

THE DANIEL FAST 3rd March 2008

The issue of fasting comes up quite regularly and people sincerely engage in fasts. There are leaders around the world who sound the call for a fast and people respond. Together with the fasting there are promises of miracles, financial breakthroughs, other signs and wonders. I do agree that there may be some who experience great happenings in their lives. I must also be quick to point out that many do not receive what they expected; we then set about to find reasons for the “so called delays” in receiving and prescribe other religious activity. Very often it may be another period of fasting

I have most recently fasted for seven days and therefore have nothing against those who may fast. However, we must give attention to a few aspects of biblical fasting. The two most commonly used words for fasting are Hebrew Tsome that is “To Cover The mouth” whilst the Greek Nesteia means “a voluntary abstinence from food.”

THE DANIEL FAST

Daniel 1:12 “Please Test us for ten days, on a diet of vegetables and water Daniel said. V15 At the end of the ten days Daniel and his friends looked healthier and better than the others. v16 So after that the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for others.(NLT).”

This so called Daniel Fast has been borne out of this event in Daniel’s life and has become a popular Christian practice. This was a special diet that Daniel adhered to. His reason for this was *that he did not want to defile himself with the king’s food.(v8). Not because he wanted SOME SPECIAL FAVOR FROM GOD.*

I hail from an Asian background. My grandparents were South Indian by birth and immigrated to South Africa as laborers. It is a common life style for many of Asian origin to live on a totally vegetarian diet. Our task is to convince these who came out of that lifestyle to now accept that *we will be on a Daniel Fast.* Therefore to a person like me this vegetables only diet is really not much of a fast. Like many in the bible including Our Lord Jesus I love to “cover the mouth or totally abstain from food.” We read of Job, Esther, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Jonah and others whose fasts were total abstinence.

EATING MEAT OR NOT:

This was not the issue in Daniel’s day. Yet it has become a primary concern for the proponents of this fast. For Daniel *it was a matter of Obedience or Disobedience. Meat eating or not was never the matter of consideration.* Ultimately this is what God is interested in. You can abstain from meat and live a very disobedient existence. The fast will have no weight. It becomes much less than *wood hay and stubble.*

THE OFFER OF LUXURIES:

This was to secure their allegiance to the king. You can’t eat his dainties and not be devoted to him. Their love of luxury would silence them, make them co-operate and prevent rebellion. They would forget their roots and blend into the Babylonian culture. The group rejected the offer. We sometimes face similar situations.

THE PROMOTION:

These men were trained in the languages, mathematics, astronomy etc of Babylon. They were found to be a class above the rest. Their skills were outstanding. However, their skills did not promote them in Babylon. They appeared before Nebuchadnezzar and *God gave them the Revelation of the dream.* It had nothing to do with a diet or training.

2.

It had everything to do with the eternal God our creator. He gave the interpretation and gave them favor. Not the special diet of vegetables.

NO SHORT CUTS:

I believe in miracles. It is an offence to suggest that *people will receive miracles just because they fast*. This suggestion undermines the sovereignty of the Eternal God. It reduces him to the level of human beings. It also suggests that our works can manipulate the King of Glory. This is certainly not so. Miracles will happen because God decrees they will. We shall see greater miracles than we've ever experienced. We shall glorify him alone. This is a season for unusual miracles.

Bible scholars tell us that Daniel remained in Babylon for sixty six years. He probably died in his late eighties. He never returned to Jerusalem.

SOME FASTS DO NOT BRING THE DESIRED RESULTS:

2 Samuel 12 David fasts for the seriously ill child borne by Uriah's wife. He goes on for seven days. Yet the child dies. This was the man after God's own heart. He had to accept that the child died. Therefore it is false to claim that the fast will always bring victories. When our Lord Jesus was on his fast for forty days he did not have angels come to minister to him. *Satan came to Jesus to tempt him. (Matt.4).* **Fasting can attract opposition and attacks from the enemy.**

THE FAST THAT GOD DESIRES:

Isaiah 58. The people complained that God did not respond to their fasting. The Lord speaks to them about their misdemeanors during their fast. He says that he does not regard their fast. He then goes on to enumerate his perspective of a true fast. The Lord asks them **to loose the bonds of wickedness v6; to share food with the poor and hungry v6/7; to avoid the pointing of fingers v9.**

Then he says Your light shall break forth as the morning sun v8

You will be quickly healed v 8

Your honesty will become your protection v 8

You will call I will answer v 9

God will provide for you even in the wilderness v 11

You will be like a well watered Garden v11

You will be a rebuilder of the ruins.

These blessings were to come to them NOT BECAUSE THEY FASTED but because THEY ACTED RIGHTEOUSLY.

RATHER TEACH AND EMPHASIZE DANIEL'S RIGHTEOUS LIFESTYLE THAN A MERE VEGETARIAN DIET.

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