

# Community on Columbia

## Fast of Ab

As with the Fast of Tammuz, the only specific reference to the Fast of Ab in the Bible is Zechariah 8:19. During the time of Christ, the fast was celebrated by all faithful Jews. No doubt Jesus and his disciples observed the fast.

The Fast of Ab is the day that the Temple was destroyed first by the Babylonians and then by the Romans in ancient Israel. For us it is the recognition that our "Jerusalem that now is," i.e., the source of all of our idolatry, is destroyed. Not one stone remains standing upon another, and the ground is plowed so that we can worship God freely in spirit and in truth. On this day the time "between the straits" is over.

In a very real sense our Fast of Tammuz began when we first believed in Him. Our Fast of Ab and our time "between the straits" ends when we begin to live by the faith of Him alone. We began this journey by faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. It is now necessary for us to live and be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16-21). We were saved by His death; we shall live by His resurrected life in us, the hope of glory (Rom. 5:10,11) (2 Tim. 2:11-13.)

A number of things happened to ancient Israel on the fast of Ab:

- On the 9th of Ab it was decreed that the fathers should not enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:1). The whole generation, save Joshua and Caleb, were told they would perish in the wilderness on the 9th of Ab (Sanh 692.)
- The Temple was destroyed the first time (II Kings 25:8,9 ; Jeremiah 52:12.)
- The Temple was destroyed the second time.
- Bethar, the last hold-out in the Bar Kochbar rebellion, was captured.
- Jerusalem was plowed under by the Romans in 70 A.D. No stone was left standing on top of another.
- The spies returned from their ill-fated mission on the 9th of Ab.
- Moses was told he could not enter the Promise on the 9th of Ab.

All restrictions that apply to the mourner apply to the fast:

- |                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a) No eating           | g) No smoking                 |
| b) No drinking         | h) No music                   |
| c) No bathing          | I) No radio                   |
| d) No anointing        | j) No television              |
| e) No wearing of shoes | k) No newspapers or magazines |
| f) No sex              | l) No rejoicing of any kind   |

It is the last opportunity to mourn for your "Jerusalem that now is," i.e., for all your idolatry including your images of yourself and the way you think things should be. The household furniture is turned over; sleeping and sitting on the ground are signs of mourning.

It is even forbidden to read the Law, Prophets, Writings, Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Hallachoth and Aggadoth, except for the assigned readings.

**READINGS:**

Lamentations

Job

Jeremiah 15; 16;17; 18; 19; & other bad parts

Psalm 119

Isaiah 2:6 - 4:1

Isaiah 24

Baruch

Letter of Jeremiah

Song of the Three Young Men

Prayer of Manasseh

Anyone who works, or does not fast or mourn for Jerusalem will not share in her joy (Isaiah 66:10). . . "Their iniquities shall be on their bones." (Ezekiel 32:27.)

The priests were reading an assigned reading (Psalm 94:23.) Young priests with the keys of the Temple assembled on the roof and threw the keys skyward saying: "Master of the Universe - as we did not have the merit to be faithful stewards - these keys are given back into thy keeping." A figure of a hand received them.