

“Fasting and Humility”

Ezra 8

I. Ezra was a Priest and a _____. Scribes were trusted men and scholars that _____ the Holy Scriptures. **Ezra’s Mission** was to:

A. Get the people back into the _____. **7:10** Therefore he:

1. Set his heart to _____ the Law of the LORD.
2. Set his heart to personally _____ (do) the Word of GOD.
James 1:22-25
3. Set his heart to _____ GOD’s statutes and ordinances in Israel.

* _____ comes when GOD’s People return to the WORD of GOD.

Spiritual _____ happens when the Bible is relegated to a shelf.

B. Get the People of the Promise, back into the _____, where they belonged. Because of _____ to the WORD of GOD, the Jewish people had been conquered by the _____, abducted, and forced to live in a foreign land for _____. Prompted by the Spirit, Ezra asked the King of the Persian Empire to allow him to lead another group of Jews back to their ancestral _____. **7:6** The Jews returned to the devastated land of Israel in three groups:

1. _____ B.C. Ezra 1-6 Led by Zerubbabel Persian King, _____
About 50,000 Jews returned
2. _____ B.C. Ezra 7-10 Led by Ezra Persian King, _____
(____ years later) Artaxerxes is probably the _____ of Esther’s husband.
About 1400 men, plus their families went. **8:1-20**
3. _____ B.C. Neh. 1-13 Led by _____ King Artaxerxes
(_____ years later)

II. After traveling for a week, Ezra stopped the group and camped by the _____ River/Canal in Babylon for 3 days. Ezra asked the people to join him in a fast. **8:21** Biblical fasting is abstaining from _____ in order to seek _____. These are some of the reasons the group fasted and prayed:

A. They did it to _____ themselves before GOD. Fasting is the best way to humble yourself in GOD’s Presence. Psalm 35:13

1. Fasting makes you _____ your busy schedule, in order to seek GOD. It makes you lay your agenda down, in order to see _____ Agenda.
2. GOD hates _____. **1 Peter 5:5-6** HE gives _____ (power) to those that humble themselves before HIM. That is how HE _____.
3. Ezra stated six times in chapter 7 and 8, “the _____ of the LORD was upon me.” This demonstrated Ezra’s _____ before GOD, and his _____ in GOD. JESUS stated in John 15:5, “Apart from ME you can do _____.”

B. They needed _____ for a difficult journey. (_____ miles over _____ on foot) **7:9** Do you need strength?

C. They were concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their _____. **8:31** Ps. 127:3 What kind of _____ are we leaving to the "little ones."

D. On wagons they were carrying precious _____ that was needed in the Promised Land. Ezra was taking with him _____ of silver, nearly _____ of silver and gold vessels, plus other valuables, donated through the offerings from the people, plus the _____ articles Artaxerxes gave him from the original temple. **8:24-30** What _____, what talents, what investments, has GOD _____ to you to deliver to others on HIS behalf?

E. The journey was exceedingly _____. There was no guarantee that any of them would make it. The _____ of caravans and human trafficking were how many ancient economies were sustained.

1. Ezra was _____ to ask Artaxerxes for an armed escort, because he had _____ in the strength of HIS GOD. **8:22**

2. There is nothing wrong with asking for _____. Fourteen years later Nehemiah asked for an _____ escort. Neh. 2:9 The issue is when needing help for anything, always go to _____.

3. That is what they did. "So we _____, and _____ our GOD, and HE _____ to our entreaty." **8:23**

III. Do you have a potentially rough _____ ahead?

1. Are you dealing with uncertainties?

2. Do you feel _____?

3. Are there _____ that you are concerned about?

4. Do you have important _____ that need to be made?

5. Do you need _____ for your future? For ministry?

6. Do you want to be able to hear HIS _____ to your heart?

7. Do you want GOD to lift you, help you, _____ you?

Would you join your pastor and your church family in fasting for 5 Fridays, March 5, 12, 19, 26, and April 2nd? The days are adjustable to your schedule. (1 meal/day; 2 meals; or 3 meals skipped)

