



# Thrive

Move from surviving to THRIVING

Psalm 105:37



Your 28 day  
Devotional & Guide  
on how to  
Pray, Fast & Give

Also includes  
***Your Appointment With God***  
By Gwen R. Shaw

[thriveapopka.com](http://thriveapopka.com)

# Move from Surviving to Thriving 2020

## Thrive 5880 (2020)- Warring for our Inheritance

In the fall of 2019, we began a new year, a new decade, and a new era in history. The Hebraic year 5780 begins the Hebraic decade of Pey! “Pey” is the Hebrew letter for the number 80, a picture symbol of a mouth.

The last decade from 2010 to 2019 has been all about “seeing” what God is saying about you, about your life, about the plans he has for you and for the world around us. The number 70 is conjoined with the Hebrew Letter “Ayin” a picture symbol of an eye. The “Ayin” decade was God inviting us to “see” what He was *saying*. 5780 and the nine years to follow will be an invitation to “speak” what God has *shown* us in the last decade. “Ayin” gives insight, but it is the “Pey” (mouth) that gives insight expression.

“Pey” (5780) is linked with calling back what the winds have scattered in other seasons. It is also linked with a declaration of our mouth for freedom. Discerning when and what to speak will be a critical component during the next decade if we are to see the Kingdom of God growing in our lives and our world through our declarations of faith. Moses was 80 years old when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. This is a year of overcoming deliverance.

As we approach Passover 5780, I believe we will gain access to the spiritual fulfillment of this established new era. We are moving from understanding into declaration. We are moving into the authority to speak it. Welcome to our Passover celebration of 5780.



### What is Thrive?

Thrive is a 28-day Fast & First Fruits Offering focused on moving us from surviving to **THRIVING!** Our church will unite by Praying, Fasting & Giving to see old cycles broken & align with the timing of God.



### Why now?

Passover is an appointed time in God's calendar. It's origin is in the exodus of Israel out of Egypt where God brought His people out of bondage & into freedom!



### Lets get started!

Be encouraged as you start your 28-day fast! God's supernatural power is with us & we can lean on Him & know Him deeper as we Pray, Fast & Give together.

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*



### How do I Thrive?



#### PLAN A PRAYER TIME

each day to spend with the Lord & allow Him to speak to you.

*"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-18]

#### CHOOSE A FAST

that is right for you & your family [Full Fast, Daniel Fast, or Partial Fast].

*"Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke?"*

[Isaiah 58:6-10]

#### PARTICIPATE IN GIVING

toward the First Fruits Offering on Sunday, April 12th.

*"Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."*

[Proverbs 3:9-10]

SUN MON TUES WED THUR FRI SAT

15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12						



Fasting Days



Passover Celebration  
First Fruits Offering

**\*Important Notice:** Fasting requires reasonable precautions. If you have any health concerns, please consult your physician prior to beginning your fast, especially if you are taking any medication, have a chronic condition, or are pregnant or nursing a baby.



## THRIVE | WEEK 1

Day 1 - Sunday Read **Lesson 1** Your Appointment With God

Day 2 - Monday Read **Lesson 2** Your Appointment With God

Day 3 - Tuesday Read **Lesson 3** Your Appointment With God

Day 4 - Wednesday Read **Lesson 4** Your Appointment With God

Day 5 - Thursday Read **Lesson 5** Your Appointment With God

Day 6 - Friday Read **Lesson 6** Your Appointment With God

Day 7 - Saturday Read **Lesson 7** Your Appointment With God

## THRIVE | WEEK 2

Day 8 - Sunday Read **Lesson 8** Your Appointment With God

Day 9 - Monday Read **Lesson 9** Your Appointment With God

Day 10 - Tuesday Read **Lesson 10** Your Appointment With God

Day 11 - Wednesday Read **Lesson 11** Your Appointment With God

Day 12 - Thursday From the Wilderness to Conquest Read Joshua 9 & 10

Day 13 - Friday Judah. Read Joshua 11

Day 14 - Saturday Issachar. Read Joshua 12

## THRIVE | WEEK 3

Day 15 - Sunday Read Ephesians 2, 3 & 4

Day 16 - Monday Read Joshua 13

Day 17 - Tuesday Read Joshua 14

Day 18 - Wednesday Read Joshua 15

Day 19 - Thursday Read Joshua 16

Day 20 - Friday Read Joshua 17

Day 21 - Saturday Read Ephesians 5 & 6

## THRIVE | WEEK 4

Day 22 - Sunday Read Joshua 18

Day 23 - Monday Read Joshua 19

Day 24 - Tuesday Read Joshua 20

Day 25 - Wednesday Read Joshua 21

Day 26 - Thursday Read Joshua 22:1-9 Ask the Lord about your portion. Do you return to last season or do you go forward?

Day 27 - Friday Read Joshua 22:10-34. Build you a new altar based upon where your future is.

Day 28 - Saturday Read Joshua 23. Review last season and your alignments.

Sunday, April 12th Read **Joshua 24**. Establish a new covenant with the Lord for this First Fruits Sunday.



# Passover Conference Schedule 2020

**Passover Seder**  
Wednesday, April 8th  
7pm

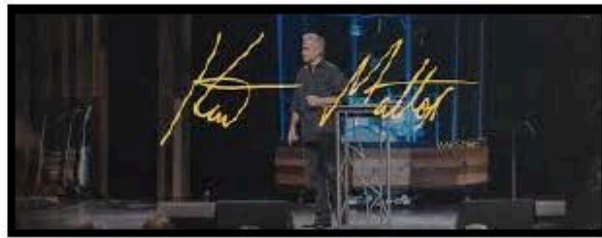
**First Fruits & Resurrection Sunday Choir**  
Sunday, April 12th  
9am and 10:45am

**Tuesday**  
April 14th at 7pm

**Wednesday**  
April 15th at 10am & 7pm

**Thursday**  
April 16th at 10am & 7pm

## Pray for our Speakers



Kent and Beverly Mattox are founders of Word Alive International Outreach, an Apostolic Center for Freedom that was founded in December 2000. This interdenominational outreach center quickly grew into a rich, culturally diverse local church with several thousand people in regular attendance and active participation and international outreach with an emphasis on preaching, teaching, recovery and reaching out to feed nations of the world. Kent and Beverly are passionate and have a great desire to see every individual find the FREEDOM to fulfill their purpose and destiny within the Kingdom. That passion, combined with their commitment to see people succeed in every area of life, fuels the vision of Word Alive International Outreach.



Charles D. "Chuck" Pierce serves as President of Global Spheres, Inc. (GSI) in Corinth, Texas. This is an apostolic, prophetic ministry that is being used to gather and mobilize the worshipping Triumphant Reserve throughout the world. GSI facilitates other ministries as well, and participates in regional and national gatherings to develop new Kingdom paradigms. Chuck also serves as President of Glory of Zion International Ministries, a ministry that aligns Jew and Gentile. He is known for his accurate prophetic gifting which helps direct nations, cities, churches and individuals in understanding the times and seasons in which we live.



Doug Addison is the founder and president of InLight Connection. Over the past twenty years, Doug Addison has been a cutting-edge prophetic leader, dream interpreter, entrepreneur, life coach, consultant and trainer. He is best known for his Daily Prophetic Words and Spirit Connection webcast, podcast and blog. He is also a leading authority in the area of destiny achievement to educational institutions, professional associations and religious organizations. He and his wife Linda live in Los Angeles, California where they are impacting the arts and entertainment and media industries.



**RUCKINS MCKINLEY - PROPHET/PASTOR.**  
Through the glitter, glamour and accomplishments of Hollywood, the Lord has used Ruckin's experiences to launch him into a new understanding and direction. He functions around the world in the five-fold ministry office of a Prophet. Ruckins' delivers a dynamic word through motivational speaking, prophetic utterance, dance, and song of the Lord. His unique style of ministry challenges and refreshes. Ruckin's brings a revelatory and provocative message while ministering the love and compassion of the Father's heart for His people. He is representing a new generation of prophetic voices, which is hearing and proclaiming the word of the Lord without reservation, fear or apprehension. Ruckins' messages are relevant and timely, inspiring the people of God to defy the "spirit of this age", a spirit of fear, by taking a step "out of the boat", into the sea of impossibility.



## LESSON 1

**“Proclaim a fast!”** the Prophet Joel cries out under the compelling urge of the Holy Spirit (Joel 1:14). This fast was called in an hour of desolation and destruction. The sins of the people had brought God’s judgment upon them. The prophet was trying under the anointing of the Holy Spirit to bring the people into a place of repentance and contrition so that God would return to them and leave a blessing upon them (Joel 2:14).

There was a drought in the land. Famine was taking the lives of man and beast. The fruit had dried up on the vine and the grain had withered in the stalk when Joel, the great prophet of God, stepped on the scene and cried out **“Proclaim a Fast!”**

### *Cover Your Mouth*

The word **FAST** comes from the Hebrew word *TSUWM*, which means to cover the mouth, i.e. to fast. It speaks of a special silence, a holy silence.

Our mouth is the greatest tool to our destruction we possess. With it we destroy not only people but our own selves. Our insatiable appetite led our first parents, Adam and Eve, into transgression and plunged the human race into sin. **“She gave me of the tree and I did eat,”** complained Adam. **“The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat,”** echoed Eve.

For some strange reason God has taken the very thing (eating) that was the cause of our fall, and of man’s losing his power of dominion over it, and has turned it around so that by **ABSTAINING FROM EATING** (fasting) we can enter again into a new dimension of God’s anointing in our lives and be restored into the state of dominion over sin and evil.

Who was this prophet Joel who cried out God’s warning in a day of judgment, and who proclaimed the day of the



outpouring of God's Spirit when it seemed the end had come upon the earth?

We only know he was the son of Bethuel, and no one knows anything about Bethuel. Bethuel means "vision of God," and he must have had a revelation or vision of God because he called his son Joel, which means "Jehovah is God."

