and laid hands upon him so that he received his sight and was filled with the Holy Ghost. And from that experience Paul went forward to become the greatest apostle of them all.

For long centuries the Gentiles had been excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and all its blessings. But a man by the name of Cornelius fasted and prayed and gave alms. Lo, an angel came to him and told him to send for Peter. At the same time the Lord gave a vision to that apostle and showed him that the Gentiles were no more unclean, but were to receive the gospel the same as Israel.

A ship went out into perilous seas with Paul on board. The captain, disregarding the divine warning given by the apostle, ran into a tempest that continued for fourteen days and nights, and would no doubt have taken the lives of all on board. But during that time Paul and the crew fasted—although hope was given up by those on board. On the fourteenth day the answer came. All the 276 souls on board were saved. Fasting and prayer had triumphed over the destructiveness of the elements!

And so the list lengthens. When all else failed, fasting and prayer turned the tide. It is true that prayer changes things. But of all prayers the fasting prayer has the greatest effect of all—yes it is the master key to making the impossible, possible.

What
fasting
can
do

CHAPTER II

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT FASTING

TH**ERE** are a number of important facts about fasting that everyone should know. For one thing the Bible speaks of three kinds of fasting. The first, fasting without either food or water. This occurred in the ministry of Moses on Mount Sinai, when he went the second time to receive the Ten Commandments, after he had interceded for his nation. This fasting of Moses occurred with the giving of the Mosaic covenant to Israel.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Exodus 34:27-28.

THE SUPERNATURAL FAST

In the natural, man can fast only a very few days without either food or water, and certainly such should never be attempted for any length of time unless divinely directed. The case of Moses was a special one of supernatural character and was associated with a Biblical event of dispensational importance. During those days God's power came upon Moses in a unique degree, even so that his face shone with the transfiguring glory of God, Exodus 34:35. The hand of the Lord had taken Moses and placed him in a cleft of the rock where he was permitted to see the unveiled glory of God, a glory that was so intense that Moses would have perished had not God supernaturally protected him, Exodus 33:20-23.

Oxygen: colorless, odorless, gaseous element constituting about 1/5 the volume of the atmosphere and present in a combined state in nature.

Important Facts About Fasting

While it is possible that Christ fasted without water during His forty days in the wilderness, there is no Scriptural record to that effect. Fasting without water except for very short periods (such as Esther's fast) is not the fasting, as is generally taught in the Scriptures.

FASTING WITHOUT FOOD BUT DRINKING WATER—THE TOTAL FAST

Ordinary fasting includes the drinking of water. For water is not a food. Water is an important element in the body, but it contains no calories nor nutrition of any kind. However, since the body is eighty per cent water, and may lose several quarts daily by evaporation, by which it maintains a temperature equilibrium in the body, water is very essential to life and must be constantly replenished in the human system. The total fast excludes the eating of food, but does include the drinking of water.

THIRD KIND OF FAST—NO "PLEASANT BREAD"

Daniel the prophet, mentions in his book (Daniel 10:3), that during a certain fast he "ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth." He does not say no bread came in his mouth but he declares that he ate "no pleasant bread." The word "pleasant" in the Hebrew is "chamadoth." Moffat's translation is "I ate not delicacies." It does not say that Daniel ate nothing at all, but that he took nothing pleasant to the appetite, nothing to stimulate him, or that would appeal to the palate. What he may have eaten we do not know. It probably was very little, although the indication is that it was not a total fast.

Here is something that we believe has been missed by those who teach on fasting. They consider only the total fast, which many Christians have not the faith nor physical fortitude to undergo. These people often attempt fasting, but become so weak that they are unable to continue, or if they do, they are unable to pray effectively and the result is that instead of a victory, they experience a defeat.

What we have to say at this point does not apply to those

pleasant: pleas. as agreeable or enjoyable; giving pleasure

Ref: Random House Dictionary: water: Transparent & odorless, tasteless liquid. A compound of hydrogen & oxygen (H_2O). Food: Any nourishing substance that's eaten, drunk, or otherwise taken into the body to sustain life, provide energy, promote growth. Nutrient: nourishing; providing nourishment or nutrients. Hydrogen: colorless, odorless, gaseous element constituting about 1/5 the volume of the atmosphere and present in a combined state in nature.

who are able to fast, totally. God bless them, and may the Lord lead them and others in more such fasts. But we speak of that great number of people who want to fast, and may have attempted it—in some cases many times—but so far they have been able to accomplish little.

In this connection, we would also note that many people while fasting are under obligation to continue their daily work. They realize that it would be best for them to suspend their regular duties until after the fast, but modern life is so set up that it is almost impossible for them to do this.

THE NON-TOTAL FAST

Now what do we mean by the non-total fast? Simply this. The taking of juices, such as orange, tomato and pineapple, which have very few calories, permits the system to get into the true state of a fast, which is an absence of hunger, but at the same time the minerals and vitamins continue to be supplied to the body. The stomach is quiet and there is little nausea and nothing like the weakness that many people experience in a total fast. They now have sufficient strength to pray and seek God which is so important in securing the benefits of the fast. It certainly is obvious that one who fasts, drinking some juices and who has strength to pray and battle the enemy, is getting along much better than the one who tries a total fast, but who is sick and nauseous much of the time and has no strength to pray. Moreover, a fruit juice fast can be broken in a short time, whereas the total fast will require days.

This is
dear
is a
total fast!

We recommend that when one drinks juices, that he takes only a small portion at a time. Whenever he seems to be weak or nauseous at the stomach, he may take a small amount of juice, preferably by sipping. A hot drink which is not prepared with milk, may be drunk occasionally. The person will lose surplus fat just as rapidly as when on a total fast, perhaps faster if he keeps active, which in most cases he will be able to do.

No doubt the total fast is the most effective for the per-

Important Facts About Fasting

son able to do it. But what we are interested in is helping the thousands of people who so far have found it impossible to fast, or who at least do not fast, yet face battles which can only be won by prayer and fasting.

For those who enter the total fast, remember this: Such a fast must be broken slowly. The first day or two, only diluted juices should be taken. Then light fruit for a few days. After that the diet may gradually include heavier foods. **To eat a heavy meal after a long fast is to invite serious trouble.**

Another suggestion that we have found helpful in beginning the fast is this: If at the end of the first day, you feel an enervating weakness and perhaps a strong hunger, it may be advisable to take a small amount of nourishment. On the second or third day the feeling of hunger gradually diminishes and the weakness will not be so pronounced. Just as the body needs to adjust gradually when the fast is over, so there is this need of adjustment while getting into the fast. However, the requirements of different individuals varies. Each one should learn the method by which he can most easily enter into his fast with a minimum of physical and mental weakness.

(It is also important that the person who fasts, gives much time to prayer.) This is literally the time to "pray without ceasing," not necessarily in audible prayer all the time. But gradually the spirit of intercession should become as natural as breathing. So much for the directions concerning fasting.

1. Fasting done in secret
2. Anoint your head
3. Wash face
4. Don't disfigure your face; don't be of a sad countenance.
5. pray w/o ceasing in the spirit.

CHAPTER III

RIGHT AND WRONG WAYS TO FAST

JUST as there is a right way to pray, a right way to worship God, a right way to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, so there is a right way to fast. Great as the results may be that are obtained through the fasting prayer, yet it is quite possible to fast in a way that will do more harm than good. It is important that we avoid those things that might lead to such consequences.

① FASTING TO BE DONE IN SECRET AS FAR AS POSSIBLE

The right method of fasting is a matter of such importance that Christ called attention to it at the beginning of His ministry. Later He would show His disciples the power that was in fasting—that it could result in a faith that would move mountains, faith that would cast out the most powerful demons. Matthew 17:20-21. But in His first lesson on fasting, He showed how such could be used merely to exalt the pride of men. He called attention to the Pharisees, who appeared before the people to fast, that they might be honored of men. He warned against this:

"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."
Matthew 6:16-18.

* It is vain to fast to receive honor of men. It is profitless to fast to seek power merely to gratify human ambition. If

Demons can only be cast out, but by much prayer & fasting.

Right and Wrong Ways to Fast

a man desires power with God, the motive must not be to seek human honor or position, but the desire must spring from a compassion for a suffering humanity that needs deliverance from its sins, from sickness, from evil habits, and oppression of Satan. To exalt fasting as a means of satisfying personal ambition is indeed vain. Promotion cometh neither from the east nor the west nor the south, it cometh from the Lord. God has a place for each member of His body. One must seek to fulfill the purpose that God has intended for him. Only then will he find permanent peace of mind and soul.

