



## Purim 2021

### Welcome to Spiritual Bootcamp

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. C.T. Studd*  
*This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy. Esther 9:22b*

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Yah Has a Calendar:** We're invited to participate (Festival Overview sheet)
1. We're invited to go on a journey through these next three months leading us up to Shavuot
- B. Recurring Thematic Reminders:** By our participation in the festival of Purim (and also the other biblical festivals) we have a consistent, yearly reminder of the themes that God is stressing during each season.
- C. Connection with Israel:** We as God's redeemed are intricately connected to His people Israel (Romans 11). As we participate in the festivals and other biblical practices, we are conscious of a practical connection with Israel as well as causing Israel to be jealous as we endeavor to "hit the heart" of what these festivals are about.
1. Antisemitism is rising, will be a Ten Boom or a complicitor now and in the days ahead?

#### II. STORY OVERVIEW

*(Purim Timeline provides a thorough overview of the story)*

##### A. Initial Thoughts on the Story of Purim

1. *Last Biblical Festival:* The story of Purim is the last Biblical festival of the year and the story occurs over the course of almost a complete year and going through all of the festivals.
2. *God's Name:* This is the only book in the Bible where God's name does not appear directly although it does appear in acrostic form in Esther 5:4 as the first letter of each of four successive words – yod, hay, vav, hay, YHWH. God was, however, obviously present and in charge behind the scenes.
3. *Festival's (and Esther's) Name:* *Purim* or the *Feast of Lots* comes from the fact that the day was chosen for the Jews to die by a lottery. The word *pur* is Persian and it is the only festival that does not have a Hebrew name. Also, Esther's name (and the name of this biblical book) is named after a pagan goddess.
4. *Culmination of a Year Long Story:* Though we celebrate Purim for one day each year, the main part of the story in Esther happened over a twelve month period.
5. *Greatest Fulfilment at the End of the Age:* In the years directly preceding Yeshua's return will come the greatest fulfilment of the Esther story with the Antichrist, the praying church, and Yeshua coming to rescue His people.

##### B. Esther's Preparation

1. *Inauspicious Beginnings:* She found herself in a place she didn't ever pursue: she started out as an adopted orphan in exile away from her homeland and became the queen.
2. *Previously Positioned:* She was in place five years before the crisis.
3. *Ready for Her Assignment:* She was readying herself before she needed to be (before the crisis).
4. *Prayer & Activity:* She prayed (along with others) and then stepped out.
5. *Submitted:* She was submitted to delegated authority: Mordecai, Hegai, and the king.

#### III. OUR OWN STORY

- A. For such a time as this?** What is that time Personally? Corporately? Nationally? Let's have our own Purim story
1. Going on a journey together: who wants to go there together? We'll have this journey reinforced in the relationships in the Lifeboats. I want to help set the table for you to have encounters with God in this season and beyond

2. Time for Yah's People to Arise
3. Did you learn to love?

### **B. Daniel's Example**

1. Consistent Disciplines: I believe Yah would have us grow in our consistent disciplines in pursuing Him
  - a. Daniel's Prayer Posture: In spite of the pressures of being a busy executive with many demands upon his time, Daniel had retired to his house three times a day to offer his prayers for the peace of Jerusalem as well as for his personal needs. This was not the act of a person courting martyrdom but the continuation of a faithful ministry in prayer which had characterized his long life." (Walvoord, p. 138 as found in Constable, 83). Daniel 6:10
2. Focused Intensity (when needed): We are to get ready to kick this into a greater gear as needed
  - a. Daniel had greater repentance, intensity, and focus as the promised fulfillment neared (Daniel 9)
3. Normal Days & Supernatural Days: 5 supernaturally recorded days out of 34,000 days of Daniel's Life
  - a. 4 visions: he had all in his 70's and 80's; 69-86 years

### **C. Examining Ourselves**

1. If we examine ourselves, we will not be judged by YHWH (1 Cor. 11:28). Ask God to search our hearts
  - a. Be ruthlessly honest with our sin
  - b. Repentance: when we're not consistently examining ourselves and coming to the Lord, we can be saying "right things" but it doesn't bear the greatest anointing and blessing of God
  - c. We are to come boldly to Him in our time of need
2. If we don't examine ourselves YHWH will judge us so that we are not condemned along with the world (1 Cor 11:32)
  - a. If we're not disciplined when we sin, the Scripture tells us to wonder if we are YHWH's children (Hebrews 12:5-11)
3. The unrepentant world is condemned and dies in their sin. YHWH takes no pleasure in this
  - a. YHWH delights in showing mercy
4. We examine ourselves so that we run to Him for forgiveness and receive His help

### **D. Asking: You have not because you ask not**

1. Don't lose heart if you've been asking (*Circle Maker*)
2. Ask with right motives
3. He's not a vending machine. We actually are talking to the Creator of the universe
4. Delight self in Lord... (Psalm 37:4)

### **E. Palm Trees/Cedars (righteous) (Psalm 92:12-14) or Grass (wicked) (Psalm 92:7)...trees take time to develop**

### **F. Practical Personal Challenges & Opportunities**

1. Daily Time with God: resolve to have daily set apart times with God of at least half an hour (preferably an hour)
2. One Supernatural Prayer: list out and pray consistently for your one supernatural prayer
3. One Day a Week to Fast: consider joining in on for a Lighthouse weekly fast day to concertedly seek Yah's face.
4. Accountable in the Lifeboat: regular attendance in these bi-weekly times in the groups to gather together to pray for each other and help keep us accountable.