### *The Time To Fast Has Come*

We, in our own time, have come into a parallel of the days of Joel. There is natural and spiritual dearth on the face of the earth. Famine has already taken many parts of the world. America too is beginning to cry out for water. The "dew of heaven" has become precious. God's prophets today look into the skies and seeing no cloud of promised rain are beginning to proclaim to the land: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."

It is time for us to bow low. To "cover our mouths." We need not only to fast from *foods*, we need to fast from words. True, sincere fasting is not only the result of a burden, but it is the cause of a burden, even an increased burden.

When we fast in search of God, to know Him, to see Him, to feel Him, to become like Him, we see our own ugliness and weakness. This increases our burden. But, thank God we have hope for change when we see what needs to be changed. No one is so hopeless as the spiritually blind who cannot see his own raiment which is full of spots and wrinkles.

Fasting is not the key to forgiveness of sins; Jesus' blood is that key. "... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Nor is fasting the key to being Spirit-filled. The Holy Spirit is that. Fasting is a sign of inward hunger for God.

I cannot fast even for health reasons, or to lose weight, or to see miracles. That which causes me to "cover my mouth" is my great and insatiable hunger for God. A hunger so great that only the Psalmist could describe it in Psalm 42:1-2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for



God, for the living God: . . . .”

Oh, may that great and wonderful mixture of hunger and thirst for God take over in your life so that you too will proclaim a fast!

When you proclaim a fast under the guidance of the Holy Spirit wonderful things will begin to happen in your life, your nation, and your world. God will return and leave a blessing behind Him (Joel 2:14). A blessing that will give life for death and fruitfulness for barrenness. Hallelujah!

### *Fast For What?*

On the mission field I have seen all kinds of fasting.

The Hindu priests who are dedicated to their idols fast to obtain merit and power. This self-chastisement was also known in the days of the Old Testament prophets. Yet God did not tell his people to stop fasting because false prophets and idolatrous worshippers fasted. Rather He explained that He had given them a *holy fast* that would loose the bands of wickedness, undo heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke (Isaiah 58:6).

I have seen how that in India a sincere man who worshipped the cow as a holy god fasted for the “salvation of the cow,” hoping that the government of India would make a law forbidding the slaughter of beef. He fasted 65 days—and died. We may call it a “hunger strike,” but God knows the mind of that man, and others like him.

We may smile and be shocked at such ignorance and zeal, and yet I have seen women in America go on a “hunger strike” for the “salvation” of their beautiful figures.

It has grieved my soul very deeply to see my sisters fasting for outward beauty. This is not the true reason for the *holy fast*. We are to seek for inward beauty. While I know that fasting will result in loss of weight and hence in most cases not only a more beautiful body, but also better health, still we must be careful—as that anointed evangelist warned me—to “Keep your motives pure!” This is especially



so when we are doing it as a religious act and presuming to come into the presence of God.

### *The Health Fast*

Pages, even books could be written about the subject of fasting for health. I am a firm believer in this, but this is a medical subject and is dealt with in more detail in many books such as: *Fasting, The Ultimate Diet*, by Allan Catt, M.D.; *How To Keep Healthy and Happy by Fasting*, by Salem Kirban.

However, the purpose of this Bible study is that we trace the subject of fasting as we find it in the Bible, and keep to the Word of God as our guide book. The Holy Spirit has been dealing with me for one year to prepare this set of lessons. I feel that the reason He wants to bring this message before the world is not for any other reason than that we will get the anointing of God upon our lives.

There is a great work to be done. Flesh and blood cannot do it. We have come to the day of the two "rains." One, the wrath of God; the other the latter and final rain that will bring in the harvest.

I have seen revivals begin around the world when people fasted. I have seen the heavens shaken and the ground tremble as people have gotten hold of the "horns of the altar" in consecrated fasting and intercession. *This* is the kind of fasting I am burdened to tell the world about. As you receive it, share it with others until God sends healing in our lives, our families, our churches, our cities, our governments, our nations—our poor sin-sick world. For did He not promise "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward" (Isaiah 58:8)?

## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

- A. Read the book of Joel.**
- B. Memorize Joel 1:14.**
- C. Answer the following questions:**
  - 1. Have you ever felt a sense of unfulfillment?**
  - 2. Have you ever heard a teaching on fasting?**
  - 3. What does the word fasting mean in the original Hebrew?**
  - 4. Describe some of your fasting experiences.**
  - 5. What should be our scriptural reason for fasting?**



## LESSON 2

### *The Uncontrolled Appetites*

In our last lesson we learned that one of the most difficult things to do is to refrain from eating, or to cover our mouths.

Our first parents fell into sin because they could not restrain themselves from eating the forbidden fruit. Because of their lust for food they lost the glorious birthright that belongs to the sons and daughters of God who were created in the divine image.

As we trace the history of their descendants we find another who did exactly the same thing. In Hebrews 12:16-17 (Living Bible) we read: "Watch out that no one becomes involved in sexual sins or becomes careless about God as Esau did: he traded his rights as the oldest son (his birthright) for a single meal. And afterwards, when he wanted those rights back again, it was too late, even though he wept bitter tears of repentance. So remember, and be careful."

### *Marriage and Fasting*

It is a known fact that the appetite for sex and for food are closely related. I believe that anyone who can conquer his lust for food can also conquer his lust for sex. I am not speaking against the temperate relationship of husband and wife. The natural, God-given instinct of physical need that a man and wife have for each other is a beautiful gift from God. The Bible clearly states that marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, or pure (Hebrews 13:4).

But the Bible also gives married people a very clear pattern for sexual conduct that must not be disregarded. Paul tells the married couples in the church at Corinth, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come

together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (I Corinthians 7:5). The word "defraud" comes from the Greek word *STEREO*—to deprive, to keep back by fraud.

Paul wrote with the wisdom of God. He knew that there would be times in the lives of couples when they would be united by a burden and would consecrate some of their time to the purpose of fasting. He knew that at that time sexual desires would leave them and they would abstain from the rights of marriage in order to give themselves to prayer.

### *Appetites*

The appetite of the stomach is no less than the sexual appetite. There are actual demons of lust who seek for opportunities to gain entrances into the bodies of men and women who are careless about the laws of purity.

The devil always has a good supply of "silly women" (II Timothy 3:6) and high-minded lovers of pleasure who are ready to lead the careless soul into the pitfalls of sexual lusts. Too many men while preaching and boasting about the power of God which they profess to possess to work miracles, reject the power of God to work a transformation of holiness and sanctification in their own lives.

I have seen the lives and ministries of great men of God destroyed because of this temptation. Had they called a fast in their lives, in that hour when they needed deliverance, they would no doubt have conquered that demon called LUST.

Certainly many great men and women of God, whom God has used in an outstanding way, have dedicated themselves to a life of fasting. If more men of God who are in the ministry would fast they would be spared a lot of temptations. They would have power from God to overcome many of the pitfalls in the ministry.

### *The Three Temptations Satan Uses*

There are three things Satan uses to tempt those in the



ministry. They are the same three temptations he used on Jesus.

*The lust of the flesh.* Satan showed Eve the fruit and she fell. But when he suggested to Jesus that He make himself some nice fresh hot loaves of bread out of the stones (a thing He could have done), Jesus conquered the temptation to satisfy His great hunger after having fasted 40 days.

*The lust of the eye.* Then came the great temptation of ambition. Personal ambition to "build a kingdom," acquire fame, control lives and use people, has destroyed many ministries.

Along with these temptations is the temptation of money and riches. A man of God, a preacher or evangelist stands in a susceptible place. Someone slips a dollar in his hand. It seems like much when he first lives by faith, trusting God to supply his needs, but when he learns how to sway audiences with the power of God and the gift of anointed preaching, and the dollar turns into a \$1,000 check, there is a terrible temptation to misuse that money. It takes a person with a God-given burden and Christ-like honesty to put that money where God wants it to go.

*The pride of life.* Just why we mortals made of clay, ransomed from sin, should ever assume we are anyone, I do not understand. But the fact remains that God finds us in sin, cleanses us, redeems us, sanctifies us, fills us with His Holy Spirit, gives us His gifts and we suddenly think we are someone great. Never remembering we are only dirty old sinners saved by grace, bought with the blood of Jesus, and anything we have or are, or hope to be, is because of His great goodness to us.

Spiritual pride is one of the greatest temptations in a successful ministry. The Sermon on the Mount and the discourse in the upper room are discarded because who wants to be meek, and humble; who wants to mourn and be persecuted and despised; and who wants to wear an apron and wash his brothers feet?

Do not be ashamed of the lowly apron which is used to

**gird you for service. I too scrub floors on my knees, cook meals, wash pots and pans, dust furniture and wash clothes. And the rewards for this service are equal to that of preaching, praying, singing and writing Bible studies. For when I serve my fellow man or my family, I serve God (Matthew 23:6). Remember, humility is the greatest gift we can bring God.**

**Humility is the opposite of pride. When we have conquered the temptation of spiritual pride we will be truly humble, for pure wisdom knows that it knows "nothing". All the wisdom of man in this world is nothing compared to the infinite wisdom of God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).**

**Many times this wisdom has been given to man when he fasted. Such men and women were: Moses, Elijah, Ezra, Daniel, Esther, Anna and Paul. We will study their experiences in fasting in more detail later.**



## STUDY QUESTIONS

A. Read: Hebrews 12:16-17  
Matthew 4:1-11  
Isaiah 58

B. Memorize Romans 11:33-34

C. Answer the following questions:

1. If someone were to ask you why you were fasting, what would your answer be?
2. What are the three things Satan uses to tempt the ministry?
3. Does he ever use these temptations on you?
4. Have you seen anyone fall into sin because he would not fast?
5. What is the greatest service or gift we can bring God? Why?

## LESSON 3

### *Results of Fasting*

Someone said, "If a person can fast, they can do anything!"

This is very true. When we can control the appetite we are in control of the "flesh-king" of our body. Not only can we control our sexual desires, but also our tempers, pride, impatience, angers, hates and ambitions.