It is best to advertise as little as possible one's personal fasting or the length of time one has fasted. Yet one must not be under bondage about it. The proper position is that you are indifferent as to whether others know about your fasting or not. One's own kin of course will be sure to know when one is fasting. Then again there may be times when many will fast together.

Of those who boasted of their fasting was the Pharisee mentioned in Luke 18. This proud formalist looked with scorn on the penitent publican, who was confessing his sins, while to himself he was boasting of his own deeds, which included fasting twice a week.

"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 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 his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 18:12-14.

② SOME FAST FOR STRIFE

In Isaiah 58, we read how that the religionists of Isaiah's day, fasted for strife. There was no thought of humbling themselves before God, but that somehow through fasting, they should secure certain mystical benefits which would give them a competitive advantage over their brethren.

abase: To lower yourself (reduce) as in rank, office, reputation, humble, degrade.

Some fast in order to secure personal power. Others fast for esthetic reasons. Still other may fast for health purposes. And apparently there are certain physical benefits apart from the spiritual, that may be gained this way. Mohammedans fast for religious reasons, even though they do not believe in the divinity of Christ. Hindus fast in the practice of their mystical arts. None of these cases can be considered as Bible fasting, nor can divine blessing be expected to come upon the devotees of false religions. But least of all will God bless the fast that has its origin in strife.

"Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" Isaiah 58:4-5.

We see from this passage that the divine purpose of the institution of fasting is the strengthening of the faith of those who seek to bring deliverance to the sick and the sinful and those with heavy burdens. Fasting is for the purpose of drawing men from the natural into the spiritual. It is to stimulate the spiritual faculties of those who seek after God. To strengthen and implement prayer. To give the necessary faith to cast out demons.

The motive for the fast should be established before it is begun. And that motive in all cases should be to the end that self may decrease and Christ might increase.

FASTING MUST NOT BE FOR SELFISH REASONS

Fasting must be as unto the Lord, and for the glory of God. It must not be to attain selfish purposes. The Lord complained of this in the day of Zechariah the Prophet. He declared that the children of Judah fasted and mourned, but not unto Him. When in Babylon those seventy years, they fasted and hung their harps on the willows. But it was not because the nation was sorrowful for its sins, but

Always ask
your fasting.

Right and Wrong Ways to Fast

rather because they felt sorry for themselves.

"Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" Zechariah 7:5.

Again in Jeremiah 14, a dearth came upon the land of Judah, and the nation languished because of the drought. The people were greatly distressed because that no rain had fallen. They had days of fasting and prayer for the drought to end, but they were little concerned about their own evil deeds from which they had not repented. From the king on down, the people seemed to think of God as a convenience. Who would march to their need whenever they deigned to condescend to ask for help. God showed Jeremiah that there was no use to pray for these people. Nor would He hear when they called upon Him. There is a time when it may be too late to fast and pray:

"Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence." Jeremiah 14:11-12.

Even as great a man as David, committed an evil that fasting and prayer could not fully repair. He had deliberately committed adultery with Bathsheba and then became accessory in the death of her husband Uriah. When a child was born as the result of this union it became sick unto death. David, overcome with remorse, fasted and prayed for seven days. Notwithstanding, the child died.

Fasting is the master key by which the impossible becomes possible. But humility and repentance and sincerity of heart, is the key to fasting that is recognized by God.

Remorse: p.ty compulsion: deep painful regret for
wrong doing

CHAPTER IV

PRAYER AND FASTING THAT SAVED OVER TWO MILLION LIVES

Fast
enough

AND he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant the ten commandments." Exodus 34:28.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he was met with the greatest crisis of his life. During his absence, things had developed in the camp of Israel of catastrophic nature. In order to understand the magnitude of the crisis that confronted Moses, let us rehearse briefly the events of the previous few months.

God had met Moses at the Burning Bush and had commissioned him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. Forty years before, he had felt God's call to deliver his brethren. In those days human ambition burned within him and he had attempted in his own power to accomplish this end. However, he signally failed and was forced to flee to the desert where for forty years he tended sheep for his father-in-law. During this long period his ambitions had faded and were almost forgotten. Now he had only a desire to be left in peace to live out the balance of his days.

But God would not have it so. Though Moses realized it not he was at last ready to fulfill the calling of God, and enter into the ministry the Lord had ordained for him.

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Numbers 12:3.

It is only when men have reached a place of deep humility that they are in a position to accomplish a great work for

Prayer and Fasting That Saved Over Two Million Lives

God. At the Burning Bush, God commissioned Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage into the Promised Land. This commission was accompanied by an awesome series of signs and wonders and judgments.

After these judgments, Moses forced a release from Pharaoh to enable him to take his people out of Egypt. After crossing the Red Sea by virtue of a supernatural intervention, Moses held out his rod and the sea returned to its place, thus swallowing up Pharaoh and his chariots who dared to pursue after them.

Once on the other side of the sea the Lord began to deal with Israel as His redeemed people, giving them a special covenant, and promising that if they kept it, they would become to Him, a "peculiar treasure," a kingdom of priests:

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Exodus 19:5-6.

Moses presented this covenant to Israel and the people agreed to its terms:

"And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." Exodus 19:8.

Then Moses returned to the Mount to receive in detail the provisions of the covenant. This required several weeks of time. Unfortunately, just before Moses had finished communing with God, a terrible development took place in Israel. Some of the impetuous spirits of this mixed multitude, seeing that Moses had delayed in coming down off the Mount, considered the time advantageous to subvert Israel to their own evil designs. They forced Aaron to consent to the making of a golden calf, and then said to the people, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Exodus 32:4.

Things happened rapidly. God revealed to Moses what had taken place in the camp. After all the signs and miracles that had taken place before the very eyes of the people this act had become an inexcusable rebellion, an effrontery to God. The people had rejected Jehovah and had turned to gods of their own hands. The only recourse was judgment.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." Exodus 32:9-10.

Moses coming down from the Mount soon learned the heart-chilling details. Not only had the golden calf been made, but the people had been drawn into an orgy of licentious worship, even to the dancing in the nude. Moses in his anger broke the tables of the commandments and sent orders for the execution of the leaders of the rebellion.

THE PRAYER AND FASTING OF MOSES

Thus did Moses come face to face with the greatest crisis of his life. He returned to the Mount resolved in his soul that he would neither eat nor drink until God undertook for the situation, for he knew that evil was determined unless he could prevail with God. And so for nearly six weeks, Moses fasted on the Mount of God:

"And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Exodus 34:28.

At this time, God gave Moses an opportunity to become the progenitor of a great nation. He said, "Let me alone—that I may consume them and I will make of thee a great nation." Exodus 32:10. To others than Moses it would have been a temptation to have accepted this offer, and no doubt it would have been accepted by men of lesser stature. But not Moses. He was not thinking of personal ambitions but rather of the millions of people about to die under the judgment of God. Moses interceded. In agony of soul he

Prayer and Fasting That Saved Over Two Million Lives

plead his case before God. He called the Lord's attention to the fact that if Israel perished in the wilderness the heathen would say that God brought them out into the wilderness that He might consume them. "Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people," interceded the prophet. Exodus 32:12. He mentioned God's promises. His covenant with Abraham. (Verse 13). And thus did Moses prevail! For "the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people." Moses was putting the master key to work and he was getting results.

DIVINE FORGIVENESS FOR ISRAEL

Moses had gained his first point in his intercession. The people of Israel were spared extinction as a nation. But the prophet was not satisfied. He wanted forgiveness for the people. On the next day after conferring with the children of Israel and calling upon them to repent of their sin, he again fell on his face before God, at which time the very soul of Moses went out to God, that He might not only spare but forgive the nation. Otherwise, Moses asked God that he too be blotted out of His book. Jehovah, moved by such selflessness, reassured him; He would never blot out the name of His faithful ones, but only those who sinned against him. And even these might be saved by intercession, which as we shall see happened in this case.

"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Exodus 32:32-33.

Now Moses entered into his third intercession. It was not enough to send an angel before him into the Promised Land. Moses could not go with this people unless the very presence of God went also.

"And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Exodus 33:14-15.

Sinners were
saved through
intercession
↓

Again Moses had prevailed with God! The Lord agreed to go with Moses and the people on their journey to the Promised Land.

MOSES ASKS GOD TO SHOW HIM HIS GLORY

In the course of the intercession, Moses had drawn very near to God. While he was experiencing this wonderful visitation of Divine presence, Moses was emboldened to ask God for the privilege of witnessing His glory. And again his prayer was answered! God hid him in a cleft of the rock, and let him behold a vision of His glory!

"And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." Exodus 33:21-22.

The bridge that had broken down had been rebuilt. The breach that could have spelled eternal doom for millions had been restored. The broken communion had been renewed. And so for forty days and nights Moses was on his face before God. There God gave him new tables of stone. And there He renewed the promise to drive out the Canaanites and give Israel the land flowing with milk and honey.

"And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." Exodus 34:10.

AFTERMATH OF THE 40 DAYS OF FASTING

At the end of forty days, Moses came down from the Mount. The glory of God was upon him. His face shone with such a glow that the Children of Israel could not look upon him for the glory. In fact he was compelled to wear a veil over his face.

"And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put

Prayer and Fasting That Saved Over Two Million Lives

the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him." Exodus 34:35.

And so the restoration of Israel was completed and national redemption ushered in, because God had a man who was completely dedicated to Him. Those 40 days and nights on Mount Horeb in prayer and fasting, had resulted in the breaking of the powers of darkness and the moving of the Divine Compassion. And in those days, Moses received strength and vision for the work of the forty years in the wilderness that lay ahead of him. He had found the key that had made the impossible, possible, and he had not hesitated to use it.

CHAPTER V

FASTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

WE HAVE seen the results of Moses' fasting on Mount Sinai, and how that by his intercessions and fasting for forty days, he saved the nation Israel from perishing in the wilderness. We also saw that the ministry of intercession brought Moses into a high and honored position before the Lord, even so that God unveiled His glory before him, a privilege that had never before been accorded any mortal man.

But Moses was not the only one who achieved mighty results through fasting. Let us notice some other great victories recorded in the Old Testament as the result of the fasting prayer.

FASTING IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

The days of the Judges was a time of confusion in Israel, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25. During this period, evil flourished almost unchecked, until at last an act took place of such a revolting nature that even the dulled sensibilities of the nation were outraged and a demand was made that the transgressors be dealt with. But the tribe of Benjamin took the part of those who had committed the heinous crime, and prepared to defy Israel's demand. The children of Israel sought the Lord in the matter, asking if they should use force to secure justice and the Lord indicated that this should be done. Notwithstanding, though they were moving in the revealed will of God, the Benjaminites on two successive days of battle succeeded in slaughtering some forty thousand of the people! Judges 20:18-25.

With this grave turn of events, the Children of Israel got

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desperate before God, and besought Him in prayer and fasting.

"Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept and sat there before the Lord, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord." Judges 20:26.

Greatly humbled by these terrible reverses and by the awful toll of lives that had taken place, they now inquired of the Lord once more, as to the course of action. This time the Lord not only gave them directions, but gave them promise of victory which He had not done before. "And the Lord said, Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand." Judges 20:28.

On the morrow the Benjaminites, cocksure because of their two previous victories, came again against the children of Israel, confident of success, "but they knew not that evil was near. And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel. . . ."

What are the lessons of this incident? The Children of Israel had done right in seeking to avenge this awful deed of the men of Benjamin. They were obeying the Law of Moses in demanding that the offenders be punished. But they took no account that lawlessness and evil had infiltrated Israel to the point that the powers of darkness had gotten control. Their attempt to settle the matter through pure physical force resulted in failure and calamity to themselves. Nevertheless, when they sought the Lord in prayer and fasting, the ascendancy of the powers of darkness was broken. God gave them victory, and the nation was purged of its awful sin. Thus we see how fasting was the deciding factor in a grave situation. Israel had prayed twice but only after they fasted did deliverance come.

THE VICTORY OF JEHOSHAPHAT

Jehoshaphat was a godly king. He loved the Lord with all his heart, though indeed he had one weakness, and that was a tendency to make alliances with the ungodly. This more than once got him into serious trouble. But it was at

Confusion brought about in
Enemy Ranks, due Fasting & Prayer

the time when a strong alliance of nations came against him, that he was met with the greatest crisis of his life. Indeed, had not Divine intervention come, it could have resulted in his nation's destruction.

The bad news reached Jehoshaphat out of the blue sky. Messengers came and told him that a powerful enemy was coming against him. It was no minor border skirmish, but a coalition of nations led by Israel's long time enemies, Moab and Ammon, who were advancing rapidly toward Jerusalem with a great multitude of people. Jehoshaphat realized that the odds were stacked against him. In the natural there seemed to be no way to avoid disaster. Although the situation seemed hopeless, the king turned to God in prayer and fasting:

"And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." II Chronicles 20:3-4.

It will be noticed that Jehoshaphat not only fasted himself but he called for a fast throughout the land. People thronged into Jerusalem to join with the king in national prayer and fasting. Their petition which was led by the king, is found in II Chronicles 20:6-13. In this prayer Jehoshaphat called God's attention to the covenant that He had given to Abraham and to Moses. He admitted his own powerlessness to stand before the enemy, and that his only hope was in God.

Was this prayer that ascended to God from a people that had given themselves to fasting answered? Yes indeed! A prophet was sent to them who said:

"And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salva-

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tion of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you." II Chronicles

20:15-17.

This prophet gave certain instructions. The people were to believe. They were to stand still. They were to praise the Lord in the beauty of holiness. And so it was when they began to sing praises unto the Lord, confusion came into the ranks of the enemy, and their enemies began to destroy one another, until there was left not a man. Judah returned to Jerusalem with joy, and the fear of God came upon the kingdoms round about. Verses 27-29. Thus did prayer and fasting save the day.

ELIJAH AT HOREB

Elijah the prophet, was one of the very greatest of all characters of the Bible. The thrilling story of how he appeared before Ahab at the time of Israel's great apostasy is familiar. His challenge of the Baal prophets and the calling of fire down from heaven upon the sacrifice turned the tide of the apostasy and brought the people to an open confession that the Lord was God. The subsequent prayer for the breaking of the drought is one of the outstanding examples in the Scripture of remarkable answers to prayer.

Notwithstanding all this, Elijah's courage failed at a critical moment. Instead of facing the threats of Jezebel, the patroness of Baal worship, he elected to run for his life. Deep in the wilderness, far from pursuit, he laid down under a juniper tree and asked the Lord to let him die. God did not answer this prayer however, for He had other plans for the prophet. Elijah was not to die! Even then plans were being made in heaven, to send horses of fire, with a chariot of fire, to catch up Elijah into heaven so he would not see death!

But before this could happen, Elijah was to undergo a special purifying experience. For forty days, even as Moses before him, he went without food, until he reached Mount Horeb, there to hear the still small voice of God.

A remarkable thing happened just before this protracted fast began. God prepares men for fasts of this nature. There is a preparation for a fast, even as there is a preparation of the heart for seeking God. **Some rush into a fast on an impulse, rather than in the moving of the Spirit. When Jesus fasted He "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness," Luke 4:1.** So with Elijah, before he began this forty day fast, he was fed with angels' food, **1 Kings 19:6, 7.** And it was in the strength of that food that he was sustained during the forty day fast as he journeyed through the wilderness, on his way to the Mount of God.

"And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." **1 Kings 19:8.**

As those forty days and nights drew to a close, he came to Mount Horeb. There he saw the display of the elements. He saw the rocks rent, the earth shake and fire appear. But after that came the "still small voice" of God, and a new anointing. And with that anointing, there was born a new Elijah. Great as Elijah had been before, the new Elijah was a greater one. The new Elijah never ran from anyone. Never again did he fear Jezebel and her wrath. One of his first acts was to return to Israel to anoint his successor Elisha, **1 Kings 19:16, 19.** Not long after that Elijah went to the very shadow of the palace of Ahab and Jezebel to pronounce judgment on them, for the murder of Naboth. **1 Kings 21.**

Fasting revolutionized the life of Elijah. Fasting gave him faith to meet Ahab, to denounce the sins of the notorious Jezebel. It gave him faith to stand against all enemies. When the messengers of the king came to take him, he said, "If I be a man of God let fire come down out of heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." **II Kings 1:12.** Fasting gave him faith to promise Elisha that if he saw him at the time of his translation he would receive a double portion of his spirit.

Yea, it gave him faith that when the heavenly chariot

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came low, to enter and be caught away into heaven without seeing death. Fasting broke the spell of the one fear of his life—fear of Jezebel. Fasting made him conqueror, so that his influence was felt not only in that generation but in all generations even unto the present day.

NINEVEH SAVED BY A FAST

The story of Jonah is familiar to all Bible readers. The main moral of the story as is ordinarily preached is that those who attempt to flee from God find that sooner or later God catches up with them, a truth that can hardly be over emphasized. But there is another truth in this story that is not so often noted—why Nineveh was spared the judgment which the prophet was told to proclaim against the city. Let us consider this matter. Jonah as we have noted was the runaway prophet. He foolishly boarded a ship bound for Tarshish to flee from the presence of the Lord. After his experience in the fish's belly, he learned his lesson and obeyed the voice of the Lord to go to Nineveh to warn it of impending judgment.

