

Ezra 8:1, 15-23 (New English Translation—NET)

¹ These are the leaders and those enrolled with them by genealogy who were coming up with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes ...

¹⁵ I had them assemble at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there for three days. I observed that the people and the priests were present, but I found no Levites there. ¹⁶ So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were teachers. ¹⁷ I sent them to Iddo, who was the leader in the place called Casiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his relatives, who were the temple servants in Casiphia, so they would bring us attendants for the temple of our God.

¹⁸ Due to the fact that the good hand of our God was on us, they brought us a skilled man, from the descendants of Mahli the son of Levi son of Israel. This man was Sherebiah, who was accompanied by his sons and brothers, 18 men, ¹⁹ and Hashabiah, along with Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, with his brothers and their sons, 20 men, ²⁰ and some of the temple servants that David and his officials had established for the work of the Levites—220 of them. They were all designated by name.

²¹ I called for a fast there by the Ahava Canal, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and seek from him a safe journey for us, our children, and all our property. ²² I was embarrassed to request soldiers and horsemen from the king to protect us from the enemy along the way, because we had said to the king, “The good hand of our God is on everyone who is seeking him, but his great anger is against everyone who forsakes him.” ²³ So we fasted and prayed to our God about this, and he answered us.

Sermon Notes:**Discovery Bible Study Questions**

1. What thoughts/emotions/questions do you have about ‘fasting’?
2. What can you determine about the context from v1 and v15-20?
3. Read v21-23. Why did Ezra call for a fast?
4. Why didn’t Ezra seek aid from King Artaxerxes?
5. With what other spiritual discipline is fasting combined with in v23? Is this important?
6. What can you determine or assume about fasting from this passage?
7. How can you apply these truths about fasting in your own spiritual life?