One of the first results of fasting is that we see everything in a new way. Our ambitions, which are often the fruit of pride, suddenly are seen for their true worth. In the light of God's eternal values, many things we count as important are vanity. Fasting gives us a holy sense of true values. It is God's "plumb line."

This is a plumb line we need today when the true vision of the ministry is *marred* by the glamour of the modern church. This is especially true in America where we have no persecution to speak of. But we will come into persecution in the USA because Jesus said, "Ye shall be hated of ALL nations for my name's sake" (Matthew 24:9). The YE is "us." That ALL includes the United States of America, as well as Canada, Great Britain and the many so-called "Christian" nations. There will come a time when we will be persecuted all over the world. It will be a time when we will not have ample supplies of food. We need to get control of our appetites now so that we will not destroy one another in order to feed our empty stomachs.



You may say Christians will never know hunger. But I want to tell you I know many Christians who have been hungry. Faith workers in India, real saints of God, have told me how often for days they had nothing to eat. "What did you do?" I asked them. "We proclaimed a fast," they answered, with a smile.

We need to come to the place where in a day of food shortage and when groceries will be expensive and too costly for many to buy, we will win the victory over our lack by proclaiming a fast to the Lord.

If every Christian family would fast one day a week like the "Jesus Family" in China did—even the children and cattle fasted—we would take the thing that the enemy uses to destroy many—"self-preservation"—and we would crucify it by scorning our hunger and dedicating our days of famine into days of fasting.

I asked my Indian friends, "Were you hungry?"

"No, not when we fasted," they answered.

### *Fasting is Body Prayer*

Fasting is more than not eating. It is another kind of intercessory prayer wherein the body slowly but surely dies.

Every day many ounces of fatty tissue deteriorate because we don't feed it. In most of our bodies there is a "pantry full of stored-up food." We need only to look at ourselves to see the potatoes, the bread and butter, the noodles and spaghetti, and still more the cakes, pies, cookies, biscuits, chocolates, milkshakes and sundaes. If we fasted, that stored-up energy and calories would be put to good use as in the life of Elijah. Most of us would have the ability to run in the strength of it for 40 days and nights.

So do not be fearful of fasting. Be more fearful of your uncontrollable appetite, and your self-destruction which is

caused by your over-eating the wrong foods.

During the time of fasting the old cells which have been turned into gluttons by three meals a day, plus in-between snacks and bedtime "suppers," begin to cry out like so many mountain lions hungry for food. The more fatty tissue we have the hungrier we are. When our spirit rises to be king over these "lions" and refuses to pamper and feed them then God sees our determination and sacrifice. And when we are fasting for God's purposes He "shuts the mouths of these hungry lions," and takes away the hunger pangs. When He has done His work in us and shown us His glory and revelation He will bring us out to honor the King, and the enemy who tried to destroy us will be destroyed.

### *Self Discipline*

The few days of hunger we may have (and many experience no hunger at all) is a very small sacrifice to bring to God. Most of us have known very little suffering for Him. Almost none of us bear in our body the "marks" of the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:17). It is a wonderful feeling to be able to control the desires that control us. The joy that comes because of self-denial is beyond my ability to describe.

Do not be dismayed by the change in physical appearance. You may begin to look drawn and pale and become weak.

During one of my long fasts I was so weak I could hardly do my regular work. This weakness was caused not only by fasting but because of a bad physical condition. Sometimes I looked so bad that my brother got alarmed and thought I would die. He called my parents and told them to pray. I looked in the mirror and saw an ugly old woman



look back at me. But it didn't matter any more. There was a desperation in my soul that only God could answer. I had come to a dead-end in my life and ministry.

As my physical conditioned worsened I would lie prostrate on the floor, making my resolution to God: "Though you slay me, still I will trust you."

Then one day when my strength was all gone, I received a phone call from a black sister, Tevelda Hall (a friend of Mahalia Jackson). God had told her to come and pray for me.

I couldn't refuse her but I didn't know how I'd get out of the bed to open the door to let her in. I lay there praying for strength. When she arrived I just managed to let her inside my small apartment where I was living alone.

She had brought two sisters with her. They gathered around my bed. One took one hand, one another and one held my feet. (My feet were like ice). They began to pray.

Suddenly a ball of fire fell on me. The Lord grabbed hold of my left wrist and squeezed it—no human hand touched it. I looked three times to see if someone was doing it. That grip was a supernatural one. The heat of God went through my body to my feet. Divine energy flowed into every vein.

I jumped out of my bed and threw my arms around Tevelda crying, "I'm healed, Praise God, I'm healed!"

Not only was I healed but two nights later God visited me in a glorious way. In the middle of the night I was suddenly wide awake as a host of angels began to fill my room. I saw how they came down in a spiral movement and flooded my small apartment and filled it with heaven's glow. And then the Lord began to speak to me. I got my pencil and paper and wrote out the things He said. Some of it He is permitting me to share with you.

"I have heard your prayers and your cries unto Me, and, behold, I am come. I have given you a special call and divine commission to a very great work here in America. (Up until that time I was only on the mission field.) I love you for your zeal to search Me out. There are many evil forces that work

against you and many strong demons who would destroy you; therefore you must be very careful to obey Me in all things. You shall have special power and authority in prayer and obtain many favors of the Lord so that people shall marvel and say, 'God is with her'.

"Be not deceived that there is ONE easy step into this power and place in God. See My servant Avila (a Puerto Rican evangelist whom God is using mightily) and know it comes by a life of sacrifice in fastings oft; in aloneness and separation and much soul travail.

"Stand firm, stand apart, stand anointed. Pay the price. All you give Me I will restore. All you will keep you will lose, and that very soon.

"Behold, the time is very short, and there remaineth much land to be possessed. You are called to be in My army to possess much land. Strong angels shall fight with you."

And then He added, "Do not eat too quickly after this fast. Drink more liquids. Try not to gain strength in your own strength."

And finally in closing He said, "Man is not the final authority. Come to Me when in doubt and I will teach you."

And beloved, THIS is the wisdom and knowledge that comes through fasting.



## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read:** Numbers 11:5  
Proverbs 16:26  
Ecclesiastes 6:7  
Isaiah 29:8  
Isaiah 56:11  
Proverbs 16:32  
Luke 21:34  
Proverbs 23:1-2  
Acts 24:25  
Romans 6:12
- B. Memorize I Corinthians 9:27**
- C. Answer the following questions:**
1. Name some of the results of fasting, and some of the weaknesses that are conquered.
  2. In what way is fasting a plumb line in your life?
  3. How can the ministry of fasting save us in the end time?
  4. In what way is fasting a prayer?
  5. Are you willing to lose your outward beauty for a while that you may have His eternal inner beauty?

## LESSON 4

### *Adam and Eve*

We have already looked into the life of Adam and Eve. We noted how in Genesis 2:15-17 God told Adam he could freely eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God warned that in the day they would eat from it they would surely die.

When Eve ate, the sentence of death fell on her. She gave of the fruit to Adam and the sentence of death fell on him. Their guilty consciences made them seek to hide from God. Whereas before they chatted with God as a friend and father, now suddenly they were separated from God.

Let us beware lest the desire to fulfill the lust of the flesh will bring a separation between us and our God.

Uncontrolled appetites have brought a curse on many lives.

The hunger for food, for sex, for power over the souls of men and for riches have sent many foolish "earthlings" to hell. Like Adam and Eve we have lost God's glory, but I believe that as we repent and come with sincerity to seek the face of God in fasting and prayer we can be the generation who will experience the Kingdom of God returning to earth, the Reign of Jesus Christ as King, the restoration of our bodies, souls and spirits into the likeness of God, and the deliverance of the animal kingdom from the curse.

### *Esau*

Read Genesis 25:19-34.

Esau was a man ruled by passions. His rebellious, strong will became a grief to the mind of Isaac and Rebecca when he disobeyed their will and married two women who were daughters of great Canaanite lords. These women brought idolatry and contradiction into the only pure family of God



on earth. It is a strange thing that often in good families are born a Cain, an Esau, or a Ham. Even Jesus' family of disciples included a Judas, whom Jesus described as "a devil" (John 6:70).

The word "devil" in this Scripture is translated from the Greek word *diabolos*, which means false accuser, slanderer, a traducer, specifically Satan.

Because Esau's life was controlled by his passions and his appetite he sold his precious birthright for a mess of pottage. The word pottage comes from the Hebrew *NAZIYD*—*naw-zeed*—something boiled, i.e. soup, pottage.

That birthright which he sold for one meal of soup was forever lost from that hour. It was the highest price ever paid for a bowl of soup. We think how foolish Esau was to do this but God says, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." He did not value his great heritage of the right of the firstborn to be the priest of the family and to give godly advice and counsel to those over whom he would be placed. He only cared for one person: Esau. He said as the hunger pangs made him uncomfortable, "I'm dying of hunger, what use is that old religious birthright?" Already his idolatrous wives had influenced him to discard the precious values of life to please the desire of the flesh.

### *Fasting One Meal*

How many of us have done as Esau did? How many times has God called us to fast and to intercede in prayer as a priest for some loved one, or some nation, and when we smelled the food we gave in to our appetite and thought to ourselves, "I'll die if I don't eat right now."

Sometimes it's not a long fast that God is calling us to observe. Often He wants us to miss only *one* meal, and we have despised the small sacrifice He asks us to make. Instead we plan in our minds that at our own convenience we will bring Him a bigger and better sacrifice . . . maybe something like a 40-day fast. Beloved, "Obedience is BETTER than



sacrifice.”

Fasting that ONE meal may bring one of the greatest victories in your life. Remember, *Jacob* was making the food for himself. He too was hungry, but he denied his stomach that he might obtain the birthright. By fasting that one meal he became Israel, a prince with God, for he secured the birthright. Often one particular meal can be a bigger sacrifice than many days of fasting.