"And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Jonah 3:4.

Certainly, things looked bad for Nineveh. The prophet of God was boldly crying out in the streets of that great city, that within forty days Nineveh would be overthrown. Already no doubt the instruments of Divine retribution had been fashioned and judgment hung suspended as it were by a thread over the capital of the Assyrian Empire—then the world's greatest city. Warnings of Divine judgment were no idle threat. Other great cities as Babylon and Tyre and Sidon which once were among the greatest cities of the world had fallen according to the word of prophecy. Was not Nineveh also doomed? However, God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and is eager to delay or forego the judgment, if He can do it in a way that is compatible with Divine justice. Repentance will turn away the rod of wrath, but it must be true repentance.

The king of Nineveh knew this. He believed the prophet's warning that catastrophe was nigh at hand. He sent out a proclamation throughout the land that the people repent in sackcloth. And that all should fast and cry mightily unto God that the city might be spared.

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Jonah 3:5, 8, 9.

Many people call on God when they are in trouble. But when they are willing to fast until they get the answer, it shows that they are in earnest. As a result of Nineveh's fasting and crying unto God, the Lord repented of the evil and spared the city.

"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them: and he did it not." Jonah 3:10.

ESTHER THROUGH FASTING SAVES HER NATION

The Book of Esther is unique in that the name of God is not mentioned once, but nowhere in the Bible is the providence of God more in evidence. This book unfolds the story of how Haman the Agagite planned to destroy the Jewish race. Through his scheming he manages to ingratiate himself with the king so as to get him to sign a document authorizing the execution of all Jews living in his kingdom. The king tricked by this maneuvering became an unwilling tool in the conspiracy. Too late, he learned of the trap which he had been led into.

Mordecai, the uncle of Esther, brings the bad tidings before the queen, asking her to intercede with the king for their people. Esther reminds her uncle that if she enters the presence of the king uninvited, she jeopardizes her life

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except he hold out the golden sceptre. But Mordecai warns her that she need not think that she will escape if she holds her peace, but that deliverance will then come from another source.

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place: but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"
Esther 4:14.

Then Esther made her decision. She called for Mordecai to gather together the Jews in Shushan to enter into a fast with her and her maidens, after which she would go in to the king.

"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."
Esther 4:16.

The outcome of this fast was that Haman was circumvented in his wicked plans to destroy the Jews. The gallows that were made for Mordecai were used for Haman himself. Moreover, the king issued a counter decree whereby the Jews could defend themselves, which it turned out they were fully able to do. So it was that their enemies perished rather than the Jews.

What is the lesson? In that critical hour Esther recognized that her most powerful weapon was to enter into a fast. And therefore she called the people to fast with her, which they did for three days and nights. Although it is not stated, we may be sure that they, like Jehoshaphat of old, cried mightily unto the Lord. Of this the historian Josephus writes:

"Accordingly Esther made supplication to God after the manner of her country, by casting herself down upon the earth, and putting on her mourning gar-

ments, and bidding farewell to meat and drink and all delicacies, and she entreated God to have mercy upon her, and make her words appear persuasive to the king." Anti. XI, Chapter 6:8.

EZRA'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM

Ezra was among those that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, a few years after Cyrus' proclamation, which granted permission for the Jews to return. It is sometimes wondered why that such a small number of the population returned at that time, but one reason was that the intervening desert was populated by thieves who were willing to commit murder for a small sum. Ordinarily, few dared such a journey unless there was a large detachment of soldiers along to give protection. So it was that when Ezra and his companions chose to make the trip, they realized that their lives were indeed in danger. Ezra was a conscientious priest. He had assured the king that his God was the God of the whole earth. Therefore, that being true he felt that he would weaken his testimony to the king by requiring a band of soldiers to go with them. Still he knew the trip was hazardous and he thought of the wives and little ones whose lives would be in peril. What should he do? Ezra did the only thing he knew to do. He called for prayer and fasting:

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us." Ezra 8:21-23.

Having completed their fast, Ezra and his companions started out. They carried along much gold and silver which

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would have been considered a rich prize indeed by the roving bands of thieves that infested the desert country. But the hand of God was with them and protected them from enemies that lay in wait along the way. And so at length they reached Jerusalem, where they delivered the gold and silver and treasure, in safety into the temple.

A FAST THAT WAS NOT OBSERVED

In the days when Babylon was carrying the children of Israel into captivity, Jeremiah who had warned the people to turn from their sins, was shut up in prison as a reward for his unsolicited advice. Notwithstanding, he told his companion Baruch, to take the words of his prophecy and read them before the nobles and the king. Baruch then arranged that a fast be proclaimed throughout all Jerusalem (Jeremiah 36:9), in obedience to the Lord's command to warn Judah of approaching judgment.

"It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." Jeremiah 36:3.

But alas! We have no record that this fast was observed. The nobles trembled at the words of the prophecy and asked Baruch to take the message to the king. But the king after listening to a part of the message, defiantly took the roll, cut it with a penknife and cast it into the fire. Jeremiah 36:22-23. Nobody seemed to be afraid or troubled over what was done. They little realized it was Judah's last chance to escape Divine retribution. Soon the armies of Babylon came into the country. Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, and the people were taken into captivity. So the words of Jeremiah were fulfilled to the letter. As for Jehoiakim the king, his dynasty came to an end and he met a violent death in the eleventh year of his reign. Jeremiah 22:18-19.

ISRAEL SAVED FROM THE PHILISTINES THROUGH FASTING

There are other passages in the Old Testament that teach the value of fasting. One of these is found in I Samuel 7.

The children of Israel had gone through some sad experiences, even including their loss of the ark of God to the Philistines. It was finally restored, but now again the Philistines were gathering against them. Samuel called on the people to forsake their gods and to turn from their sins. He called for a national day of fasting and prayer. The people in their distress obeyed him and in turn besought Samuel to "Cease not to cry to the Lord for us that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." I Samuel 7:8. So the Lord discomfited the Philistines in the battle which followed, thundering a great thunder upon them, causing them to flee in great disorder. Verse 10. As a result, the Philistines came no more against Israel in the days of Samuel's judgeship.

JOEL'S WARNING TO CALL A FAST AS THE DAY OF THE LORD APPROACHES

The prophet Joel takes us forward by the Spirit of prophecy to the Great Day of the Lord. He sees it as a day of destruction. "Blow a trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain," he cries, as he perceived judgment was approaching. Looking to the north he saw a great armed confederacy invading the land of Israel. It is a dark hour, "even the hour of Jacob's trouble." What can be done?

Joel has the remedy. Sanctify a fast! Call a solemn assembly! Gather the people together and cry unto the Lord! World War III is at hand!

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord, Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." Joel 1:14-15.

Alas for the day. It is even the day of the Lord. It is the hour of reckoning. What is to be done? Again, Joel repeats: Call a fast!

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"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet." Joel 2:12-16.

That is the message of the prophet Joel. If the people will do this, if they will humble themselves, if they will truly repent, God will drive away the northern invader. More than that He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. And whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Joel 2:28-32.

CHAPTER VI

TRIUMPH OVER THE PRINCE OF PERSIA

DANIEL is one of the most remarkable characters of the whole Bible. He lived over a span of nearly a century, and much of that time he was employed in high office in the government. On several occasions his life and those of his friends were placed in jeopardy because of their open faith in the God, Jehovah. Once Daniel was thrown into a den of lions, and on another occasion, his three friends were tossed alive into a fiery furnace. But on each occasion, God gave miraculous deliverance. Daniel survived several regimes and changes in government. The successive rulers in each case came to recognize the merits of the prophet and honored him with great responsibilities in the kingdom.

Now Daniel was in his last years. He was not so active as he once was in affairs of state. Nevertheless, there was one ministry that he was as active in, as ever—the ministry of intercession. In Ezekiel 14:14, Daniel is mentioned along with Job and Noah as men who had unusual favor with God. Daniel knew the mighty power of prayer. Three times a day he knelt and lifted up his voice in praise to God in worship. This daily habit of the prophet is mentioned in connection with the persecution of Daniel at the time when he was thrown into the lion's den.

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." Daniel 6:10.

The secret of Daniel's success, was that he prayed his

way through life. The result was that God was with him, and though the powers of darkness time and again rose up against him, the Lord God on all occasions gave him supernatural deliverance.

