

November 28, 2021
Ezra 8:1-36
That We Might Humble Ourselves

“Preparation time (‘I assembled them at the canal’) is not lost time. Ezra was eager to go to Jerusalem, but he knew the importance of careful planning.” **Mervin Breneman**

“These people were making a momentous decision to leave the security of their relatively comfortable life, make a dangerous four-month trip, and live in Judah, which still had a precarious existence. Yet as with the first return in Ezra 1, this decision was important to God’s plan of redemption, for it was through the continuance of this Jewish community that Jesus came to the world and brought redemption for all humankind. Ezra challenges us with his emphasis on humility and worship. Before he launched any project related to God’s work, he sought God’s guidance and worshipped.” **Mervin Breneman**

“The first thing the returnees did was worship God. **For those who love God, the first response before, during, and after any project such as this must be worship.**” **Mervin Breneman** (*emphases mine*)

They were able to secure 38 Levites from two families. They were to be temple servants. Without these men to teach the Law the whole thing would have been futile for God’s people. Avoid futile endeavors.

Ezra proclaimed a **fast** in preparation for the journey. He wanted this group assembled before him to **humble themselves** before God and ask God for a safe journey for all and their possessions, which were many. They were demonstrating their total dependance on God who was in total control of their very lives.

The key men were charged with care of the precious cargo. God holds them accountable, your cargo will be weighed when we arrive, it must all be accounted for. There is an accounting for what has been entrusted to each believer, are you taking this accountability to the Lord seriously? Be faithful in the little things.

Application:

In **verses 31-34**, just a few short sentences, the 900 mile trip is described. It was a difficult journey, loaded with valuables, and no military escort. Ezra said it all when he stated, “**the hand of our God was on us.**” When they arrived, after a 3 day rest, all of the goods were handed over to the Levites as planned for accountability. A good start resulted in a good finish, they **fasted**, they **humbled themselves** before God, they demonstrated their **total dependance upon God**, and afterwards **they worshipped**. God is in the details, pray without ceasing, pray believing, trust God to keep His promises. As you go forth in service to the Lord practice what we have learned in our text today, fast, pray, humble yourself, live in total dependance upon God, and worship before, during, and after every thing you do.