### *Fasting 24 Days*

I recall when I returned from India to Hong Kong after doing missionary work there. I had asked God to lay a fast on me. I love Chinese food and I thought *At least I will have one good Chinese meal before I fast.* So I got dressed and called those I wanted to have eat with me. I was looking forward with anticipation to all those delicious exotic dishes. As I was walking out the door to go to the restaurant a great burden fell on my heart which was caused by something that happened just then.

God spoke: “Pray!” I went to kneel by my bed weeping before the Lord with this great agony of travail which took over my whole being. After the Spirit of God began to lift the overwhelming degree of the burden, God spoke: “Twenty-four years, twenty-four days. I will let you fast one day for every year.” This was 24 days of fasting on water alone. Because my body was worn from the missionary work I lost weight quickly (28 pounds) and I felt very weak. I locked myself in with God and did not see friends, or minister publicly. I was able to carry out the most important duties of cooking and caring for a family. The last week however, I was getting increasingly more tired with each task. I didn’t know how I could fulfill the time if God did not send help.

One evening I had just made supper and the children were eating when there was a knock on the door. When they opened it and I saw who was there I thought I was seeing an angel. It was my dear friend and co-worker Sister



Alice Shevkenek, who had been working with me in India.

I asked in amazement, "Alice, how come you have come to Hong Kong?" It was a long journey and cost much money.

"Gwen, God told me that you needed me, so I got on the plane and came."

I rejoiced in the goodness of God. She took over the household work and all the responsibilities from then until that fast was ended. During this time God gave me two outstanding visions.

In one of these visions God gave me an old-fashioned type of basket filled with grain and told me to go out and sow the seed. I was not alone; Alice was with me. We walked through the length and breadth of the big field sowing the seed by hand. And when our baskets were empty I thought we would rest, the Lord said, "Turn around and look." To my amazement where we had sown was a mighty harvest, tall and golden, waiting to be reaped. "Now," said He, "Go and reap the harvest." And He put the sickle in my hand, and though I was tired I returned to do the bidding of the Master.

If we fast through to victory God will speed His work and bless our labors so that we can accomplish more in a few short days than we could if we toiled in our own strength for years.

We have come to harvest time very late, "and the work that centuries might have done, must crowd the hour of setting sun."

Let us fast and pray through to victory that our seed-sowing will produce one-hundredfold and we will be able to quickly reap an abundant harvest.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Study Genesis 25:19-34; Hebrews 12:16-17
- B. Read Genesis chapter 1, 2 and 3
- C. Memorize I Samuel 15:22
- D. Answer the following questions:
  - 1. Has God ever asked you to fast one meal, and what were the results?
  - 2. How close do you think we are to the restoration of all things? And what can we do to hasten this event?
  - 3. Do you know a family who has a difficult wayward member? (A Cain, Esau or Ham) Discuss among yourselves and share the burden.
  - 4. Have you ever had a vision or dream given of God while you were fasting? Share it.
  - 5. Are you willing to be a reaper in the end time? And in what way?



## LESSON 5

### *Moses*

The first and longest of all the fasts ever recorded in the Bible was the fast (or fasts) of Moses.

When God called Moses to the mountain he was in the presence of God for 40 days. He talked about it in the memoirs of his life in Deuteronomy 9:9: "I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water."

As leader of close to 3 million souls, he carried a tremendous burden day and night. He needed help from God. The Lord Jehovah knew he needed a heavenly plan and guidance and so He called His servant and leader up out of the camp, away from the noise and confusion, the complaints and problems, into His divine presence. There Moses received the entire foundation of not only the Jewish religion but also that which is the guideline for Christians up to our time. Oh, how much we owe to Moses!

Today it is still the message of God given to us through Moses which teaches us to worship only one God; to honor His name; not to kill, steal, cheat or lie, and to love our parents. These laws which God gave Moses have been woven into the laws of Great Britain, the United States of America and most nations of the world today.

There in God's presence Moses was given the plan for the building of the tabernacle, the furnishings, design of the priestly robes, the ceremonies of the offering of sacrifices. God told him how to move out the camp and how to prepare for battle.

There in that fast God wrote with His finger on the tablets of stone the Covenant of God with Israel. Things happened in that 40-day fast which Moses was never permitted to tell about because his people could not have received them.

When we fast God gives us His pattern—His divine order—not only for our lives, but the lives for which we have responsibility. Much of our lack of “government” in nation and home is because there are no fathers who will fast and seek the face of God for the revelation of the oracles of God.

### *Second 40-Day Fast*

When Moses saw that the people had sinned in his absence by making a golden calf and worshipping it, he broke the tablets of the Covenant and fell on his face before the Lord another 40 days and nights as he did the first time.

The shock of the idol worship had been so great he was as a man beside himself. He had been in God’s presence. He had felt the glory. He had seen God write out the Commandments with His own finger. God was real to him. And now when he saw his people playing in their nakedness, worshipping the golden calf his brother Aaron had made for them, he was completely overwhelmed.

I imagine Moses must have been in the same agony of soul as Job when Satan had struck him and he had lost everything (Job 2:12-13). In relating his experience Moses said, “And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you” (Deuteronomy 9:18-19).

Moses told of the fierce anger of God against Israel and Aaron: “And the Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time” (v. 20). It was at this time that Moses offered to be the ransom for his people when he said to God, “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:32).

America, like Israel has entered its wilderness.



Wickedness is increasing so rapidly that people are fearful of walking the streets. Every elderly man and woman living alone in our big cities is full of fear. Crime, suicide, broken marriages, immorality, unemployment, communist teachers instilling their evil in the minds of our youth, atheistic women changing our governmental laws, corruption in high places, liberalism in our churches, murder, rape and robberies are taking their toil. God is getting ready to pour out His blanket of wrath upon us and cover us with His cloud of fiery judgment. The Aarons have gone astray, obeying their backslidden congregations and making their calves of gold.

The Lord needs a Moses to “fall down before the Lord” and fast for this nation, to “lay his life on the line” as Moses did for his people, that God may save them. The hour is very late. It may be too late. It seems I can hear God say in the spirit: “Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them” (Exodus 32:10).

### *When Israel Fasted*

The tragic story told in Judges chapter 19 was almost unbelievable a few years ago. Now when we read it we are not so shocked anymore. Homosexual demons have taken over multitudes of men and women until some don't even know if they have the spirit of a man or woman in them.

Read Judges chapters 19-21.

And now, let us look at chapter 20:14-17. Benjamin had 26,000 soldiers. Israel had 400,000—their cause was God's cause, and yet when they went to battle Benjamin won the victory, killing 22,000 men.

The people tried to encourage each other. They slapped each other on the back and said, “Never mind, tomorrow we will do better.” Again they lost the battle—18,000 more of their soldiers lost their lives on the battlefield—all men who drew the sword—the finest of the army of Israel. It seemed the devils of hell were fighting with Benjamin.



This time Israel did not have vain words of comfort or empty phrases of encouragement. The anger had gone out of them. Their hearts were filled with sorrow and dismay. "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" (Judges 20:26).

They sought God's face. Too bad they hadn't fasted at the beginning. God was slowing them down to teach them one big lesson: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). Israel called on God and He answered them and promised them, "Go up; for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand" (Judges 20:28).

That day the angels of God fought with Israel. The enemy was conquered—and almost wiped out. This is one of the most tragic stories of civil war ever told in the Bible when brother fought brother and one tribe was cut off from Israel (Judges 21:6). The price of sin is very great.

We wonder why Israel did not win the first battle when they vastly outnumbered the Benjaminites. It could be because they themselves were too full of uncleanness. Pride and anger cannot win God's battle, neither can boasting or false promises of victory and peace.

Many do not want to face the reality of the hour we are living in. The hour has come for our nation to see that our might cannot save us. Neither our weapons, aircraft carriers, tanks or bombers, even our atomic and hydrogen bombs cannot redeem us. Our soldiers were slain on the fields of Vietnam like so many coolies, and it is no wonder when we remember the sins of our armies. Even today the innocent sons and daughters fathered by our American soldiers stationed there are suffering in communist Vietnam. We have received reports that many of them are being allowed to literally starve to death in communist Vietnam camps and 'homes' for such children.



## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read Deuteronomy chapter 9  
Exodus 32  
Job 13:15
- B. Memorize the Ten Commandments.
- C. Answer the following questions:
  - 1. How long did Moses fast? Explain why.
  - 2. Can you find any record that Moses might have broken his fast between the two 40-day periods?
  - 3. What did Moses accomplish in his first and second fast?
  - 4. In the story in Judges, how many battles did Israel fight with Benjamin? How many did they win?
  - 5. Why do we lose a battle?

## LESSON 6

### *Elijah, the Fiery Prophet*

Few prophets have left their mark so indelibly upon a nation as Elijah. Even though Elisha had the double portion and performed twice as many miracles, Elijah was the prophet the most honored and wondered at. The greatest miracle of his ministry was not the raising of the dead son of the widow, or the calling down of fire on Mount Carmel, but his own translation, ascending into heaven, by-passing death, the grim reaper.

Elijah, with Moses, visited with Jesus while He was on earth. The story of the transfiguration of our Saviour into a divine body and the sudden change of His raiment is one of the great mysteries of the Bible. How Jesus could suddenly put on His immortal body and then lay it aside to don his earthly tabernacle and die as a man dies is a thing I often meditate and wonder about. If we live the Christ-life, would we be able to put on the immortality in a moment of divine ecstasy?

Matthew records the happening, "And there appeared unto them Moses and Elias (Elijah) talking with him" (17:3). Mark and Luke mention it also. Jesus spoke about Elijah after that happened and said Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things, and then He went on to say that Elijah had come but had not been recognized, and even as he had suffered at the hands of his persecutors so Jesus would also suffer. The disciples understood that He was speaking about John the baptist coming in the spirit of Elijah.

The ministry of Elijah lives on. Many believe that the anointed group God is raising up in the end-time are the Elijah company. Some Bible scholars believe that the two witnesses of Revelation 11 are Elijah and Moses, or Enoch. Others believe these two witnesses are not two individuals but two companies of people in the spirit of Elijah and some



other prophet. We are not told who they are. Every cult seems to end up thinking they are that special company. Spiritual pride has entered and they do not know they have fallen.