DANIEL PRAYS AND THE CAPTIVITY COMES TO AN END

One of the great victories of Daniel in his prayer warfare is recorded in the 9th chapter of Daniel. On this occasion, he was reading the writings of Jeremiah which declared that the captivity was to last 70 years. Consulting the calendar, the prophet saw that the time was up, even with the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire that had just taken place. At that time the Spirit of God came upon Daniel in deep intercession with fasting, to pray that God would fulfill His promise for the restoration of the Jews to their land.

"And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Daniel 9:3.

There, prostrate before God, the prophet confessed the sins of his people. And even while he was praying, the angel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven to tell him what would happen to his people. The angel not only reassured Daniel that the commandment would go forth "to restore and to build Jerusalem" so that his people would flourish once again in their homeland, but he also gave Daniel the wonderful prophecy of the coming of the Messiah and of His sacrifice on Calvary.

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off. . . ." Daniel 9:25.

THE 21-DAY FAST

What a wonderful victory this was! Within a matter of

days or weeks, the "commandment" actually did go forth being issued by Cyrus, authorizing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. See Ezra 1:1-3.

This revelation however made Daniel's burden for his people become even greater. The Messiah was to come, but lo, the prophecy declared that He was to "be cut off!" What would be the fate of his people, after that tragic event took place? The matter weighed so heavily upon Daniel that he determined to go upon his knees in prayer and fasting until the answer came. And the story of this great 21-day intercession is told in Daniel 10-12.

"In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 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." Daniel 10:2-3.

This is the fast of which Daniel said, he "ate no pleasant bread." Was this a total fast or did Daniel partake of some food? Of this we cannot be absolutely certain, although the inference is, from the words he ate no "pleasant bread," that he received slight nourishment.

At any rate he set himself before God in prayer, determined to get an answer. In previous times the answer had always come and that before long. Daniel on this occasion, probably did not realize on the first day of his intercession, that three whole weeks would go by before he would have his answer. But that is what happened! For twenty-one days he wrestled in prayer, with seemingly no indication that any answer was on the way.

Apparently others were with him during this time, sympathetic with his solicitude for his people, but who understood little of spiritual warfare. For on the 21st day when the answer came, the supernatural manifestation which accompanied the appearing of the angel so alarmed them that they fled to hide themselves. Daniel 10:7.

The effects of the 21-day fast were felt by the aged prophet. He said that "there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I have re-

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tained no strength." However the touch of the angel apparently strengthened him. Verses 10 and 18.

THE ANGEL EXPLAINS A MYSTERY

With the coming of the angel, there was an explanation of the mystery of the delayed answer. But note first of all, that the angel addressed Daniel by saying, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved." What a salutation! Men today scheme and strive for position in the Kingdom of God. But promotion and honor from God are not obtained that way. It is given to the intercessors and the prayer warriors who do not war with flesh and blood but who, without flinching, war against the spiritual forces of darkness.

The angel explained to the prophet that from the first day that he set himself to get an answer from God, his words had been heard and that the angel had been sent to him:

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." Daniel 10:12.

Now comes information of the most revealing character concerning the operation of forces of darkness in the spiritual realm. In an article written some time ago, we spoke of this revelation to Daniel concerning the working of the powers of darkness—a power which dominates the kingdoms of this world and resists the saints, and even the very angels of God. We quote from this article here:

"This is perhaps one of the most remarkable revelations of the Old Testament. What is said, and what is evident from these verses, gives us a unique glimpse into what takes place above us in the unseen world. The 'prince of Persia' is not to be regarded as the human ruler of Persia, who certainly had no power to resist an angel, but rather a spirit prince under Satan. Human princes are not the real rulers, but the unseen powers of darkness that inhabit the heavens determine events in the Gentile world (always of course

within the limits of Divine permission).

"The fact is that there is a spiritual kingdom composed of principalities and powers. Each Gentile nation has its unseen spirit ruler. Each earthly kingdom is under the sway of organized forces of wickedness which seek to bend it completely to their will. That this present evil world is almost completely under the dominion of Satan, is clearly revealed in Luke 4:5-6:

"And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it."

"Under Satan there are subordinate princes, who in turn have under them armies of demons. All work toward one purpose, that is to bring all the intelligences of this planet under their evil control. Those who suppose that man is evolving from a lower species and in time a super-race will come forth which will create its own millennium, are under the grossest kind of delusion. Human attempts at race regeneration are hopelessly impotent. Only the preaching of the Gospel can have any effect in changing man's fallen nature.

"Spiritual powers in high places are dislodged only by spiritual warfare. The strength of the 'prince of Persia' is realized in the fact that for three weeks he was able to successfully hinder the angel from getting through to Daniel. Only when God sent re-inforcements by the Archangel Michael, were the powers of darkness at last forced to give way.

"This 'prince of Persia' highly resented his authority being disturbed, and fiercely resisted intrusion into his domain. Nevertheless, Daniel continued praying, and his prayer aided in releasing the spiritual power that in the end defeated the powers of darkness.

"What would have happened if Daniel had given up?

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The answer can hardly be missed. Daniel's faithfulness in prayer had a determining effect on the outcome of the struggle in the heavenlies. Because he persisted in prayer, the 'prince of Persia' was defeated."

Here is a great lesson for us, on how to get answers to prayers that seemingly are not being answered. Note this particularly, that there was no mysterious providence of the will of God that prevented the answer. God was not turning a deaf ear to the prophet because Daniel would be better off with his prayer unanswered. Such an explanation is often given by lethargic persons, and even some ministers who do not want to pay the price of "praying through." The reason some prayers are not answered is simply because there is an active evil power in the world that resists the saints getting their petitions through to God.

The devil and his demons cannot be every place at once, nor successfully prevent the answer to all prayers. Therefore they determine which of God's saints at the moment are doing the most harm to the kingdom of darkness and then concentrate their efforts against them. They are sometimes able to prevail, only because God's people do not understand this fact of the hindering power of Satan. Even as Paul once said that he had planned to minister to the Church at Thessalonica, "but Satan hindered us." 1 Thessalonians 2:18.

Notwithstanding, the devil's power is limited. The shield of faith will quench all the fiery darts of Satan. Persistent battling in prayer will in every case result in the ultimate rout of the enemy. God will, if necessary, dispatch an archangel to the assistance of the man or woman who is faithful in prayer. And if the enemy continues his assaults and more reinforcements are necessary, God is not without additional resources. He will send all the help that is needed. Even as Christ said to His disciples as He faced the Cross:

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53.

Unlike us, Christ could not call for reinforcements at the Cross. He had to face that battle alone.

And now we must not forget the place that fasting plays in all this. For three whole weeks, "no pleasant bread" came into Daniel's mouth. For three weeks he continued in travail of soul. For three weeks he wrestled against the forces of darkness, not knowing that an angel had been dispatched to bring him the answer. Yet he prayed on in faith, stubbornly refusing to accept failure, believing that surely the answer would come. And so it did.

The answer was not only good, it was wonderful. Not only did the Lord reveal the things Daniel wanted to know about the destiny of his people in the years to come, but He also showed the prophet what would take place at the end-time. The angel brought him right down to the time of the end—the days of the great Tribulation. He showed him the signs that would then take place. "Even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 12:4. He showed him of the rise of the antichrist who should enter and destroy many countries. Daniel was shown how this self-willed king should magnify himself against the God of gods, yet finally he would "come to his end, and none shall help him." Daniel 11:45.

Having revealed all these things, the angel showed that when the time of trouble would reach its worst, God Himself would take a hand. The Lord would come, would raise the dead, reward the righteous and judge the wicked.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn

Triumph Over the Prince of Persia

many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.
But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt
rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”
Daniel 12:1-3 and 13.

Shall we not like Daniel be intercessors? Shall we not also
covet a position in God's affections, as Daniel, who was
spoken of as a man “greatly beloved?” Shall we not as he
hold on by prayer and fasting until the answer comes? If
so, then like the prophet we too “shall rest and stand in our
lot at the end of the days.”

CHAPTER VII

FASTING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Anna the Prophetess

ONE of the first characters introduced in the New Testament is that of Anna the prophetess. For nearly a century this woman had lived in the temple fasting and praying and waiting upon God.

"And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." Luke 2:37.

Perhaps there were those who wondered what she had accomplished in all those years. But it is evident that her prayers played a definite part in preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. And so it was her inexpressible joy that when the Christ-child was brought into the temple, by Joseph and Mary, the Spirit revealed His presence to her, so she could go in and give thanks before the people that this was He who would bring redemption to Israel, the very Redeemer she had been looking for so long.

CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

Christ the Perfect Man, as well as being the Son of God, began His ministry with a forty-day fast. Perhaps we will never know all that was accomplished by this fast, but we may be sure that this event played a most important part in the preparation of the Lord for His redemption ministry.

