

Shrove Tuesday 16th February 2021

Anglo-Saxon Ecclesiastical Institutes about the 11th century: *'In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him.'*

2 Chronicles 20:3 *"Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to enquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah"*

Ezra 8:21 *"There by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions"*

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday which latter marks the beginning of Lent as the Christian churches start the build up to Holy Week. The name is derived from '*shriven*' implying a time of confession of sins and receiving absolution before the fasting of Lent. In years gone by it was a time of using up any food stuffs which wouldn't keep for the 40 days of Lent. Eggs, butter and milk were easily turned into pancakes using a little flour.

In times of stress fasting has been associated with repentance and turning to God since Biblical times. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was faced with an invasion by an army of Moabites, Ammonites and Meunites. Fasting was seen as allowing relief from daily cooking chores for time to be given to confessing sins and praying for forgiveness.

Similarly Ezra before leading his people 900 miles back to Jerusalem ordered them to fast and seek God's assistance in this enormous undertaking.

The comparison with the current pandemic and the stresses it has produced is obvious. We should ensure that we have made our peace with God before we toss the pancakes.