Elijah must have lived a life of fasting or he could never have done the mighty deeds which he did. But the final and great fast of 40 days came in the middle of his ministry. He had just done some of the greatest miracles recorded in the Scripture. The fire of God had fallen and Israel had repented and turned from their idols back to God. As soon as Jezebel heard about it she threatened to take his life. It seems that great fear fell upon Elijah and he fled for his life (I Kings 19:3). He complained to God "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." He fell asleep in exhaustion and awoke to find an angel making him breakfast. Talk about room service! He had it! The angel encouraged him to eat and told him "the journey is too great for thee" (v. 7). After finishing that cake and drinking the water he started on his journey to Mount Horeb. He had to go back where it had all begun, the place God had spoken to his people. He needed a new meeting with God. Across that barren desert, which Apollo 15 Astronaut James Irwin says is like the Moon itself, Elijah trod, stick in hand, not stopping to eat or drink, day after day and week after week until he arrived brown with dust and his clothes covered with sand. But he had made it. He found a cave and lay down to rest. And then God spoke: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Has God ever asked you that question?

Sometimes it takes a long fast for us to have our eyes opened. Elijah poured out his heart about his lonely life, his heartaches, fears and problems. Then God told him to go and climb the Mount. That same Mount where God had spoken to Moses. It is a long and hard climb up. I have been at that mountain and camped there. (I would have liked to have climbed that mountain but it was impossible as we didn't have the time).

There on that mountain, like Moses of old, Elijah had



his appointment with God. God gave him the commission and authority to anoint Hazael as king over Syria (v. 15), and to anoint Jehu as king over Israel; and to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his stead (v. 16).

God also revealed to him that He had 7,000 in Israel who had not bowed their knee to Baal. This was great encouragement to Elijah.

When the Lord visits you, you can never be the same. Everything is changed. Praise the Lord! With new confidence Elijah retraced his steps and fulfilled his last commission. He saw his enemies die. He lived yet many years doing God's mighty works, and at the end of his ministry it seems he was teaching the students in the school of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho.

He knew he would be translated. He even knew the day, and maybe the hour. He had spoken about it to the students and they knew it also. At last that glorious day came, the day for which he had been waiting. The chariot of fire and the horses of fire swept down from the throne of God, through the gates of heaven, past the stars and planets to snatch away the prophet of fire who had lived in the anointing and was ready to go. As he was leaving he bequeathed to Elisha his mantle and a double portion of his anointing.

If he had not fasted would he still have been translated?

### *Nineveh*

To understand the magnitude of the grace of God in His saving Nineveh one must know a little about the city. It was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:5-10), the grandson of Noah's son Ham, upon whom the curse had fallen (Genesis 9:25).

Nimrod was also the founder of Babylon. He is called "a mighty hunter." In my understanding, it means he was a fierce and cruel man, a man who killed freely to seize control. He was a Hitler, a Stalin, a Mao of his time. He no doubt lived longer than any of them also. He founded the Babylonian



system of idolatry and elevated himself to that of a god. Josephus says Nimrod was a bold man with great strength of hand who with the people rebelled against God, and sought to ascribe their prosperity to him and their own courage. He turned the government into a tyranny and threatened to avenge God if He would send a flood. For this purpose he engineered the Tower of Babylon which would be too high for the waters to reach. It was considered cowardice to submit to God.

This man, Nimrod, also founded Ninevah. This city was situated on the bank of the Tigris River—opposite the modern city of Mosul. Archeologists have uncovered magnificent palaces which were the residences of Assyrian kings. Sennacherib's palace has revealed some amazing secrets of the past. Sargon II made Nineveh the capital of Assyria. A library that held 22,000 clay tablets has been discovered. These tablets have important accounts of the creation and flood. Sennacherib had built a wall 40-50 feet high around the great city. The Assyrians were a cruel people who tortured and greatly afflicted any people they conquered (II Kings 19:17; Isaiah 10:13-14; 37:11, 18-26). The stories of how their kings attacked Israel and Judah is well-known to every Bible scholar. Jonah had no particular love for them. He would have been just as glad if God would have annihilated them. But God wanted to show His grace because He is not willing that any should perish. And so He sent Jonah. The story about his disobedience and flight is one you can read by yourself (Jonah 1:3).

I want to draw your attention to what happened when he arrived at the great gates of Ninevah. As he paused to take a look at the scenes of idolatry, wickedness, worldliness and evil, the Spirit of God fell upon him and he began to cry, "Yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." He cried out the message of warning and doom. He went up one street and down another and the people heard it and believed. The children stared in amazement at this strange-looking man in his different costume, but they didn't laugh. God's fear fell

on them too.

The King was told about the prophet, and terrible fear seized him. He felt Jonah was a messenger sent from a divine source. The Bible says he arose from his throne, took off his robe, and putting on sackcloth sat in ashes. He issued a decree for the city to fast—man, woman, child and beast. All were commanded to wear sackcloth. “Who can tell,” said he, “if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?”

Today we need kings, presidents and prime ministers like him who will face the facts and proclaim a fast. It's not enough for only the people to fast. That is like the Pharisees who made the laws for the people but they themselves didn't keep them (Matthew 23:4). It's time for our leaders in office, throne and pulpit to leave their position of prestige, and fall on their faces before God.

This is the year for the prophets, pastors, evangelists, missionaries and every worker in the kingdom of God to seek the face of God in intercessory prayer and fasting. Who can tell if God will repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that WE perish not?

God heard the cry of the people and the lowing of the beasts and He spared Nineveh for approximately 120 years. When the city was destroyed in August 612 B.C. God's patience had run out and the clock had stopped for Nineveh forever.



## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read the book of Jonah
  - I Kings 18 and 19
  - 2 Kings 2
- B. Read the history of Elijah in any good Bible dictionary (I recommend *Ungers*, published by Moody Press)
- C. Memorize 2 Kings 2:9b
- D. Answer the following questions:
  - 1. Compare Elijah and Jonah.
  - 2. After Elijah had fasted 40 days what did God tell him?
  - 3. Name five of the miracles Elijah performed.
  - 4. Why did Jonah not want to go to Nineveh?
  - 5. How long did the people of Nineveh fast?

## LESSON 7

### *Daniel*

The story of Daniel's fast is one of the greatest of all victories won in the history of God's people.

Daniel, the great prophet of God who had been carried as a child captive into Babylon had, almost from the beginning, resolved to not defile himself with the King's way of living. God had led him to live on a vegetarian diet. The result of this, his dedication to God, and also being chosen by God as a son of destiny, resulted in him being especially gifted in wisdom and knowledge. He was God's man in a strategic place in one of the most tragic hours of the history of Israel.

The custom in those days was such that when a nation came in battle against another nation they would carry away thousands of the people as captives. The Assyrian King Sargon in 722 B.C. had carried away from the ten northern tribes of Israel 30,000 captives. This took place a few decades after Jonah had prophesied in Nineveh.

In 721 B.C. Sennacherib came against Judah with 185,000 soldiers, and laid siege on Jerusalem. King Hezekiah cried out to God, and the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians—wiping out the entire army in one night. As one minister said, "When they woke up in the morning they were all dead men."

In 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar came against Israel for the first time and carried away captives. He returned in 597 and carried away more captives. Among them was Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1). In 586 Nebuchadnezzar came in rage and anger and completely destroyed the city (II Chronicles 36:17-20). Daniel, with three other Hebrew boys (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) had been carried away in the first deportation.

God had spoken through Jeremiah that the people would stay in captivity for 70 years, until they had observed



all the Sabbaths that they had not observed in their land (II Chronicles 36:21; Jeremiah 25:11-13).

Never had it been known that any people in captivity were permitted to return to their land. Other people or other nations were sent to take and live in their lands (II Kings 17:24; 18:34). But as Daniel was serving under King Cyrus (the Persian King) who now was in control of Babylon, God gave Daniel wisdom and the understanding that the 70 years were complete. Daniel had been carried away captive in 606 B.C. Cyrus had conquered the city of Babylon in 539 B.C. This was the third year of Cyrus' reign—making it 536 B.C. (from 606 to 536—a total of 70 years). Daniel believed God's word and he knew how to do arithmetic. He realized the time had come—but NO ONE was returning. The great burden fell on him that God would move on the heart of King Cyrus to release the Jews and let them go back. No doubt Daniel had access to the writing of the prophet Isaiah who had prophesied 176 years earlier that God's anointed, Cyrus, would open the doors and set the Jews free (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1).

Cyrus was now ruling, and the time of Judah's appointment had come. The burden fell on Daniel. For three full weeks (Daniel 10:1-21) he was in mourning for the release of Judah. For three weeks he was on a liquid fast. He may have been 80 years old at that time. He perhaps was not able to fast a complete fast like Moses or Elijah, but he paid the price that God wanted him to pay. At the conclusion of the fast a heavenly visitor, none other than the pre-incarnate Messiah (whose appearance was almost identical to the vision John had of Him on the Isle of Patmos given in Revelation 1:14-15) came to speak to him. Read the words He spoke to Daniel in 10:10-14.

Notice especially verse 12: “. . . Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand . . . thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.” Oh, the wonder of it! From the first day of his fast, the Glorious One had started on His mission to loose His



people. These were the people through whom He would one day come as flesh to this world. On His way He was stopped by a great demon prince—the Prince of Persia—who did not want to let the people go. He wanted to keep them as slaves in bondage. Every nation has a demon prince appointed by the evil one to destroy and work evil. I have many times on the mission field withstood powerful and mighty demons who were in control of nations and governments.

For 21 days he had withstood the Anointed One (Daniel 10:13). Many times the battle must have waxed furiously, but down there on that little globe the Lord could see Daniel fasting and mourning and knew this was one prayer He had to answer. At last, Michael, the chief prince of Israel (Daniel 10:21) came, and together they wrestled through to victory.