Before going into the wilderness, He was given water baptism by John the Baptist at the River Jordan, at which time he also received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He was then led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Fasting in the New Testament

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." Luke 4:1.

Observe that Christ received the Baptism of the Spirit before He began the fast. Two things are revealed here: One is, that though any one may fast and gain thereby (as the heathen seamen fasted with Paul on board the ill-fated ship that was destroyed in the storm), yet the Baptism of the Spirit is needed in order to fast to the greatest advantage. The second thing is that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will lead His people to fast, not necessarily for forty days (except in rare instances), but to fast. There will be times in every Christian's life when the Spirit will lead him to fast.

What did Christ do during those forty days in the wilderness? He was there meeting the full impact of Satan's power and temptations.

"And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." Mark 1:13.

As we shall see from the experience of Christ, one of the great purposes of fasting is to give men power over the temptations of the flesh.

Think of the multitudes of Christians who are today in bondage to the flesh. They are oppressed with habits and complexes that take away their victory and leave them defeated and powerless. Many of these people are sincere and earnest but they are under such power of the flesh that they see no way in which they can break the chains which bind them. Some people have tried everything, in seeking a solution to their difficulties. Many times they have turned over a new leaf or made new resolutions. But at the end there is always the inevitable failure.

What is the answer? Has God allowed a situation to develop for which there is no redemption from the bondage of the flesh—at least for many of God's children? Yes, there

is a solution. "But this kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting."

Satan came to Jesus and said, "If thou be the Son of God make these stones bread." After fasting for 40 days, Christ became hungry. But He was not going to make bread for the devil. Later Jesus would multiply the loaves and fishes until there would be enough bread to feed the multitude.

Again Satan came to Christ and tempted Him in His spirit. He took Him to the summit of a high mountain and "shewed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time," saying to Him, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." Luke 4:6.

Christ indignantly rejected Satan's offer. He did not want to reign over the devil's kingdom. The hour would come when He would indeed reign King of kings and Lord of lords, but that would be when the kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet again Satan took Christ to the pinnacle of the temple and told him to prove His divinity by casting Himself to the ground. In this temptation of the soul the devil quoted Scripture which promised that the angels of God would bear God's people up lest they dash their "foot against a stone." But Jesus had no intention of putting God's power on display for the mere purpose of creating a sensation, and replied, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Later Christ would overrule the power of gravity, by walking on the water to rescue His disciples who were in peril.

And so it was, that through those days of fasting in the wilderness, Christ overcame every temptation, whether it affected His body, His spirit or His soul. And we must remember that Christ was both divine and human, and "was tempted in all points like as we are." Therefore we too may obtain mastery over temptations of body, soul or spirit, through prayer and fasting.

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING FASTING

That Christ intended His disciples to fast is evidenced by His teaching. The Lord Himself did most of His fasting before He began His active ministry. The Pharisees who were always looking for some complaint against Jesus, trying to catch Him in His words, on one occasion called attention to the fact that John's disciples often fasted, yet they had never seen Christ fast. The Lord did not enlighten them by telling them that He had indeed fasted forty days at the beginning of His ministry. If they wanted to be ignorant, they could be ignorant. He did give the reason why He did not ask the disciples to fast while He was with them. And He plainly said that after He was taken away, they would fast.

"And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink? And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." Luke 5:33-35.

Here is a plain statement that the followers of the Lord are to have times of fasting during this present age. While Christ was present, His power and presence caused the evil powers to flee. If the disciples failed, the Lord was at hand to deliver. But after He was gone, it would be necessary for them to advance into the place of dominion that He lived in.

This is brought out in the case of the epileptic boy whom the disciples could not heal. Though they tried to cast the devil out in the name of Jesus, this stubborn evil spirit held his ground and refused to move. Then Christ came on the scene and showed that there was no reason that the boy could not be healed. Speaking the word of authority, He cast out the evil spirit. Afterward the disciples came to Him and said, "Why could not we cast him out?" The

Prayer and Fasting

answer that Jesus gave, shows us the importance of prayer and fasting. Some circumstances, some problems, some demons are not exorcised without fasting and prayer.

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Matthew 17:20-21.

Thus we observe that power over certain demons may only be obtained by prayer and fasting. That the faith necessary for such a ministry is only obtained by the fasting prayer. That is the key to mastery over the impossible.

CHAPTER VIII

FASTING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

THE most important conversion in the Early Church was associated with a fast—that of the Apostle Paul. The apostle, by his own testimony had been a blasphemer and was accessory to the death of the first martyr, Stephen. In his madness he had siezed men and women, and because of their faith, had thrust them into prisons. In his last act of persecution, he had secured letters from the high priest for the purpose of uprooting the Christian church at Damascus. It was at this time, however, as he approached the gates of the city that the Lord Jesus appeared to him in a vision of dazzling brilliance. The astonished young Pharisee, upon seeing the Lord Jesus, asked what he should do. He was commanded to go into the city and there he should be told what to do.

Blinded by the vision, the apostle after being led into the city, immediately went into a fast. Day and night, for three days he continued before God, taking neither food nor water.

"And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Acts 9:9.

For seventy-two hours, Saul of Tarsus, waited on God in a total fast. At the end of that time, God spoke to Ananias, one of the Christians in Damascus, and told him to go and lay hands upon Paul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. For, said the Lord, "Behold, he prayeth." Acts 9:11. Ananias at first did not want to go, but the Lord explained to him what had happened, and that Saul had seen in a vision, Ananias coming in and putting his hands upon him.

God might have sent Ananias the first day, but He did not. Three days of prayer and fasting prepared Paul for his deliverance. Other people who have serious afflictions such as total blindness would do well as Paul, to pray and fast until they have the assurance of the faith that brings the answer. Many a person whose faith is apparently too weak to secure deliverance from some chronic affliction, might be completely healed if they would pray and fast before they received ministration.

**FASTING OPENED THE DOOR OF THE GENTILES
TO THE GOSPEL**

Cornelius was a godly man, a centurion "who feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." Acts 10:2. He had not yet received the message of salvation through Christ. Nevertheless, his soul was crying out to God for a fuller revelation of his will. One day, while he was praying and fasting at about three o'clock in the afternoon, suddenly an angel appeared before him, telling him that his prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God. Now he was to send for Peter (his address as well as the name was given) and he would tell him of the way of salvation more certainly.

Many religionists in the days of the apostles, prayed, and some prayed long prayers. But what was there about this prayer that came up as a memorial before God? No doubt, one thing was Cornelius' deep sincerity. Yet we must not forget that his prayer was accompanied by fasting, and this certainly had a vital importance. When Peter arrived at his household, Cornelius spoke saying,

"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, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God." Acts 10:30-31.

The rest of the story is familiar. While Peter preached about Jesus of Nazareth Who was anointed of God with the Holy Ghost and power, Who went about doing good, and

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healing all that were oppressed with the devil" (Acts 10:38)—the Holy Ghost came and fell on Cornelius and his whole household.

Fasting without sincerity will accomplish nothing as was the case with the Pharisees, but fasting and praying in sincerity is the power that moved heaven for Cornelius. In this case it opened the doors of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

FASTING PRECEDED THE FIRST MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

The time drew near when the call of God to reach the unevangelized heathen began to weigh heavy on the hearts of the Apostle Paul and his companion Barnabas in the Early Church. In those days they were ministering in the church at Antioch. The Apostle Paul remembered how that the Lord had spoken through Ananias at Damascus when the latter had come to pray for him to receive his sight, saying, that he, Paul was to be sent on a mission to the Gentiles. A considerable time had now elapsed and yet he had never gone, nor had the Lord made it clear how or where he was to go. Now he and Barnabas as well as some of the others thought it was time to get the answer. And so it was that these men decided to enter into a fast:

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Acts 13:2.

How many days were spent in this fast we do not know, except that they stayed before the Lord, until the answer came. God could have given them specific directions without the fasting, but the fact remains that He did not. There was a reason why a fast was in order. There was a spiritual battle being waged against the powers of darkness that needed to be won—so that when they went out on the field, the way would be open before them.

And as they ministered before the Lord, the answer came. The Lord commanded the church to set aside Paul and Barnabas for the work that He had called them to do.

It might be supposed that with these divine instructions

given by the Holy Ghost, that the apostles would have left immediately. But they did no such thing. Now that they knew what the Lord wanted them to do, they desired the blessing of God on their plans, more than ever. So it was that the whole church fasted and waited on the Lord before a move was made. Finally, hands were laid upon them, and they were sent away to begin the world's first missionary tour.

