

Lesson 1

Introduction to Lent & Holy Week

Holy Week marks the final week of the season of Lent and it remembers the final days of Jesus Christ's life, as well as his death, burial, and resurrection.



Lent is a period of fasting before Easter. Fasting means to go without food for a period of time. Fasting for Christians is used for a number of reasons:

- It develops self-control
- It helps Christians prepare for a significant event
- It gives them space and time to pray and to listen to God

“When you fast, put oil on your hair and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in heaven; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt 6:17-18)

Answer these questions.

1. What is fasting? Use a dictionary/internet and write down a definition.
2. Why do Christians fast?
3. Why might it be difficult for people to fast?
4. What does the quote above tell Christians about HOW they should fast?



Lent specifically remembers the 40 days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness following his baptism. But this isn't the only time we hear about fasting. Here are some other Biblical characters who also fasted:

- **Moses** before receiving the 10 commandments (Deut 9:9) fasted for 40 days
- **Elijah** after defeating the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 19:7,8) fasted for 40 days
- **Esther** and all the Jewish people while she prayed for an audience with the King who would go on to marry her and save the Jewish people (Esther 4:14) fasted for 3 days
- **Paul** after his encounter with God on the road back from Damascus (Acts 9:9) fasted for 3 days

1. What do Christians remember during Lent?

Jesus fasts in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written,

"One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."



Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."'

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! for it is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."'

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.



Answer these questions.

1. What do we mean by the term tempt? Use a dictionary/internet write down the definition.
2. Who took Jesus into the wilderness and why?
3. How did Jesus react to Satan in the story?
4. Why do you think Jesus did not give into temptation?
5. What do you think Christians might find important about this story about Jesus' life?
6. Using the internet find out which other religions fast? Why do they do this?