

## READ DANIEL 1

**1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia<sup>[a]</sup> and put in the treasure house of his god.

**3** Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— **4** young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.<sup>[b]</sup> **5** The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

**6** Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. **7** The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

**8** But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your<sup>[c]</sup> food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

**11** Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." **14** So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

**15** At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. **16** So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

<sup>17</sup> To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

<sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom.

<sup>21</sup> And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

## **WHAT IS FASTING**

"Fasting can be regarded as an act of desperation for a move of God. In the Bible, the people who were led to fast needed something from God such as: divine wisdom, guidance, repentance, salvation, or victory in battles. Fasting told God, "I need You" and "I can't do this without You."

In Biblical times, fasting would only involve the abstinence of certain or all foods and/or water in order to spend dedicated time to prayer and reading God's Word.

Fasting simply brings the spirit man into alignment over the flesh. It is a vital part of our Christian walk. We not only need to pray, meditate, and study God's Word, but we should also employ the discipline of fasting.

Fasting is a powerful weapon from God, that helps bring transformation, revelation, deliverance, and breakthroughs.

The Holy Spirit can give you the power and desire to start and complete a fast. Your eyes always have to be on Jesus and not on your own efforts; otherwise, the fast would be in vain.

Fasting without prayer and reading the Word of God is just a diet. This is not why we fast.

## Ways To Start A Fast

First you must know what you desire as a result of fasting during Lent. Is it to draw closer to God? Is it for a spiritual breakthrough? Do you need a healing in your body? Do you need a renewing? A refreshing? All of the above?

- Determine if your fast is going to be a 10-day, 21 day, or 40 day fast.
- Determine what you're going to **"give up"** from your daily diet for Lent. (sweets, meats, carbonated drinks, indulgent snacks etc.)
- Determine what time(s) during the day you're going to pray.
- Whatever you decide, stick to it throughout the fast, with the aid and guidance of the Holy Spirit. God is with you!

**Example Fast #1 Based on Daniel 1** You may decide you are going to eat vegetables and fruit and drink water **only** during your mealtime (s) praying and reading the Word of God and communing with God at designated times throughout the day.

**Example Fast #2** You may decide that you are not eating at all throughout the day and then eating one meal that excludes the item or items you are giving up for Lent. Throughout the day you are praying, reading the Word of God and communing with God.

**Example Fast #3** You may decide you are going to eat 3 square meals a day and just omit the item or items that **you** chose to give up for Lent. Then, at designated times you are praying, reading the Word of God and communing with God.

## What You Can Expect

When you finish your fast, you will be renewed, full of energy, detoxed, with a new desire, a new praise and a sensitivity to God's voice. You'll also find that the absence of food was small in comparison to what you gained. You gain self-discipline and more mental and spiritual focus. You will begin to hear God's voice more clearly.

*In each of these examples, it's a good practice to choose a scripture or scriptures throughout the Word of God that apply to you and what you are seeking. Stand on His promises while you fast. Pray His promises throughout the fast. Listen for His voice. Journal during this time of fasting. Chronicle what God is speaking to you and watch God work!*