The first stop of the missionaries was in Cyprus. From the beginning the Spirit of God moved. Even the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, himself was interested. He called for the apostles to bring the word of God to him. But Elymas, the sorcerer, withstood Paul, and used his influence to turn the deputy away from the faith. Was the apostles' mission to Cyprus to fail after all? But Paul, after those days of fasting in Antioch, was ministering under a powerful anointing. Suddenly he turned to the sorcerer, and rebuking him, informed him that judgment was to come upon him for a season. Immediately, Elymas was smitten blind. The deputy, astonished by what had happened, became a believer. And thus the first stage of this historic missionary journey was a success. And to a great extent this success had come because it had been preceded by prayer and fasting. Without the supernatural power which had come because of the fast, it is possible that the apostles would have left Cyprus frustrated and defeated, instead of victorious and triumphant.

A CREW OF 276 SAVED BY FASTING

The Apostle Paul understood the power of fasting. When recounting the things by which one's ministry is approved of God he included fasting.

"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in *fasting*." II Corinthians 6:4-5.

Again in the eleventh chapter, Paul speaks of being in

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"fastings oft" (verse 27) but he also adds that along with the trials and infirmities that he experienced, he was given visions and revelations of the glory of God. II Corinthians 12:1.

A most dramatic story of deliverance through a 14-day fast, appears in Acts 27. Paul was being taken to Rome, a prisoner, to stand before Caesar.

It was necessary that the Apostle and his company should make the journey by ship. It so happened however, that their departure was late in the season, when dangerous storms were apt at any time to descend upon the unwary mariner. To make matters worse, they had only a light breeze during the early part of the journey, and many days were lost in reaching Crete. Paul was disturbed, and seeking the Lord in the matter, was warned that if they continued any farther, they would be in the utmost danger of their lives. He passed this information on to the centurion in charge, who seemed impressed by the warning, but notwithstanding was influenced more by the advice of the owner of the ship, who was anxious to get on to Rome at all hazards and dispose of a valuable cargo of grain.

Under these ill-omened circumstances they took to sea again. For the first few days it appeared that Paul was mistaken in his misgivings. The wind blew in the right direction and for a short while everything appeared promising. Then came the gale in all its force. As the writer of the Acts says, "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon." For two weeks the ship was driven by terrific winds. At any moment, during this time the officers and crew expected the ship to break in pieces. On the second day the tempest became so furious that in order to lighten the ship they poured the cargo into the sea. Day after day passed, with no abatement of the storm. Neither sun, moon, nor stars appeared, and finally all hope that they would be saved was taken away.

But in the meantime, the Apostle Paul had been in prayer and fasting. Though his advice had been disregarded, he

now was to become the sole hope of those on board. They saw that Paul had been right in the beginning and if they had only heeded his advice they would have been saved this calamity. The apostle called them to a fast. This time they were ready to take his advice. Verses 27 and 34, show that the seamen evidently at Paul's suggestion began a fast that lasted 14 days. Here we see that a short fast apparently was not sufficient. The prince of the power of the air somehow had gained such control over the elements that an ordinary prayer was ineffective. He knew that if the ship went down, the ministry of the Apostle would come to an end, and Paul would never be able to fulfill his cherished hope of bringing the gospel to Rome.

Satan had depended on the master of the vessel to counteract the advice of Paul, so that he might bring to bear upon the ship the full force of his fury. And his scheme well-nigh succeeded. Only one thing prevented his plans from being fulfilled. Paul used the one tool that was effective at that hour—prayer and fasting. He did not depend on prayer alone. He did not passively depend on his faith alone. He did not depend on the gift of miracles, which he undoubtedly possessed. He did not rest on the fact that he was an apostle. He did not take for granted the assumption that God would protect him until his earthly work was finished. He assumed that under the situation his life might be lost unless he fasted. And so both he and his companions took no food for fourteen days.

Finally the answer came. When the prospect was the darkest and all hope of the sailors was gone, Paul after long abstinence appeared on the scene with reassurance saying . . . "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." And then he told how the angel had met him that night and promised that not only his life would be spared, but all who were with him in the ship.

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul;

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thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Acts 27:23-24.

What a lesson this teaches! Through prayer and fasting, Paul could claim the lives of two hundred and seventy-six souls. So shall not we by the same method save many souls from perishing?

There comes a time when the fasting is over and the battle is won. So Paul admonished his companions (in the 34th verse) to cease their fast and take nourishment, as they would need it when the hour of action came. So it is true that when the time of action comes, the fast should be broken, so that all strength possible may be available to gather in the fruits of the victory.

What a power prayer and fasting is! It will deliver men from the power of Satan. It will cast out devils. It will move the very mountains that stand in the way. It will make the impossible, possible. Yes, prayer and fasting is the key to changing the impossible to possible, and the possible into accomplishment. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

CHAPTER IX

A TWENTY-THREE DAY FAST FOR REVIVAL

By LEN JONES

(The following is the story of a 23-day fast by Colonel Len Jones, a former chaplain in the Australian armed forces. We believe this day-by-day account of the fast by this Australian editor and evangelist will give much information and insight into the proper way to fast, and also shows something of the results which attend such a fast.)

THIS is a diary of a 23-day fast. There is one thing God has against fasting, and He has the same against prayer and almsgiving, and that is that we do it "to be seen of men," and to glory in what we do before others. For that reason I am hesitant in putting the experience on paper. But as I read the Scriptures of the many testimonies of fasting I am made to feel it is God's will for this experience to be made known. That convinces me that there is a place in which we can give fasting testimony, not to receive honor from men, but to bring blessing to others.

This was a complete fast. No food was taken during the fast. Only water was taken. During the time of the fast I was conducting evangelistic meetings every night except Monday, and two meetings on Sunday. I remained in South Africa one year and during that time thousands knelt at the altar for salvation, restoration, healing and consecration of their lives afresh for the service of the Lord.

THE NEED IN SOUTH AFRICA—CAUSE OF THE FAST

When I arrived in South Africa, the whole union opened up to me for evangelistic campaigns, but I felt totally inade-

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quate for the situation. I was conscious of a tremendous spiritual need first, for a much deeper experience with God myself, and second, for a ministry for this country.

Something had to be done! The need was desperate! I was brought up against a brick wall—unless God met me I knew I would be a failure. Praying alone did not seem to make the slightest impression upon the burden—I could see no other way out but to fast and pray. It was a call of God! It was my only hope!

I did not know how long I would fast—I did not make a decision. I have found it wiser to start that way, for if you make a time and do not continue until that time, there can be a sense of frustration that might mar a little of the great blessings received.

FIRST DAY—HARDEST OF ALL

Everything was black and hopeless! It was a miserable day! The first day is generally the hardest of all. Most of the day was spent in prayer—such conditions often lead you to prayer.

SECOND DAY—FIRST BLESSING RECEIVED

Today I felt brighter in spirit and more confident. I was not very hungry, but drank quite a lot of water. It is good to drink plenty of water while fasting. I felt weak, but this is exactly as I expected for this is generally such during the first three days of fasting, and explains why Jesus said when he fed the four thousand, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: if I send them away fasting to their houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far." Mark 8:2-3.

During the day I was very conscious of the presence of the Lord and His blessing and peace, and in the early hours of the morning had a mighty time with God in prayer. The Lord gave me faith that all the many things being prayed for would be answered—this was a wonderful and powerful time of intercession.

THIRD DAY—WEAKNESS FELT

I felt weak this morning, as was to be expected. My tongue was coated and there was a bad taste in my mouth. In the afternoon, I walked about four miles, visiting and praying. In the evening I had a wonderful meeting with the power of God in evidence.

FOURTH DAY

This evening had a wonderful meeting, when the subject was "Faith." The whole congregation was at the altar for prayer. Let me say here that if this time of prayer and fasting were stopped right now, the services we have been having, have been more than worth it all.

FIFTH DAY—WEAKNESS BEGINS TO LEAVE

Today I was very bright in spirit and body. The feeling of weakness and lassitude that I have had during the last few days has gone and I feel fine.

The meeting in the evening was best yet. Who says that fasting as well as praying is not abundantly worthwhile?

SIXTH DAY—BLESSINGS INCREASE

As I awoke this morning I felt better and stronger than I have since I started fasting.

Today is Sunday and I have two meetings. What a wonderful meeting it was this morning. Right from the start the presence and power of God was on the meeting. Without invitation many came to the front for prayer. Physically, I felt a lassitude and weakness today with the long meetings. But with it all I felt so restful and peaceful with a steady confidence in God.

SEVENTH DAY—PRAYER NECESSARY

Today I realized afresh it must be fasting and prayer, and not fasting alone. Both are necessary!

At the end of the first week I weighed myself and found that I had lost about twelve pounds, which is about right. You lose much more the first week than later. As the fast proceeds it generally works out at a loss of weight of about one pound a day.

