

Fasting in the Old Testament

9/16/26

- Tonight – Opportunity to give a Bible study
 - Title – “Fasting in the Old Testament”
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- This Bible study tonight = 5 days before the Day of Atonement
 - My Bible study on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. = 2 days before the Day of Atonement
 - Can you guess what my title will be on Saturday?
That’s right – “Fasting in the New Testament”
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- 3 Main Subheads
 - Comment – When I have talked about this subject in the past, I have often used the same 3 main subheads
Some recent times were – 8/24/19 – 9/16/21 – 9/24/25
 - Here are the 3 subheads
 1. After – Repentance
 2. During – Seeking help during a trial
 3. Before – Connecting with our Father
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- Before I give scriptures under the 3 main subheads, I want to mention a few general scriptures – that may not directly fit under the 3 main categories

1 Sam. 31:13	the children of Israel fasted 7 days – after the death of Saul (same account – in 1 Chronicles 10:11-12)
2 Sam. 1:11-12	David and his men fasted – to mourn the death of Saul
Psalms 35:13	David – described his mourning for his enemies
Jer. 14:12	Jeremiah mentioned – that God does not always hear those who are fasting
Zech. 7:5	the Lord asked – “when you fasted and mourned in the 5 th and 7 th months during those 70 years, did you really fast for Me?”
Zech 8:19	the Lord said – the fasts of the 4 th , 5 th , 7 th and 10 th months should be cheerful feasts

1. After a Sin – Repentance

1 Sam. 7:5	Samuel – “gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you”
6	and the people fasted and prayed – “we have sinned against the Lord”

1 Kings 21:29	Ahab proclaimed a fast – (after his wife told a lie about fasting)
2-4	Naboth told Ahab that he would not sell some land to Ahab
5-7	Jezebel – said she would get the land for Ahab
8-12	Jezebel forged a letter from Ahab – using his name to proclaim a fast
13-16	Naboth was stoned – Ahab took the land
17-26	Elijah – told Ahab what Jezebel had done
27-29	Ahab – humbled himself with fasting before God
Ezra 10:1	Ezra – was praying, confessing, bowing down before the house of God
2-4	Shechaniah said – “we have trespassed against our God”
5-6	Ezra – ate no bread and drank no water – he mourned
Neh. 1:4-11	Nehemiah confessed the sins of the children of Israel
Neh. 9:1-3	the children of Israel – fasted – confessed and worshipped
Jer. 36:6-9	the people of Judah proclaimed a fast before the Lord
Dan. 9:3-19	prayer – supplications – fasting – sackcloth – ashes
Joel 1:14	the people consecrated a fast
Joel 2:12	the people turned to the Lord – fasting, weeping & mourning
15-17	the people consecrated a fast
Jonah 3:5-10	the people of Nineveh – believed God – proclaimed a fast

2. During a Trial – Seeking help during a trial

Judges 20:21-26	after the children of Israel were initially defeated by the Benjamites, they went to the house of God and fasted
2 Sam. 12:15-23	David – beseeching God for his sick son
2 Chron. 20:3-4	Jehoshaphat (Judah) – responding to approaching armies
Ezra 8:21-23	Ezra proclaimed a fast – he was ashamed to ask for an escort of soldiers – on the way to Jerusalem
Esther 4:1-3	Mordecai and the Jews – mourning
16	Esther and the Jews – fasted before she visited the king
Psalms 69:10-12	David fasted for relief – during trials
Psalms 109:24-25	David fasted for relief – during trials

3. Before – Connecting with our Father

Exod. 34:28	when Moses was with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights (while writing the 10 Commandments on the tablets), he “neither ate bread nor drank water”
Lev. 16:29, 31	you shall afflict your souls
Lev. 23:26-32	Day of Atonement
27	instruction – you shall afflict your souls
32	instruction – you shall afflict your souls – from evening to evening
Isaiah 58:3-6	Isaiah talked about fasting – serving God and man