

Reference	Context	Significance
Leviticus 16:29, 31; 23:27; 23:32; Numbers 29:7	Day of Atonement is a day for ‘humbling your soul’. This seems refers to fasting (see Psalm 35:13 for confirmation. Also Isaiah 58 which alternates this expression with the Hebrew word for ‘fast’).	Interestingly this shows that the Hebrew fast was from evening to evening – Lev 23:32. This was a day for atonement to be made for our sin. Humbling (same Greek word as used here of the Hebrew) is mentioned in the NT: James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6. There are verses that talk about God humbling us with need or circumstances – Matt 18:4; Phil 4:2, 2 Cor 11:7; 12:21. Fasting is linked to humbling, lowering and bowing ourselves before God.
Deut 8:2-16	God tested them by humbling them without food and giving them manna instead.	To see what is in the heart. Obedience to God and to learn that man does not live by bread alone but by God’s word. We must be careful though: Deut 8 refers to something God did to the Israelites, not something they did to themselves (as in fasting).
Judges 20:26	Benjamin wins great victory over Israel (22k dead). They weep before the Lord, ask if they should go out again, the Lord says yes. But the next day Benjamin wins again (18k dead). They fasted till evening, wept and offered sacrifices and asked again if they should fight. The Lord said, yes I will give them to you tomorrow. This time they win (25,100 dead).	Possibly the additional humbling of double defeat and fasting before winning a victory in a civil war was necessary. Strong link to mourning circumstances/seeking the Lord.
1 Samuel 7:6	After ark returns from Philistines, it is sent to Kiriath Jearim for 20 years while Israel mourns and seeks the Lord. Samuel says if you’re returning lose your idols and he will deliver you from the Philistines. At Mizpah they gather for repentance and fasting for a day. Samuel keeps praying and they defeat the Philistines.	Importance of fasting in confession.
1 Samuel 31:13	After the death of Saul, the men of Jabesh go and get his body and bury it. They fast for 7 days.	Mourning circumstances.
2 Samuel 1:12	David and his men mourn, weep and fast till evening for Saul, Jonathan and Israel at the news of defeat and death.	Mourning circumstances.

Reference	Context	Significance
2 Samuel 12:16 – 23	David seeks the Lord with fasting for his dying son. He explains that his weeping and fasting was to see if God would be gracious and let the child live.	Mourning circumstances; seeking the Lord.
1 Kings 21:9 – 27	False fast proclaimed to kill Naboth but Ahab fasts genuinely when he hears Elijah's words of judgement. God sees that he has humbled himself and graciously changes the timing of the judgement.	Mourning/confessing
1 Chronicles 10:12	Men of Jabesh and Saul's death again.	Mourning circumstances
2 Chronicles 20:3	Jehoshaphat is afraid at the army coming from Edom and set his face to seek the Lord. He proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. They assembled to seek help from the Lord.	Mourning circumstances/seeking the Lord.
Ezra 8:21 – 23	Ezra proclaims a fast by the canal to humble themselves before God and ask for a safe journey for them all and their stuff. Fasting and petitioning.	Seeking the Lord.
Nehemiah 1:4	Nehemiah fasts and weeps at the news of Jerusalem's problems.	Mourning circumstances.
Nehemiah 9:1	Gathering of the people in the 7 month to hear the Law read. They weep but are told to be joyful. However, on the 24 th day of the month (16 days after the festival ends) they gather to fast and wear sackcloth to confess sin.	Confession of sin.
Esther 4:3 – 16	Fasting of the Jews because of the death sentence issued by the king of Assyria. Esther proclaims a 3 day fast before she goes to see the king.	Mourning circumstances/seeking the Lord
Esther 9:31	Purim is a joyful celebration to remember their time of fasting and lamentation.	Joy replaces fasting. We are not ascetics. Food and joy are good things.
Psalm 35:13	Fasting & sackcloth (described as humbling) when someone is ill.	Mourning circumstances/seeking the Lord.

Reference	Context	Significance
Isaiah 58:3-6	The people's fasting is criticised by the Lord.	Criticism is of drawing near to God and fasting externally but with no internal love of God's ways. They behave evilly (fighting, arguing, exploitation etc.) but expect God to listen to a fasting ceremony. One day of seeking with fasting and every day evil is not on acceptable before God. God's fast is to behave justly (a fasting from evil).
Jeremiah 14:12	People's fast is not heard by the Lord.	Similar to Isaiah 58.
Jeremiah 36:6	Jeremiah tells Baruch to read the words he dictated to him to the people on a day of fasting. Perhaps they will turn from wickedness to the Lord because his anger proclaimed to them is great.	Go on a day of humbling, possibly get the best reception for repentance.
Daniel 6:18	The King spends the night fasting (which is how some English versions translate it) when Daniel is thrown to the lions.	Not really fasting. It says 'hungrily'
Daniel 9:3	Daniel realises that Jeremiah had said it would be 70 years of desolation for Jerusalem. So he turns to pray, fast, confess sin and pray for Jerusalem.	Confession of sin/seeking the Lord.
Joel 1:14	Call to fast because of the coming judgement.	Mourning circumstances/confession of sin/seeking the Lord
Joel 2:12 – 15	Warning of judgement and encouragement to return to the Lord with weeping, mourning and fasting.	Mourning circumstances/confession of sin/seeking the Lord
Jonah 3:5	Ninevites fast at warning of judgement.	Mourning circumstances/confession of sin/seeking the Lord
Zechariah 7:3 - 5	Question about continuing the fasts. Lord asks if it was really for him that they fasted. Again, encouragement to turn from evil and do good (active, visible social good).	Similar to Isaiah 58.
Zechariah 8:19	Fasts of the 4, 5, 7 and 10 th months to become joyful occasions therefore love truth and peace.	Joy replaces fasting. Truth and peace

Reference	Context	Significance
Matthew 4:2	Jesus hungry after fasting 40 days and nights.	Jesus fasted – he humbled himself (as in Philippians 2:8). 40 days mirrors Noah’s flood and Moses’ desert wanderings. It is a time of testing; to see what is within (like Deut 8). We see Jesus’ purity and faithfulness to God.
Matthew 6:16-18	Sermon on the Mount Teaching about fasting.	Don’t look sombre, look normal. Do it for the Lord not men. The Lord will reward.
Matthew 9:14 – 15	Jesus asked about why his disciples don’t fast	Fasting not appropriate while the bridegroom is with them. When he is gone, then they will fast. Fasting is only appropriate because Jesus is not here. It is not a state that God ultimately delights in. We are not ascetics. We humble ourselves now because of sin, trial and the need to seek Christ.
Mark 2:18-20	Jesus asked about why his disciples don’t fast	As Matt 9:14-15
Luke 2:37	Anna the prophetess never leaves temple but stays to worship, pray and fast night and day.	Link of worship, prayer and fasting.
Luke 5:33 – 35	Jesus asked about why his disciples don’t fast	As Matt 9:14-15
Luke 18:12	Pharisee’s boast about fasting (and other things)	Outward fasting is useless. God cares about the heart as in the sermon on the mount.
Acts 13:2-3	Paul and Barnabas finished their mission of taking gifts to brothers in Judea. With the church in Antioch, they were worshipping and fasting. The Spirit called them to set Barnabas and Saul apart for the work he had called them. After their prayer and fasting they laid hands on them and sent them off.	Mixture of worship, prayer and seeking the Lord. Fasting is part of this.
Acts 14:23	Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in the church and committed them to the Lord with prayer and fasting.	Again, mixture of worship, prayer and seeking the Lord.

2 Cor 6:5; 11:27 (‘gone without food’) could be other examples of fasting: the marks of a servant of God/Christ.