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EIGHTH DAY—SOME PHYSICAL REACTION

When I awoke this morning there was more physical distress, but it is this that constrains you to prayer. There was a feeling of dizziness but the blessings were wonderful. There was such a peace and confidence and I felt I had such a grip of things—I felt I could meet anyone with ease and with authority. In the spirit, also, all was well—it seemed that I had vacated from the natural into the spiritual and it was wonderful.

And after all, the physical inconvenience should be expected. The natural must decrease while the spiritual increases. Daniel did not have an easy time with his 21-day fast. Scripture says he was in mourning the whole time. Daniel 10:2. Daniel says, "There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained no strength." Daniel 10:8. (Also read experience of the Psalmist, Psalms 109:23-25.) And so it is with us! But Daniel and David had a wonderful spiritual experience.

Today I start a campaign in another church, and had to go stay with new people. One of the biggest trials in fasting is the people with whom we live, especially those who love us and are dear to us—they get so concerned about us.

The tendency to quit came over me this morning. "The Lord has blessed and answered my prayers. Perhaps this is enough." In the afternoon I felt so much brighter and wondered why I had ever considered ending the fast. There are moods and changes in fasting. Watch and pray!

NINTH DAY

This was a busy day and I was on my feet most of the morning. Feeling very well in body and happy in the Lord. Preached with much blessing tonight.

TENTH DAY—SELF-EXAMINATION

Just as my body has been objecting to the elimination of toxins, poisons, accumulated waste matter and other things that offend, and bids me to stop the fast, so now I am finding my spirit is objecting to the elimination of things that are displeasing to God, and bids me quit.

This is a fight to the death of everything in me (spiritual and physical) that is contrary to the will of God. And what a fight it is. How the spirit is resisting. There is no mistaking it when God shows you yourself—it takes away all your self-righteousness all right. What a fight is going on as these things lift their ugly heads, but they have to go in the same way as things that offend physically have to go.

In a time of prayer and fasting you see yourself as others see you and as God sees you. This affords you an excellent opportunity to confess and deal with all such things. As the fasting continues I am expecting other things to come up—I am also expecting that they will be dealt with.

ELEVENTH DAY

All is going well spiritually and physically. I feel that I am taking a vacation in heaven. Physically there is nothing like the discomfort there was a week ago. Many others are being blessed and encouraged to fast and pray. A great work has been done. Tonight, feeling that the fast has served a wonderful purpose there is a strong desire to cease. But not only am I prepared to cease I am also prepared to carry on if that is God's plan.

TWELFTH DAY—NEW STRENGTH COMES

Today has been a very easy day. All who have fasted testify of the feeling of weakness, nausea and lassitude that you have the first few days and which continues up to the first week, all goes as you get around the twelfth and thirteenth day. In fact, and I know that only those who have fasted will believe me when I say it, around the fourteenth day you actually get stronger as the time goes on.

THIRTEENTH DAY—SELFISHNESS REVEALED

Today the Lord has been dealing with me again about greed, covetousness and selfishness. As I have seen myself I seem to have been such a selfish person, always concerned about my interests—interests in God's work, yes, but also very much interested in my own needs and comforts. What a time I have had this morning! I have been low before the

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Lord! And then there is another great battle, closely allied to pride—wanting to be somebody in the eyes of men, wanting to impress, a hesitance to take an humble place, and being more concerned with what man thinks of your ministry than what the Lord thinks. And so these two battles were fought today in intense earnestness, with a keen desire that my heart shall be laid bare before God and that a new experience will be my portion.

What a time we had in the meeting last night, and again this morning. Many testified of healing as a result of prayer for them last night. Oh that people would pray and fast—what a difference it makes, both in regards to our own lives and ministry. It is worth it a thousand times and brings blessings that nothing else can bring.

FOURTEENTH DAY

Today I was on my feet all through the day until 4 P. M. How well and strong I feel! It is always unbelievable that one actually gets stronger when they pass into the third week. Only those who have experienced it will believe it! To others it must sound like exaggeration. But how well in spirit one feels, for this time of prayer and fasting is primarily a consecration fast unto the Lord.

A week ago in the morning, as I packed my suitcase in preparation for a move to this present home, I was very weak. As I packed I had to sit down and rest, but tonight, although at the end of a very busy day, there is no feeling of weakness. It is simply amazing.

SEVENTEENTH DAY—GREAT FAITH BEING BORN

Today I feel wonderful. Fasting is no trial now, and the days come and go beautifully and easily. Spiritually I feel that I am in another world. It is a wonderful experience and the end is not yet. I believe as the fast continues I am going to get to that place with God that my soul has been longing. A man came to the house today to be prayed for with pains in the stomach. I felt such faith as I put my hands on him. He was healed instantly and went away rejoicing. This is happening continually in the meetings night after night.

**EIGHTEENTH DAY—HEALING MINISTRY
BEING DEVELOPED**

This was not such a good day. I went to the meeting with the conviction that I had not sought God sufficiently this day—yes, it is to be prayer as well as fasting. But as soon as I started to preach all tiredness left me. After I had prayed for many sick people I felt better than I had felt all day. It was encouraging tonight to hear about a dozen testify that they were healed when they were prayed for the night before.

NINETEENTH DAY

Today I had an attack in my body of a trouble from the days in the army, probably through army food and conditions. I am glad that it came up at this time as it enabled me to do some real praying about it.

TWENTIETH DAY—INCREASING BLESSING

What wonderful meetings we are having. A great crowd gathered last night in the city hall. Many testified in this morning meeting of instantaneous deliverance from all kinds of troubles.

Today I preached in a way that I have seldom preached before. I seemed to have faith to believe for almost anything—well, we are fulfilling the conditions, "and nothing shall be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Matthew 17:20-21. When you are fasting you feel that you have done the last thing, that there is nothing more you can do—it seems to give you a claim on God for the supernatural to happen.

Everyone is rejoicing at the blessing and presence of the Lord in our midst. Never do I remember being so completely concerned about the will of God only! Never did everything outside God's will seem so uninteresting and uninviting.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

One of the purposes of this fast was to encourage others to fast and pray, and to convince by example that no bodily harm would result. As people see me preaching night after

A Twenty-Three Day Fast for Revival

night, looking little different than when I started, it is inspiring many others to fast and pray.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY—FASTING ENDS

The appetite we have for food is very often from habit, and is not a true habit but a perverted one. Just like a heavy smoker would rather have a smoke than a meal—he has an appetite, a very real appetite, for it, but it is not a true need. This false appetite for food goes after about three days. It is not till many days later that the real appetite comes.

It is then that fasting finishes and starvation begins. This is the time to cease. It is at this time your tongue clears, your mouth and breath sweeten, and weakness returns. That is why we read about Jesus, "And when he had fasted forty days and nights, he was afterward an hungered" (Matthew 4:2), which suggested that He had not been hungry before.

Two or three days ago, I remarked about a new color in my face and today my tongue, mouth and breath are sweet. And with this I have a ravenous hunger. For this reason I have decided this afternoon to finish my fast. . . . Weighing myself at the close of the fast, I found I weighed 149 pounds compared to 176 pounds at the beginning, or a loss of 27 pounds in twenty-three days.

BREAKING THE FAST

It is obvious that after so long without food the utmost care must be taken in breaking the fast. This cannot be over emphasized—the longer you fast the more care must be exercised. Impatience here can cause much harm!

It is good to break such a fast as this with fruit juices diluted one in three—any fruit juice will do but orange juice is best. The first day take a half glass of orange juice diluted with water, three or four times during the whole day. Double this amount the second day (it is best to take it warm). The third day the orange juice undiluted. Perhaps a little fruit may be taken. On the fourth day you can take several meals of fresh fruit. On the fifth day take a half pint of milk every two hours. On the sixth day you can begin eating meals of raw vegetables such as tomatoes,

carrots and lettuce. From now on you can gradually work back to your usual diet.

Breaking your fast is more difficult than the fast itself. You will certainly be a very unwise person and will risk serious damage, which could prove fatal if you unduly rush this breaking of the fast period.

With all my heart I thank God for the past twenty-three days. Words fail to express the blessings I have received both spiritually and physically, and I believe the results of the fast which follow will be even greater than the results during the fast have been.

SPECIAL NOTE: A free gift subscription to **CHRIST FOR THE NATIONS** magazine is available to those who write to CFN, Box 769000, Dallas, Texas 75376-9000. This magazine contains special feature stories of men of faith and includes prophetic articles of the latest world developments. Why not include the names of your friends? (Due to high mailing rates, this applies only to the U.S. and Canada.)



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