

Fasting to See things Change For the Better

Zechariah 7: 3-5 – Fasting was not being done unto God and eating and drinking was done for themselves

Zechariah 8: 19 -But the Prophet seems to allude to what he had before taught when he indirectly taunted the Jews, because they were too anxious about keeping fasts, while they neglected the main things. But the simple meaning is, that if the Jews really repented and sincerely sought to return to God's favor, there would be an end to all their miseries, so that there would be no need of fasting.

We must also remember that the design of fasting is this, that those who have sinned may humble themselves before God, and go as suppliants before his throne, that they may confess their sins and condemn themselves. Fasting then is, as it were, the habit of criminals when they desire to obtain pardon from God; for Christ says, that there is no fasting at marriages and during festal days. (Mat_9:15.) We then see that there is here promised a restoration which was to put an end to every former cause of sorrow among the people; not that these fasts of themselves displeased God, for they were appointed, as we have said, for a good purpose – that the people might thus exercise themselves in acts of piety, and also stimulate and support their hope till the time of their deliverance; but Zechariah pursues what he had begun – that God was now plainly reconciled, for he favored his people, and proved this by the blessings he bestowed.

2 Samuel 12: 16 – David fasted for the life of the little child that he had conceived in his sin with Bathsheba. The Pulpit Commentary says: He went, not into the sanctuary, which he did not enter until after the child's death, but into some private room in his own house. There he remained, passing his nights stretched on the ground, and fasting until the seventh day. His fasting does not imply that he took no food during this long interval, but that he abstained from the royal table, and ate so much only as was necessary to maintain life. Now, what was the meaning of this privacy and abstinence? Evidently it was David's acknowledgment, before all his subjects, of his iniquity, and of his sorrow for it. The sickness of the child followed immediately upon Nathan's visit, and we may feel sure that news of his rebuke, and of all that passed between him and the king, ran quickly throughout Jerusalem. And David at once takes the position of a condemned criminal, and humbles himself with that thoroughness which forms so noble a part of his character. Grieved as he was at the child's sickness, and at the mother's sorrow, yet his grief was mainly for his sin; and he was willing that all should know how intense was his shame and self-reproach. And even when the most honourable of the rulers of his household (Gen_24:2), or, as Ewald thinks, his uncles and elder brethren, came to comfort him, he persists in maintaining an attitude of heart stricken penitence.

Esther 4: 16 - Fasting is in itself a prayer

“It is remarkable that nothing is here said about prayer, but fasting was in itself a prayer; for it was not a form put on from without, but the natural expression of the inner emotion, and as an application to God, it is to be explained much as we do the touching of the Saviour by the woman, who in that way sought her cure. Words are signs, just as fasting is a sign. That which is essential in either is genuineness. God does not look to the words themselves, any more than He does to the fasting in itself. He has regard only to that which the soul expresses, either by the one or through the other. The touch of the soul of the woman went to the Master's heart through her touching of His garment with her fingers; and the yearning of the soul of Esther, through her fasting, made its appeal to Jehovah, even though she did not breathe His name.” (W. M. Taylor, D. D.)

John Gill says: “....and fast ye for me; that is, pray for her, that she might have courage to go in to the king, and meet with success; for prayer was the principal thing, fasting only an accessory to it, and as fitting for it, and expressive of affliction and humiliation of soul.”

Ezra 8: 21

Daniel 10: 2-3

Jonah 3: 6-8

Matthew 17: 14-21