## **IV. DIFFERENT CATEGORIES, TYPES & BENEFITS OF FASTING**

### **A. Positioning Our Heart To Receive Greater Grace: The Fasted Lifestyle (Mt. 6:1-23)** The Sermon on the Mount describes God's upside-down kingdom. It is a comprehensive teaching from Yeshua found in Matthew 5-7 which describes the "fasted lifestyle" of submitting to weakness in order to greater receive God's strength and grace in our lives. The five grace-releasing activities described in this passage are listed below. Our heart receives more grace as we consistently and secretly:

1. Serve: Doing good works (5:13-16); others will see (5:16) and glorify God
  - a. Fasting (giving of) our time

- b. Helping the needy (widows, orphans, foreigners, leaders in the Kingdom)
  - c. Preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, delivering the oppressed
  - d. There is also a false “justice movement” arising in the earth; “works” without repentance and Yeshua at the foundation
2. Give: Giving alms (offerings) (6:1-4; 19-21)
    - a. Fasting (investing) our resources
    - b. Offerings consist of giving resources that are above our tithes to our local community
      - i. Missions: gospel going to the nations
      - ii. Benevolence: poor/needy
      - iii. Ministries that are building up the kingdom
  3. Pray (6:5-13)
    - a. This is a fasting (giving of) our time
    - b. Song lyric: “*I take my cold, cold heart; I take my unrenewed mind; I take Your Word in my hand; And I give You time to come and melt me*”
    - c. For effective prayer:
      - i. knowledge of God: growing in a proper understanding of God
      - ii. time: scheduling the time and being consistent to keep the time to pray
      - iii. vocabulary: discovering words to say to Him by developing our own prayer list or pray-reading the Bible
      - iv. listening: asking God questions and discovering how to hear His voice
  4. Bless Adversaries (6:14-15; 5:44)
    - a. Fasting (not defending) our reputation
    - b. Forgiving and doing good to our enemies
    - c. Forgiveness is: Father, I don’t hold it against them; I release this into Your hands; It is a process
    - d. Forgiveness is not: condoning or forgetting; It is not necessarily reconciliation, and it is not a dismissal of justice in consequences
  5. Fasting Food (6:16-18)
    - a. Fasting (giving of) our physical strength
    - b. Declaring that God is our strength and we pursue Him more than our necessary food

## **B. Proper Attitude Towards These Grace-Releasing Activities**

1. His Love For You is Already Supreme and Complete: *You are not striving for God—He is already yours!* Your consecration cannot change or improve your standing in the love of God. For example, you are not loved more when you fast, and you cannot be loved less if you do not fast. His love is supreme and complete and has nothing to do with your level of fervor or devotion. Ultimately, any effort you make toward a [consecrated] season or lifestyle is only sustainable because God’s love is at work within. It is His labor, not our own (Engle, 67).
  - a. *My Beloved Son*: Please note what launched the fast of Jesus: the proclamation of His Father, “You are My beloved Son.” Timing is crucial. Jesus was proclaimed the beloved Son *before* He did anything noteworthy (Engle, 68).
  - b. *receiving more*: God gives more to our heart but does not love us more when we live in spiritual disciplines.
2. Positions Our Heart to Receive More: “grace-releasing activities” in our devotional life position our heart to receive more strength in the grace of God
3. Not “Earning” Anything: Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more grace. These activities do not earn us God’s favor. The power is in the “bonfire of God’s presence” not in the cold flesh positioned in front of it.
4. Submitting to “Voluntary Weakness”: These five areas are expressions of “voluntary weakness” because we invest our natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, etc.) into Kingdom purposes. The normal use of our strengths is to increase our personal comfort, wealth and honor. In other words, by the fasted lifestyle

we bring our natural strengths to God as we trust Him to “return” our strength back to us in a way that enriches our personal spheres of responsibility and transforms us with meekness.

5. Calling Us to the Process of Developing Spiritual Maturity: God lives in our spirit but expresses His life in our soul progressively. God fully lives in us at the new birth, the measure that He expresses Himself in us is the measure of our maturity. A carnal believer has the life of God in their spirit but not expressed in their soul or heart.

