

Acts Series

Lesson #95

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Dr. Robert L. Dean, Jr.

The Acts of the Apostles “To the end of the earth” Acts 1:8

Fasting and Prayer Acts 13:1–3



Acts 13:1, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”

Scythia



DIASPORA
TECOST
population

Acts 13:2, “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ ”

Ex. 30:20, “When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.”

Ex. 35:19, “ ‘the garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy place—the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.’ ”

Doctrine of Fasting

1. Contemporary practice

Made increasingly popular in the current environment of mystical spirituality.

- 2. The Bible neither condemns nor commands fasting. The Bible recognizes its legitimacy and warns against excesses and misapplication.**

3. There are 43 instances of fasting recorded in the Old Testament; 15 in the New Testament.

4. Key words

םז (ṣôm) v., *fast, fasting.*

םז (ṣûm) n., *fast.*

νηστεύω (nēsteuō) v., to fast;

νηστεία (nēsteia), fasting, fast;

νηστις (nēstis), not eating, fasting.

5. Fasting in the Old Testament seems to be related to the idea of humbling oneself before the Lord.

Lev. 16:29, “This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you;”

Isa. 58:3, “ ‘Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?’ Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, and drive hard all your workers.”

Psa. 35:13, “But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom.”

6. Fasting definition

To fast is to abstain for a limited period from any kind of food.

Two kinds of fasting: Total and limited abstinence from particular foods.

Human viewpoint notion: asceticism: we give up something to impress God and motivate Him and/or bargain with Him to do something for us.

Fasting in the Scripture–

First mention:

Ex. 34:28, “So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.”

Judg. 20:26, “Then all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel and wept; thus they remained there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening. And they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.”

1 Sam. 7:6, “They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day and said there, ‘We have sinned against the LORD.’ And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.”

1 Sam. 31:13, “They took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.”

2 Sam. 1:12, “They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.”

Acts 14:23, “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

7. Problems in textual variants

Matt 17:21, “This one comes out by prayer and fasting;”

**Acts 10:30, NKJV, “Cornelius was fasting;”
NASB, “Cornelius was praying”**

Matt. 4:2, “And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.”

Matt. 6:16, “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Matt. 6:17, “But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

Matt. 6:18, “so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”