Because Daniel fasted he freed his whole nation. The victory was won and Cyrus issued the decree that the people were free to return and begin building the house of God in Jerusalem, (II Chronicles 36:21-23) and a vision of God that reaches down the corridors of time—even to our time—was given to Daniel.

Among the kings of the Bible none were more humane than Cyrus. He sent the captives back to their homeland. The famous cylinder of Cyrus found in the Nineteenth Century is a confirmation of this. It reads, "All their inhabitants I collected and restored to their dwelling places." He saw himself as a "man of destiny," and tells how the one he worshipped "sought a righteous prince after his own heart, whom he took by the hand, Cyrus, king of Anshan, to lordship over the whole world he appointed him. Without battle and conflict he permitted him to enter Babylon and spared his city Babylon a calamity. The king he delivered into his hand."

Cyrus was slain in battle in 530 B.C., nine years later. His tomb is still in existence today. A picture of it can be seen in Unger's *Bible Dictionary*, page 233. Plutarch (c 90 A.D.) says the tomb bore this inscription: "O man, whosoever thou art and whensoever thou comest, for I know that thou wilt come, I am Cyrus, and I won for the Persians their



empire. Do not, therefore, begrudge me this little earth which covers my body."

Is it any wonder he was kind when he had such companions? The glorified Christ had said to Daniel, "I remain with the king of Persia." He had stayed by Cyrus, unseen, influencing him to do the will of God. Truly, our battles are not with flesh and blood but with the unseen forces of the spirit world, and when we fast we move Jesus on our behalf.

### STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read II Chronicles 36:11-23  
the book of Ezra  
Isaiah 44:24  
Isaiah 45:1
- B. Read the book of Daniel
- C. Memorize Daniel 10:19a
- D. Answer the following questions:
  - 1. When was Daniel led into captivity? How? Why?
  - 2. When did he begin to get favor with the king? How? Why?
  - 3. How old was he when he fasted? Why did he fast? How long did he fast?
  - 4. What happened when he fasted?
  - 5. Describe the vision Daniel had of Christ and compare it with the vision of the revelation of John.

## LESSON 8

### *Ezra*

Ezra was a descendant of Aaron through Phinehas (Ezra 7:1-6, 11-12).

God had stirred up his heart to return with the children of captivity who were going back to Jerusalem. In the reign of Artaxerxes Ezra won favor with the king to take back with him supplies and silver and gold. It was King Artaxerxes who made the decree that the ministers of God need never pay taxes, toll, nor custom fees (Ezra 7:24). We still have this law in our time.

Because of the valuable cargo they were taking with them and the long and difficult journey (5 months, Ezra 7:9), and the dangers of many robbers and bandits on the way, it was very dangerous, but even so Ezra was ashamed to ask the King to give them an escort (Ezra 8:22). (Living Bible says: "I weighed the money as I gave it to them and found it to total \$1,300,000 in silver; \$200,000 in silver utensils; \$3 million in gold; and 20 gold bowls worth a total of \$5,000. There were also two beautiful pieces of brass which were as precious as gold" Ezra 8:26-27.)

One thousand seven hundred fifty-four people were returning with him, among them many children. He was a man of wisdom. How could he brag on the greatness of God and His power of protection and then turn around and ask the king to give him protection? But he knew where to get help.

When they started out at the River Ahava, as the whole group gathered in preparation for the journey, Ezra proclaimed a fast (Ezra 8:21). He made an appointment with God. "So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us" (8:23). In verses 31 and 32 we read: "Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand



of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem . . . ” God had given a great company of people divine protection and travelling mercies—carrying millions of dollars in valuables through robber-infested roads.

We need to fast and prepare ourselves for important journeys. We End-Time Handmaidens always prepare ourselves in fasting and prayer before we go on our dangerous missions of taking Bibles to the parts of the world where they are forbidden. (The United Bible Societies claim that the following countries *forbid or severely limit Bible distribution*: Libya, Mauritania, Albania, Saudi-Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Angola, Afghanistan, Tibet, Mainland China, Mongolia, Cuba, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Turkey, Lebanon and Russia.) And I could add many more names to the list, such as Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc. The need to make journeys to bring our brothers and sisters Bibles is very urgent.

Some Christians go on these trips behind the Iron Curtain but they are afraid to take Bibles. Perhaps this is because they do not fast for victory over the spirit of fear.

One of the most fearless women I knew is a dear friend of mine, Olga Robertson, who has worked as a missionary for many years in the great Muntinlupa Prison in the Philippines. In her work she must often go into big cells full of demon-possessed men, murderers and rapists. Sometimes she is locked in with as many as 200. I know, I have been there with her. She has gone in empty-handed and calm into cell blocks where there are raging and rioting men—where no prison guard dared to go. Her courage, love and strength has turned lions into lambs. I was there when the prison superintendent told her she was the greatest “rehabilitation assistant” he had ever had. People marvel at her courage; even strong men know she has something they don’t have. I know she does too, for one day she said to me, “Gwen, I could never do this work if I didn’t fast one day a week. Most of these men have demons and I need the power of God when I minister to them.”



## *Esther*

Esther, the cousin of Mordecai, was chosen for her beauty. King Ahasuerus (also known as Xerxes began reigning over Persia in 422 B.C. His kingdom was very extensive, extending from Ethiopia to India (Esther 1:1). It seems he was a very temperamental, unpredictable "playboy" kind of a man.

In the third year of his reign he divorced his wife Vashti because she refused to come and show her beauty before the multitudes who had gathered at the palace Shusan for a long feast that lasted 160 days.

The land was searched for the most beautiful women. They were brought to the palace. And there the king chose the one who would take Vashti's place. Esther, the daughter of Abihail, one of the captives who had been brought from Judah, was among those who were brought in. She had been left an orphan, and her cousin Mordecai who held an important office in the government raised her as his own daughter.

Esther was a Benjamite. The name Esther was no doubt given her in the Persian court. The name Esther is *Aster* in Greek, and it means star, referring to the star Venus. Her Hebrew name was *Hadassah*—Myrtle. The name Myrtle is beautiful, but the name Esther was prophetic of what she was to become, a bright and shining star, the hope of her people and their salvation too.

Even as the myrtle is a humble shrub, so Esther's beginnings were humble. She lived in obedience to her uncle and when she was brought into the palace harem was soon placed into the best place of the house of the women. In her wisdom she never told who her parents were. She had no doubt been born and raised in Persia and had no betraying accent. Mordecai, knowing the dangers and intrigue of court life had told her to be secretive and she was. She "fasted her words," literally putting "her hand on her mouth." When her turn came to go in before the king, she was chosen. This was in the seventh year of his reign.



Ahasuerus had a very wicked prime minister, Haman, who in terrible anger at Mordecai's refusal to bow to him offered to the king 10,000 talents (Living Bible gives it as \$20,000,000) for the right to massacre the entire Jewish race. When Mordecai heard about this he rent his garments, put on sackcloth and walked through the streets wailing bitterly.

Throughout the kingdom Jews began to do the same. Soon the news got to Esther. It was when she tried to get Mordecai to take off his sackcloth and wear other clothes that the greatest challenge of her life came to her.

Mordecai sent a letter to her with the chamberlain Hatach, with the full message of what had happened, and then he charged her that she should go in unto the King to make supplications unto him and to make request to him for her people.

She sent a message back to Mordecai letting him know that no one could approach the King without special invitation. And she did not know what had happened but she had not been called into his presence for 30 days. It could easily have been that he was tired of her.

But Mordecai returned the message to her that she had no more chance of saving her life than any other Jew. The same King who had disposed of Vashti would get rid of her too. He knew God would send help, but if she did not volunteer to stand in the gap and risk her life for her people she would never escape, for the murderer of the Jews would begin in Shushan the Palace.

Esther sent one final message back to Mordecai: "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" (4:16). Now we see the courage, the love and the obedience that had made God choose her to become the queen of Persia, the wife of Ahasuerus.

After three days of fasting, Esther put on her royal



robes and entered the inner court where the King was sitting upon his throne. God moved his heart in love toward her, and the King asked her her desire, promising to give her half of the kingdom. In wisdom, she remained silent. Instead, she invited him and the prime minister (who no doubt was seated close by) to a feast which she could prepare herself.

That night at the banquet, when the King asked her what her petition was she again asked him to come to another feast the next day. What poise she had! She was not in a hurry. Fasting gives us poise so we are not rushing about in confusion. It gives dignity, courage and inner strength, and builds our faith in God, and gives us self-confidence.

It's good Esther could wait because that night God took over the whole situation. The King couldn't sleep.

—He called for his servants to read to him.

—They “happened” to choose the story about how Mordecai had at one time spared his life, an event he had forgotten.

—He decided to do something good for Mordecai.

—Haman stepped into the court house.

—The King asked Haman how he could do a special favor for someone he wanted to honor.

—Haman thought the King meant himself and suggested the extremest “Red Carpet” VIP treatment he could dream up.

—The King said, “You go and do that for Mordecai the Jew.”

—Haman was humbled as he led Mordecai around the city. (I'm sure he was thinking: “And I paid the King \$20,000,000 for this!”)

—Haman was finished and he knew it, his wife knew it, his friends knew it, and the demons who had driven him knew it.

—Haman was brought in to the feast, all unprepared and full of fear.

—The King asked Esther again what her petition was.

—And Esther spoke the most swaying words heard by



any lawyer of defence: "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not counter-vail the king's damage" (7:3-4).

—Within an hour Haman was hanging on the gallows he had built for Mordecai. And the Jews throughout the kingdom were saved because a young "myrtle tree" paid the price in fasting, and dared to lose her life in an attempt to save the lives of her people.

Today we need Esthers who will pay the same price and stand in the gap for their nations, their people, their families—women who will shine as stars.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read Ezra 7, and the book of Esther.
- B. Memorize Esther 4:16b
- C. Answer the following questions:
  - 1. Describe the work God gave Ezra to do.
  - 2. What was the strength and protection of Ezra's ministry?
  - 3. What was the reason Esther became Queen of Persia?
  - 4. What does Esther's name mean, and what was her former name and its meaning?
  - 5. Why was it so dangerous for Esther to speak to the King?
  - 6. Why did Haman have to die?



