

Ezra 9:5-10:4 – Ezra’s Prayer and Confession - Judah’s Intermarriage with Pagans!

3/16/19 Sat Morn Prayer – P. Twente, 714 425-9221; ptwente@gmail.com

TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY – William Longstaff – Dallas Christian Adult Choral Group

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word. Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak, forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.
2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on; Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone Abiding in Jesus, like Him thou shalt be; Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.
3. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul, Each thought and each motive beneath His control. Thus, led by His Spirit to fountains of love, Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

The Confession of Sin (Ezr 9:1-15)

No sooner had a teacher of the Word arrived than the Word began to reveal sin (*Heb 4:12*). Ezra discovered that the Jews had mingled with their heathen neighbors and married heathen wives. See *Deu 7:1-26*; *Exo 19:5-6*; and *Psa 106:35*. Ezra was so burdened at hearing this report that he publicly tore his garment in sorrow and repentance and sat like a dumb man until the hour for the evening sacrifice. The people who knew God’s Word began to tremble (*Ezr 9:4*; *Isa 66:1-2*), fearing what the Lord might do to the feeble nation. Ezra’s prayer of confession should be compared with Daniel’s prayer (*Dan 9:1-27*) and the prayer of Nehemiah (*Neh 9:1-38*). “**I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face!**” Ezra prayed. He looked back to Israel’s past sins (*Ezr 9:7*) and admitted that the nation deserved captivity. But now the Lord had sent deliverance; they had been restored by His grace; and yet the nation was sinning again. The future of the kingdom was hanging, as it were, like garments on a tent nail, so feeble was the restored remnant of Israel. God had given them a wall of protection (*Ezr 9:9*) and graciously answered their prayers. What more could Ezra say? “We have not learned our lessons,” he says, “for God has punished us for our sins, yet we go on sinning still!” It is interesting to note that Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah all had to confess national sin and plead for forgiveness. *2Ch 7:14* applies here. However, it was not enough for the religious leader to pray. The entire nation had to face its sins and make matters right with the Lord.

Ezra Prays About Intermarriage – (Ezra 9:5-10:4)

*At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God. [6] And I said: “**O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.**” [7] Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day. [8] And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. [9] For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. [10] And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? **For we have forsaken Your commandments,** [11] which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. [12] Now **therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.**’ [13] And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, [14] should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor? [15] **O LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day. Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!**”*

The People Confess Their Sin

[10:1] Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly. [2] And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, “We

have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. [3] Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. [4] Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it."

SUMMARY:

- Ezra's actions and response are excellent examples for us to follow.
- **THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S CALL:** Ezra, soon, on his arrival in Jerusalem, sees the purpose of his call.
- On his journey to Jerusalem – 900 miles, 4 months – he may have wondered why me? He repeatedly said, "The hand of the LORD was upon me"! But why I am being called? There must be many there in Jerusalem who could much better be used.
- Even though Ezra, or us! do not understand the full purpose of God's calling, we, through faith and our love to Him, must give obedience to the call!
- **THE SIN OF JUDAH INTERMARRYING THE PAGANS:** Upon hearing and seeing the gross sin of the people, their leaders and their priests, he was quick to humble himself for "our" guilt, and repent! "I tore my garment and my robe and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished".
- **UPON FINDING JUDAH'S GREAT TRESPASS, WHAT DID EZRA DO?** He was so overwhelmed by the sin of his people that he tore his clothes and tore out his hair. Instead of beginning a tirade against them, which would have been characteristic of many, notice the next step Ezra took – **He prayed!**
- Notice he includes himself in the iniquity and the guilt. He prays for their sins as if they were his own!
- He didn't make excuses! The appeal must be made for mercy to the guilty, not as a favor to the deserving (or somewhat deserving).
- Ezra ended his prayer not by asking for forgiveness, but by declaring that God was righteous, appealing to His mercy and kindness to the guilty.
- Only the mercy of God, the confession of sin, the sacrifice of Christ, and the grace of God could make it possible for Him to save these people, restore and revive them.
- When confession of sin has been made, let us stand before God claiming forgiveness, acceptance, and cleansing, through the precious blood of Christ, **1Jn 1:7**.
- Even though the problem was dealt with directly, it would eventually reappear.
- How long did this reformation last? About twenty-five years later, Nehemiah faced the same problem (*Neh_13:23*). It was a repeated sin and required repeated discipline. This corrective action worked for that generation.
- The best reformers can but do their best efforts to turn away from trespass, but, when the Redeemer Himself shall come to Zion, He shall effectually turn away ungodliness from Jacob.
- We see the need for every generation to be reminded to do the same thing! God's servants must "watch and pray" if the work of God is to prosper.
- May we commit to follow Jesus Christ; to live to please Him. We must cleanse our house from the defilement of the world and **live a separated life unto God. (2 Cor. 6:4-16)** A life that pleases Him!

SEARCH ME, OH GOD (CLEANSE ME) - J Edwin Orr – *The Kingsmen*

Search me, O God, and know my heart today; try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray.

See if there be some wicked way in me; cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

See if there be some wicked way in me; cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

Pray for World Leaders, including: Xi Jinping – China; Narendra Modi- India; Donald Trump – USA; Joko Widodo - Indonesia; Jair Bolsonaro - Brazil; Arif Alvi - Pakistan; Muhammadu Buhari - Nigeria; Hasina Wazed - Bangladesh; Vladimir Putin- Russia; Lopez Obrador – Mexico; Benjamin Netanyahu – Israel; Angela Merkel – Germany; Theresa May – U.K.; Kim Jong-un – North Korea; Moon Jae-in – South Korea.

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