### C. Five different type of food fasts

1. The regular fast is going without food and drinking only water or that which has no calories.
2. The liquid fast is going without solid food and drinking only light liquids (like vegetable/fruit juices).
3. The partial fast, or Daniel fast, abstains from tasty foods and eats only vegetables or nuts, etc.
4. The Benedict Fast established by Saint Benedict (525 AD), consists of only one meal a day.
5. The absolute fast or Esther fast, abstains from food and water (Esth. 4:16). Exercise caution! If wanting to proceed with this type of fast, get input from your pastors, doctor, etc. One can't physically go for much more than three days without water.
  - a. *voluntary weakness*: Fasting embraces voluntary weakness in order to experience more of God's power and presence. It is a paradox that we become weak in the natural in order to receive more strength from the Spirit. Yeshua revealed to Paul that the release of God's power in his life was connected to his willingness to embrace weakness. This revelation is foundational to understanding fasting.

<sup>9</sup> *My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor. 12:9)*
  - b. *strength made perfect in weakness*: The “strength made perfect” refers to Paul experiencing more of God's power. Many desire to walk in “perfected power,” but do not want to embrace the necessary weakness. The most challenging issue in fasting is the physical weakness it produces.
  - c. *physically weak*: We become physically weak and can't function in the way we usually do (Ps. 109:24).

**D. Normal for Believers:** Fasting is part of the normal Christian life. It is often thought of as an optional discipline. Yeshua said, “When you fast,” implying that fasting occurred in the regular course of a disciple's life.

<sup>17</sup> When you fast...18 your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:17-18)

1. Fasting is for Everyone: I want to dispel the notion that extended fasting and prayer is just for the few “spiritual” people. In actuality, fasting is one of three disciplines that Jesus called His own disciples to: He said, “When you pray,” “When you give alms” and “When you fast,” you will receive a reward from the Father (*The Jesus Fast*, 82).
2. Rewards: Yeshua emphasized that the Father will reward fasting. This proclamation makes fasting important. Yeshua called us to fast because He knows that its rewards will far outweigh its difficulties.
  - a. *external & internal*: Some of the rewards are external, as our circumstances are touched by God's power. Some of our rewards are internal, as our hearts encounter Him. We fast both to walk in more of God's power to change the world, and to encounter more of His heart to change our heart!
3. A Faith Releaser: Reduced to its simplest formulation, fasting helps to bring us back to our senses, or rather, beyond our senses into the realm of faith. This is why fasting is for us, not God (Engle, 176).
4. A Resetting Mechanism: Prayer combined with fasting resets our rhythm to the cadence of the Spirit.

**E. Fasting for Power:** We fast to experience the power of God in personal ministry.

1. Power to Set Others Free: We pray for God's power to bring healing to family members, and in national and international crises. When the disciples could not set a demonized boy free, Yeshua told them that that kind of demon did not go out except by prayer and fasting (Mt. 17:21).

<sup>15</sup> Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic... <sup>16</sup> I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him. <sup>19</sup> The disciples said, “Why could we not cast him out?” ... <sup>20</sup> Jesus said, “Because of your unbelief...” <sup>21</sup> This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Mt. 17:15-21)

- a. *contending for others*: In fasting, we labor in secret with the Lord so that we might more effectively bring His heart of love to the broken and oppressed. We deliberately weaken the controlling power of our physical appetites and soften our spirits. We yield. We hunger. The cost is real (Engle, 137).
- 2. *John the Baptist's Power*: The power of John the Baptist's preaching was connected to his fasted lifestyle (Mt. 11:18).
- 3. *Able to Receive More*: In fasting, many would say you do not change God, you only change yourself. No doubt, this is mostly true. Fasting certainly does not gain you spiritual points with God or prove your maturity. Derek Prince notes that "fasting helps a Christian receive direction and power from the Holy Spirit." In other words, fasting does not win the battle, per se. Instead, rightly practiced, fasting brings both soul and body into subjection of the Holy Spirit. . . . By removing the carnal barriers, fasting makes a way for the Holy Spirit's omnipotence to work the "exceeding abundantly above" (Ephesians 3: 20) of God's promises. Fasting positions man in humility to better appropriate the fullness of God's will for our lives. Those aspects of God's will that we can achieve through prayer alone are like the tip of an iceberg, while the fullness lies deep below the surface, reserved not as a prize for the faster to win but as grace for the humbled faster to discover (Engle, 131).
  - a. *personal anointing*: Fasting will be crucial to enlarging your life with God, forming your voice and adding gravity and weight to your soul (Engle, 79).

