

## **Fasting**

by Martin L. Nelwan  
The Nelwan's Approach  
Department of Animal Science – Other

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*It seems that a fast is done to have survival, salvation, strength for activities, guide from God, and worship.* The king of Nineveh and his people took the fast in order to survive and salvation. Through Jonah, God stated the city of Nineveh should be overthrown. The king and the people did seriously the fast. They eat and drink nothing for they hoped that God would forgive their sins and turned away from his fierce anger. The result was that God did not punish the city. In the era of Esther, Jews fasted for their survival (Est. 4 : 3). Then, Esther and Mordecai asked the Jews to do fast, to confirm the day of Purim, after they won over Haman, their enemy (Est. 9 : 31). Certain prophets and teachers in the early church ministered with fasting and prayer to the Lord. They did fast and prayer for the Lord work needs (Acts 13 : 1-3).

Perhaps fast was done for the first time in the era of David (Ps. 35 : 13), or in the era between David and Moses. Moses did neither eat bread nor drink water for forty days and forty nights on the Mt Sinai when he was there with the Lord (Ex. 34 : 28). Moses was not stated fast at the time. Jesus did not eat for forty days and forty nights. However, it is clearly stated that Jesus did fast at the time (Matt. 4 : 2 and Luke 4 : 2). It is possible that fast was done by both Jews and other than Jews in the era of The Old and New Testament, too, as people of Nineveh did.

Jesus fasted in order to strengthen the relationship with the Father. He did it forty days and forty nights. After doing it, he was tempted by the devil. Jesus prayed and fasted to heal sick

people. However, he did not say that each the sick must be healed by prayer and fast. To heal deafness, the gospel of Matthew indicates that it should be done by prayer and fast. Fast and prayer are needed to heal a certain sickness (Matt. 17 : 21). It seems that prayer and fast were used by the early Christian to strengthen their faith and to heal the sick. Fast is not a requirement to become a good Christian, but it is strongly recommended to do it.

The scripture does not indicate clearly about how to do the fast. Jesus did it as long as forty days and forty nights. It is difficult for everyone to fast as Jesus did. Everyone could fast as long as he/she can. It could be done as long as : 1) No more than forty days and forty nights; 2) Between a day and forty days and nights; and 3) A day or a night. Fast could be done with no eat at all (Luke 4 : 2). The gospel of Matthew does not indicate clearly about how Jesus took the fast. It seems indirectly that he took it without eating only. And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the Son of God, Command that these stones be made bread (Mat. 4 : 3). The tempter did not say anything about water. However, it could be done with no eat, nor drink. It is a good idea to fast, according to the gospel of Luke, to fast as Jesus did; that is, not eat only. Fast could be done for needs: healing, travel. During fasting, it should not be known by others. Common fast could be done before winter.

In my opinion, a Christian, who is walking regularly his/her faith as a Christian in either day and/or night, has done a fast. For example, after taking dinner at 8 p.m., he/she does not eat anymore until at 8 a.m., it could be stated that he/she has done fast a night and a part of a day. According to my habit, I finish my dinner around 7 p.m. I do not eat anything after dinner, except I am not in good shape. I drink water around 7 a.m. in the morning, and then around an hour later, around 8 a.m., I take breakfast. I do self-denial during the night. I do it every night. If I cannot sleep at all, I pray to God each hour and is finished with the Lord's Prayer at 4 a.m. This

is a full night fasting and between two and three hours fasting in day in Indonesia time. Thus, I do fast every day. Darius, the king of Medes and Persians, did a night fasting (Dan. 6 : 18). It is not easy to do a fast in the night. We face the terror by the night, particularly in a rural or isolated area. I encourage doing fast in a day and/or a night. Psalm 91 : 1, 2, and 5. 1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him I will trust.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by the night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by the day;

#### Verses that related to fasting

Ex. 3 : 24

And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Ps. 35 : 13

But for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

Ps. 69 : 10

When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

Ps. 109 : 24

My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

Est. 4 : 3 and 16

3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

16 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 *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Est. 9 : 31

To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoyed them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fasting and their cry.

Dan. 6 : 18

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and he sleep went from him.

Neh. 9 : 1

Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.

Jer. 36 : 6

Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, with thou hath written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

Joel 2 : 12

Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:

Jonah 3 : 5-8

5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sad in ashes.

7 And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

Matt 4 : 2

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

Matt. 15 : 32

Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

Matt. 17 : 21

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting

Mark 2 : 18-20

18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

1 Cor. 7 : 5

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.

2 Cor 6 : 5

In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fasting;

Acts 10 : 30

And Cornelius said, For days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in the bright clothing.

Acts 13 : 1-3

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

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

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

Acts 14 : 23

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 27 : 9 and 33

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*,

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing