

Elder Vernon Johson

Numbers

Forty Days Fasting – Moses vs. Christ

Moses and Christ are set forth for us in the scriptures for us to compare:

1. Deu. 18:15 "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"

2. Acts 3:22 "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

3. Acts 7:37 "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."

4. John 1:17 "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Moses is the prophet by which the law was given. Jesus Christ is the prophet by which grace and truth came.

When Moses went up into the mountain at the commandment of God to receive the law, including the ten commandments he fasted forty days and forty nights: Deu. 9:9 "When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: 10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant."

In contrast to this, when Christ was baptized of John in the river Jordan, he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness: Matt. 4:1 "Then was Jesus led up of the

Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered."

Fasting for forty days and forty nights is, no doubt, a quite arduous task. Moses and Christ are the only two that I read about in the scriptures who fasted for forty days and forty nights. It is easier to say that we are followers of the Lord when we have everything going right for us. If we are in good health, have a good job, have no problems to speak of in our family and in our church, have a good relationship with our fellow workers, etc. and are not faced with any particular troubles or problems, then to say that we are followers of the Lord and are walking by faith is much easier, than it is when our health falters, we have lost our job, or we have family difficulties, or we have troubles in the church, or we are faced with a myriad of troubles and problems.

It is much more a test of our faith when we are at our weakest condition than when we are at our strongest condition. Now, I say the above to show that both Moses and Christ were put to the test at the point of great weakness of body. Actually, it could be argued that Christ test was more arduous than Moses test. Moses was in the mountain, whereas Christ was in the wilderness.

In Moses test, he had been given the ten commandments which were written on two tables of stone by the finger of God. When he came down out of the mountain after forty days and nights, he found the children of Israel committing idolatry and fornication and revelry. In his anger, he threw down the two tables of stone and broke them. Thus, the first thing that man did after receiving the ten commandments was to break them!

In contrast to Moses, Christ was tempted of the devil and sinned not. Moses later sinned in the matter of the waters of Meribah and was not permitted to go into the land of Canaan: Deu. 32:49 "Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: 50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: 51 Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel." Christ never did sin though he had more tests of faith than anyone ever had.

This comparative test of faith shows forth the superiority and greatness of Christ and that he is a worthy redeemer for his people.

No doubt, Moses was a great prophet and he was blest of God to deliver the law. Christ is the greater prophet and he delivered both truth (justice) and grace to which we are totally indebted and should be most thankful.