#### F. Internal Heart Benefits

1. Fasting leads to ***tenderizing our hearts*** so that we feel loved and God's presence more.
2. Fasting leads to ***changing our desires*** and enlarging our desire for righteousness (Heb. 1:9).
3. Fasting leads to ***increasing our understanding*** of the Word and the spirit of revelation operating in our life (including receiving prophetic dreams).
4. Fasting leads to ***making our body healthier*** and changes what we desire to eat and drink. It helps free us from overindulgence in legitimate physical activities that dull us.
5. Fasting leads to ***strengthening our sense of identity*** as sons of God before the Father and as a bride before the Son. Our identity is rooted in the knowledge of God's affection for us.
  - a. Circumstances, promotion, & demotion are responded to the same
6. Fasting leads to ***enhancing our spiritual pleasure***: Fasting restrains our physical pleasure, but it enhances our spiritual pleasure. Our greatest pleasure comes by feasting on the person of Yeshua. Fasting is an exchange where we abstain from certain things to "feast" on God's word and prayer, whereby we experience more of His grace.

#### G. Fasting's Outward Trajectory (Isaiah 58:7-8)

6 "No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. 7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. Isaiah 58:7-8

1. ***Summation***: In Isaiah 58, fasting is 1) to loose the bonds of wickedness; 2) to undo heavy burdens; 3) to help the oppressed go free; 4) to give bread to the hungry; 5) to receive the light of revelation in God's Word; 6) for emotional and physical health; and 7) for righteousness to break forth.
2. ***Into the Fray***: God wants us to prayerfully become involved in the lives of people that are challenging, time-consuming, and messy. As fasting Believers we are called into the mess. What mess is before you right now that you have been avoiding where you as a Believer can (potentially) bring change? What about adding fasting food and praying to God in the midst of this endeavor.

#### H. Lighthouse Invitation:

1. ***One Day Weekly***: Join us starting this Thursday for the fast of Esther and then continuing through the 90 days with a fast each Thursday for those who want to participate;
2. ***Three Days a Month***: once a month at the first of the month on a Sunday -Tuesday, join in on a three day fast.
3. ***40 Day Fast Leading up to Shavuot***: At firstfruits, start a 40-day fast to pray for Yah's breakthroughs.

## V. THE NEXT 90 DAYS

- A. Yah's Calendar:** God's calendar helps calibrate us to focus on the things that are close to His heart
1. Purim is the ending of the previous year's story & talks of the start of a new one. Next year at this time Yah wants us more in love with Him and others, stronger spiritually and with spiritual fruit coming from our lives
- B. Purim** [Adar 14] – *Divine Reversal* [No Convocation] Yeshua is Faithful in Difficulty (even when we don't see Him), and He will miraculously turn the tables at His Return
1. Thursday night prayer meeting: heading into Purim
  2. Daily time with God: at least 30 minutes (an hour is better) each day with the Lord
  3. One Day a Week Fast: fast one day a week (default to Thursdays)
  4. One Prayer: one focused prayer on our heart to consistently ask Him
  5. Accountability & Support: through the relationships in the Lifeboats
  6. Weekly Online class: Starting on March 7 on *How to hear the voice of God*
- C. The New Year** [Nissan 1] – *New Beginnings* [Rosh Chodesh] Yeshua is our New Beginning
1. We will start year in Prayer that Saturday evening
- D. Pesach (Passover)** [Nissan 14] - *Justification* [No Convocation] Yeshua is our Savior/Deliverer
1. Taking God's mark: we're in covenant with Him
  2. Prayer Vigil that Passover evening: to have a prayer vigil where we stay up on that night to wait upon and minister to YHWH
- E. Unleavened Bread** [Nissan 15-21 -7 days] - *Sanctification* (Unleavened Bread) [1<sup>st</sup> Day Convocation & 7<sup>th</sup> Day Solemn Assembly Convocation] Yeshua is our Sanctifier
1. 1<sup>st</sup> Day Holy Convocation: feasting on Yeshua (matzah) as our Sanctifier
  2. 7<sup>th</sup> Day Holy Convocation: committing to be faithful to the end; only the overcomers will be rewarded by Yeshua
  3. Start a corporate Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in a year
- F. Firstfruits** [Sunday after Passover]- *Resurrection* [No Convocation] Yeshua is our Resurrector
1. Celebrating the resurrection of Yeshua as we gather in the homes to celebrate.
- G. Counting the Omer** [50 days from Firstfruits to Shavuot] - *Persevering Anticipation* (Counting of the Omer) Yeshua is our Sustainer
1. Start a 40 day fast up leading up to Shavuot
  2. Asking YHWH for an outpouring of His power to save the lost, deliver the oppressed, heal the sick, and to baptize His people with the Holy Spirit
- H. Shavuot (Pentecost)** - *Empowerment & Instruction* for God's Mission [Convocation] Yeshua is our Provider

## VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- In closing, I acknowledge a great debt to Mike Bickle and gratefulness for his encouragement to freely use his material. I have liberally done so in the fasting portion of these teaching notes.*