## LESSON 9

### *New Testament Experiences* *Anna, the Prophetess*

The New Testament begins with the story of the birth of our Saviour, and one of the first people we meet is a woman called Anna (Luke 2:36-38). She was from the tribe of Asher. You will remember the special prophecy Jacob gave to his son Asher and his descendants (Genesis 49:20). Moses also prophesied to these descendants (Deuteronomy 33:24-25).

In the Israel Anthem which God inspired me to write, I have written one verse to each of the tribes of Israel.\* of Asher I wrote:

Asher, my happy tribe, arise,  
Thou blessed with children of the Lord.  
Thy coffers shall be full  
As royal dainties thou shalt give  
To others sad with poverty.  
Dip thou thy feet in holy oil;  
With shoes of iron—be strong.

Upon Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, came all these blessings because she sought the Lord. Her name means "God shall grant a favorable reply." It also means, "one who makes every effort, one who labors and toils; a herald, a narrator, a singer." This is a perfect description of the woman who bore that name. It would be a good thing for some of us to understand the meaning of our own name more fully and to live up to it.

Anna truly knew how to get a favorable reply from God. She exerted every effort to secure the greatest gift that God gave Israel—the Messiah. This woman lived a life of dedication to God, like a nun in the temple of the Lord, fasting and praying day and night, never leaving the temple for over

\**Treasures in Song*—Published by End-Time Handmaidens (1976).

50 years. Seven years after her marriage, as a young woman no doubt, which the custom was ("seven years from her virginity"), God took her husband. She had a higher, more noble calling than to be the wife of a man, a mother of children. She had been called to pray and fast for the incarnation of God in flesh. For those many years she never lost the vision, or the burden of the great and glorious thing that God was going to do. Maybe God has taken your husband while you are still in the prime of life, and you are heartbroken, wondering why. Or perhaps your marriage has broken, or you are divorced, and life doesn't seem to have any future. Your heart has cried, "Why, Lord, why?" It could be that God is working out a far more glorious future for you than you have ever dreamed. There is no place left for you to go but into the arms of God. This time of heartbreak is the time of your appointment with God. Enter into His presence. Seek Him in fasting and prayer. Give Him your life. ALL of your life—for ALL time. Do not depart from this commitment of your soul.

I can say that as you find God, you will find your answer. He will bathe your weary travel-worn feet in holy oil and give you shoes of iron to march the rest of the journey, even if you must march it alone.

And I can promise you that it will pay off! There will be a glorious reward. Your eyes too shall behold the Lord of glory. You shall have a revelation of Him that others do not have because they turned to the broken cisterns of the world for comfort.

Like Anna, you shall also herald the good tidings, narrate the old, old story of Jesus and His love to many by your life and by your words. God will give you a song that will echo in the halls of heaven.

### *John the Baptist*

Luke tells us in chapter 5, verse 33 that John the baptist lived a life of fasting, and his disciples did the same. He stood



at the close of one dispensation and at the threshold of another. He had a hard message to bring: "REPENT!"

This is the message the world needs today. We are at the brink of a holocaust. Only mass repentance can save us now.

John lived a hard life in the wilderness. A life where there were no supermarkets, vegetable gardens or orchards. His food was supplied by wild nature. For some of us to live like that, it might be harder than fasting. I have seen preachers come to India from America and when they saw what they had to eat in the Indian homes they "proclaimed a fast," while I looked on in absolute amazement because to me—a life-long missionary—the food was delicious!

As we stand at the close of one dispensation and the beginning of another, many of us will be called to a ministry of fasting.

### *Cornelius (Acts 10)*

There is little doubt that Cornelius was a believer in God. He was a proselyte who came from one of the most noble and distinguished families of Rome. Somewhere in his life he had had a meeting with Jehovah and became a devout man who "feared God with all his house, and gave much alms to the people."

It was while he was praying, between 12 noon and 3 p.m., that an angel appeared to him and told him his prayers and giving had come up for a memorial before God, and that he should send for a man called Peter, living with Simon the tanner in the village of Joppa, who would tell him what he should do.

God sees our earnest seeking for Him, and He will show us the will of God when we draw nigh to Him.

When Peter arrived, three days later, Cornelius said to him, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour" (v.30).

It was not by accident or incident that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. He had kept his appointment with God, and God kept His

appointment with him.

God needs men like Cornelius, busy men, who will, in the heat of the day, seek the face of God in fasting and prayer. Cornelius means "a horn," "strength." God needs men who will find their God-offered rights—men who will get hold of the horns of the altar in fasting and intercession that they might become men of tremendous strength in the hour of spiritual, moral, physical weakness and decay.

"Act like men, be strong, and whatever you do, do it with kindness and love" (I Corinthians 16:13, 14 Living Bible).

### *The Shipwrecked Sailors*

The story takes place as Paul was being taken to Rome as a prisoner. I would like to quote it as given in The Living Bible, Acts 27:14-26:

But shortly afterwards, the weather changed abruptly and a heavy wind of typhoon strength (a "northeaster," they called it) caught the ship and blew it out to sea. They tried at first to face back to shore but couldn't, so they gave up and let the ship run before the gale.

We finally sailed behind a small island named Clauda, where with great difficulty we hoisted aboard the lifeboat that was being towed behind us, and then banded the ship with ropes to strengthen the hull. The sailors were afraid of being driven across to the quicksands of the African coast, so they lowered the topsails and were thus driven before the wind.

The next day as the seas grew higher, the crew began throwing the cargo overboard. The following day they threw out the tackle and anything else they could lay their hands on. The terrible storm raged unabated many days, until at last all hope was gone.



No one had eaten for a long time, but finally Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Fair Havens—you would have avoided all this injury and loss! But cheer up! Not one of us will lose our lives, even though the ship will go down.

For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and said "Don't be afraid, Paul—for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God has granted your request and will save the lives of all those sailing with you." So take courage! For I believe God! It will be just as he said! But we will be shipwrecked on an island.

Paul said, "Men, you should not have left Fair Havens." How many times have we disobeyed the advice of godly people, have disregarded the voice of the Holy Spirit and have sailed out of the Fair Havens of God's perfect will?

God has watched us sorrowfully, like He watched the Rich Young Ruler. He has seen how we were too weak to pay the price, too foolish to realize we were willfully sailing into a terrible typhoon, and that we would not come out without great loss—and He has let us do it because we are free moral agents.

But somewhere in the storm when we have been caught by the winds and "blown out to sea" we suddenly realize that all hope is gone. We have made a terrible, tragic mistake which can never be erased from our lives. That is when we catch sight of the true values and we begin to throw "the cargo overboard." How much cargo are you hanging on to in your life? It seems so valuable when you reckon it with dollars and cents, or pounds and shillings, but in the sight of the eternal values of God IT IS RUBBISH. Believe me, it is! Throw the cargo out of your life. You have a life to save—your own!



**“The following day they threw out the tackle and anything else they could lay their hands on”—utter abandonment! That is the place some of us have had to come to before God could save us.**

**We have come to the place where the guidelines of our laws and the rules and traditions of our upbringing, the whole of our built-in structure of society was thrown overboard. Some have lost faith in the church, the doctrine it teaches, the people who worship in it and even the God they worship, and they are drifting before the wind with all hope lost.**

**This is the tragic thing that happens when we leave the port of Fair Havens after God has warned us. But in the middle of the storm I hear a voice speaking loud and clear: “Be of good cheer for I believe God.”**

**What did these men do when it seemed the mountain-high waves would dash them to the bottom of the seas? They FASTED. All 276 of them fasted. Even though they were not believers they knew there was only one key and that was a desperate turning to God in fasting. For 14 days they did not eat. “Why feed a dying man?” they may have thought. But now a voice of authority spoke. Speaking with confidence, for in the hour of the darkness he had had a visitor, an angel from heaven who had come straight from the throne with a message of hope.**

**Is your life shipwrecked? Have you lost your way in the storm? Fast and pray for 14 days. I know a wonderful thing will happen to you. The angel of the Lord will keep his appointment with you. You may not see him. There were 276 people on the boat with Paul. Two hundred seventy-five of them did not see the angel, but they knew the angel had visited them, and they broke their fast with great joy. The storm was still raging, but praise God, every life was saved. When the burden lifts you can break your fast, even though your prayer doesn't seem to have been answered.**



## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read** Luke 2:36-38  
Luke 5:33  
Acts 10  
Acts 27:1-26
- B. Memorize** I Corinthians 16:13.
- C. Answer the following questions:**
1. Have you ever known a woman like Anna? Tell about her.
  2. What was Anna's reward for her years of fasting and prayer?
  3. Why did John the baptist have to live a life of fasting?
  4. What was so important about the happenings of the house of Cornelius?
  5. Do you feel that one person can bring blessing on a nation by paying a price? Can you name five who did?
  6. Why did God save the ship and its passengers that were on the way to Italy?

## LESSON 10

### *The Life of Paul*

Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles lived a life of fasting and prayer. Immediately upon his conversion on the road to Damascus he began to fast. After that tremendous vision of Jesus Christ Paul sought the face of God in a new way.

Let us trace his life. In Galatians 1:13-14: "For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." Can you picture this orthodox son of Israel, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), of the tribe of Benjamin (like Esther), belonging to the most strict sect of his religion—and directing his angry zeal against the early church, determined to wipe it out together with the memory and name of Jesus—like Haman had tried to wipe out the Jews? He tells King Agrippa about this in Acts 26:9-11.

And now suddenly he sees this brilliant light and hears this beautiful voice speaking in love and compassion: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? You are only hurting yourself." When Paul asked, "Who art thou?" the mind-shattering answer comes, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then and there, in that same instant comes his call for missionary service.

Struck blind by the light, he is led by the hand to the city of Damascus where he was going to persecute the Christians. But now the wonderful power of God has struck the sword of persecution out of his hand.

For three days he sat in blindness waiting for the Lord to speak to him again. Fasting and waiting (Acts 9:9). And on the third day God speaks to the disciple Ananias telling him to go and pray for Paul so that he would receive his sight



and be filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17). Immediately his eyes were opened, he was baptized and began to preach Christ in the synagogues: *that He is the Son of God*.

When you come to a place of great change in your life, prepare for it by fasting. For Paul it was as if he had been a man who was driving at a speed of 160 miles an hour in an open car straight into a concrete wall. He was absolutely and completely different, changed in his whole way of thinking; the conversion of his mind, the revolution of his way of living, his motives, his zeal, his goal; everything had to be broken off and begun all over again in a new way. During those three days of fasting God prepared him for a new life. It was then, no doubt, as he kept his appointment with God, that his name was changed from Saul—"the demanding one"—to Paul—"the little one, the smallest, the lowliest." A man God could use to turn the world upside down! (Acts 17:6).

### *Jesus Christ*

We have already written about the Lord's 40-day fast. He knew better than any living mortal that the only way to start into the great ministry of life and the martyr's death that lay before him was through the anointing that comes with fasting.

The Holy Spirit knew it too, and that is why we read: "The Spirit *drove* him into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). That is the way we should begin a true God-given fast, with the Spirit of God *driving* us to fast. We should have such a hunger, longing and desire for God that we feel we can't live any longer unless we have an appointment with Him.

For 40 days Jesus was alone with God, nature, the wild beasts and Himself. It is a beautiful experience to be in communion with God. It is exhilarating to be out in the fields and deserts, but to be with the wild beasts and your own mean self as the only companions is something many find difficult and fearful. But out there Jesus made His resolutions and His dedication, and He was given the vision of His goal.

The plan of His 3½ years of ministry was laid out before Him. And when that happened, the enormity of it was so great that Satan came to try to pervert that call and turn it to the glory of Satan's kingdom. But Jesus had paid the price and had won the victory, and Satan was defeated. No wonder Jesus said demons would be cast out by fasting (Matthew 17: 21). He knew how to overcome them. He knew what the greatest power was . . . had He not been there when Daniel had fasted?

And now He had come as Man, the Son of God, and accepting the limitations of a human body He had nevertheless refused the limitations of a sin-cursed spirit. We too can do that—we don't need to accept the limitations of a sin-cursed spirit. By breaking through the barrier, reaching up beyond the boundaries of the complacent and average religious experiences, we can come into the realm of the divine power of God through the key of fasting. Yes, Jesus too kept His appointment with the Father, and when He did the angels ministered to Him, and He came out of the wilderness in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit with the word of authority that would heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, and still the storms.

The anointing of that fast is still upon our Saviour Jesus today, and if He, the Son of God, Emmanuel, felt the need to fast—how much more should we!



## STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Read Acts 9:1-31  
Acts 26:1-32  
II Corinthians 6:1-13  
II Corinthians 11:21-33  
Matthew 4:1-11
- B. Memorize Acts 26:19; Matthew 4:4.
- C. Answer the following questions:
1. Tell something about the background of Paul.
  2. What are the meanings of "Saul" and "Paul"?
  3. Why was Saul's conversion so dramatic?
  4. Why did Jesus fast?
  5. Name all those the Bible records who fasted 40 days.

## LESSON 11

### *"JESUS, WHY DON'T YOUR DISCIPLES FAST?"*

When Jesus was on earth the disciples of John came to him with a question: "Why do we and the Pharisees fast (the Pharisees fasted twice a week) but thy disciples fast not?" (Matthew 9:14). The scribes and Pharisees also criticized them for not fasting (Luke 5:30). This happened right after they had enjoyed a good feast at the house of Levi, the tax collector.

It was then that Jesus gave one of the most mystical of all His parables, found in Luke 5:36: "And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old."

#### *The New Agreeth Not With The Old*

This is a day of new beginnings. God is winding up the old—the manna of the wilderness is going to cease falling in the camp of Israel. We are getting ready to eat the corn and fruit of the land of Canaan. The manna and corn do not mix. The old and the new cannot live together. It is like putting spoiled, left-over food into the new pot of stew you are cooking. The old will spoil the new. They cannot agree together.

Often when God gives new revelations the old way of thinking is the worst enemy. In the middle ages the Catholics persecuted the Lutherans. Then the Lutherans persecuted the Baptists. Later the Baptists persecuted the Pentecostals, and today Pentecostals have to be careful that they don't persecute God's children who believe differently than they do.

**THE OLD AND NEW DON'T MIX.**



## *New Bottles for New Wine*

Then Jesus went on to say: "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish" (Luke 5:37). New wine has new life in it. This new life, this glorious resurrection life that Jesus was speaking about was so wonderful, so magnificent, so completely different that the old "skins" that had been stretched with yesterday's liquids would not be able to contain the radicalness of the new wine as it would grow and expand.

- You must remember the "bottles" Jesus referred to were not glass bottles but skins made from the hide of animals. When these skins were filled with liquid they took on the shape of the animal that they had come from. Goat skin bottles looked like goats, and pigskin bottles looked like pigs. I have seen both, the former in the Middle East, and the latter in China. Jesus said before He could pour out the "new wine" He was going to prepare new bottles.

How was He going to make those new bottles? In Luke 5:34-35, the verses just preceding these parables, Jesus told them that while the Bridegroom was with the children of the bridechamber it was very difficult to fast. "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and **THEN SHALL THEY FAST IN THOSE DAYS.**" This is the command of Jesus to you for all time. If you are a child of the Bridechamber—a disciple of Christ, then you too will fast.

*And why should you fast?* Jesus goes on to explain that through that fast He will make a new wine skin out of you so that you will be able to contain the new wine that your heart will receive when you have met His conditions. He will not just patch up those old clerical robes of righteousness that are tattered, faded and worn. Hallelujah! He will give you a new robe, the garment of praise—that the world may see Jesus in you!

Someone once told me of a dream in which she saw a



closet full of beautiful clothes. In front of the clothes were old tattered, faded, ancient clerical robes. She saw they were hindering her from seeing the beautiful garments on the inside. "What are those ugly old things doing there?" she asked in anger. Reaching up she pushed them out of the way saying, "Italy will see Jesus, Italy will see Jesus." She awakened while saying this.

That is what God is doing today. He is not patching up old clerical robes. He has a closet full of beautiful new mantles of anointing ready to be given out when His children pay the price by fasting.

These old ugly worn-out bodies of ours will be reconditioned by the power of the anointing that comes through fasting, so that we shall be able to contain the new wine without bursting.

### *When Fasting Prayer is Not Answered*

One of the most beautiful and significant stories of fasting in the Bible is when King David fasted.

In an hour of uncontrolled passion David had committed adultery with beautiful Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and she conceived (2 Samuel 11:2-5). Then to cover his sins he had commanded Joab, commander of his army, to place Bathsheba's husband Uriah in a dangerous position so that there would be every possibility that he would be slain in the battle (2 Samuel 11:14-15). When Uriah was killed David took Bathsheba to be his wife. Their son was born, and no one but God knew the difference.

Then one day, because God loved David too much to see him continue without repenting, He sent Nathan, His prophet, to him with hard words (2 Samuel 12:1-12). When David saw his act in the light of God's justice he repented bitterly. Nathan told him: "God has put away your sin, but the child shall die" (2 Samuel 12:13, 14).

Soon after this the child became very sick. David earnestly sought the Lord for his son, the child who was the fruit



of his lust. He lay before the Lord fasting and crying out to God in agony of soul. Every time he thought of that beautiful, fevered dark-eyed laddie his agony was intensified. And when he remembered the face of his beloved Bathsheba he felt he could not bear it another minute, and so he hung on to God.

For seven days and nights the servants slipped around quietly whispering to each other. And while David agonized, the angel of death slipped in through the grand portals of his palace and touched the child, and he was no more.

The servants of David did not know how they would tell David the tragic news. "While the child was yet alive, when we spoke to him, he wouldn't hear us. How will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?" they whispered to each other (2 Samuel 12:18).

David, seeing them whispering, guessed what had happened. "Is the child dead?" he asked. And they said, "He is dead."

To their great surprise he arose from the earth, washed, anointed himself and putting on a clean robe went into the house of the Lord, and worshipped God. Then he came home and ate some bread (2 Samuel 12:20).

In amazement they asked, "What are you doing? When the child was alive you fasted and wept, but now when he is dead, you go about and even eat."

Then he answered, "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead. What is the use of fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he cannot return to me" (2 Samuel 12:22-23).

And then David went to comfort his wife, and while holding her in his arms and comforting her he performed the act of love upon her and she conceived a second son. And David called his name Solomon, and the Lord loved him (2 Samuel 12:24).

Can you see the difference? The first child was conceived in an act of sin in a moment of uncontrolled lust, and



the child was the fruit of sin. God, in His love took the innocent child to heaven, thus removing the evidence of David's sin.

Sometimes we ask God for something that is not God's will. Sometimes we even fast for it, demanding, crying, even screaming—and God says, "NO!" Let us accept the will of God. He knows what is best.

The child Solomon was very beautiful. He was not conceived in an act of lustful passion and sin, out of wedlock with another man's wife. Instead, God gave Bathsheba power to conceive with the seed of her husband when he came to her in pure love, (after he had just finished a seven-day fast) with the holy anointing still upon him during the act of copulation. Is it any wonder that the child became one of the greatest, wisest and most powerful men who ever lived?

If husbands would come to their wives in an act of pure love and not only to satisfy their lustful hunger, I believe that we would have a race of holy and pure people. We have much to learn on this subject.



## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

- A. Read Luke 5:27-39  
Matthew 9:9-17  
2 Samuel 11 and 12**
- B. Memorize Luke 5:35.**
- C. Answer the following questions:**
  - 1. Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast?**
  - 2. What do you understand about the parable of the patch? The wine skins?**
  - 3. Why did David fast?**
  - 4. Why did God not answer David's prayer?**
  - 5. Have you ever asked for something out of the will of God?**



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