

Ezra Chapter 10

V: 1 Ezra cried out to God, confessing, and humbling both himself and the nation.

- Key words: Prayed, confessed, weeping, casting himself down (humbling) himself before God.

2 Chronicles 7:14 “If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

- Sin always binds us up, like a snare or a trap; but confession is liberating.

Romans 6:16 “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”

Romans 6:22 “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

- We are free from the power of sin in our lives which is death; but we are also free from sin in the sense that we are no longer slaves to it - we don't have to sin, we can't be forced to sin - it's a choice, we don't have to yield to the sin nature, now we have other options.

1 Corinthians 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

- Ezra wept and grieved over his and the nation's sin:

Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil:...”

Turn to:

Psalm 32:1-2 “¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

- These first two verses describe how David feels in comparison to how he felt before He was forgiven, when he was still in the midst of his sin and trying to cover it up.

Psalm 32:3-4 “³When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. ⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.”

- David was grieved by his sin, and eventually broken.
- As Ezra cried out to God, confessing, and humbling both himself and the nation - the Spirit of God stirred amongst the people and they were drawn to the house of God.
- The Holy Spirit did what He does and moved through the people bringing about conviction for sin:

John 16:8 “And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

- The people wept too, they were grieved over their sin.
- They didn't come because Ezra preached a fiery sermon on sin and repentance, he just prayed, his heart was broken over the sin of the nation, their hearts were stirred by the Spirit of God and they came.

James 5:16 “... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

V: 2 Shechaniah one of the leaders involved in the taking of foreign wives follows Ezra's lead and confesses plainly what he and others have done.

- No attempt at justification, or dodging responsibility - he says he's sinned
- There is hope because of who God is, because He is a merciful and forgiving God - and He hasn't destroyed them, there is still hope.

V: 3-4 Solution: let's make a promise / covenant! / commitment. We'll see as this progresses that they will in fact honor their promise / covenant with God - but there is also an underlying flaw in the covenant - they can't keep any promises to God!

- The underlying flaw is their own sin nature, their own depravity, their own inability to do good.

Paul understood this well:

Romans 7:18 “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

God knows who He's dealing with:

Genesis 15:7-18 Abraham wanted to know how he would really know that he would inherit the land.

- **Covenant:** divided animals, deep sleep, smoking furnace & burning lamp - all one sided, dependent on God. - Just like our salvation!
- The covenant / commitment - would be to #1 put away their foreign wives and the children thereof.
- #2 To receive the instruction or counsel of Ezra and those that fear God's word.
- To do it all according to the Law, in submission to the Word of God.
- They were told to set these foreign wives aside and their children.
- Not completely sure what this looked like:
 1. Divorce - kicked out on own, no support, go back to your father's house in Moab or Ashdod...
 2. Physically separated, set aside but still provided for, no longer a typical marital relationship.
- Arise, let's get going the ball is in your court, it's time to move - and be of good courage because this won't be easy - people's lives are involved. These women have been used, their children won't understand - but it needs to be done.

V: 5 Then Ezra "made" them promise, swear to do according to this word meaning the word of God and this covenant.

- Not sure how he "made" them, he might have threatened to sack Nehemiah on them...

V: 6 Ezra wasn't done grieving over the sin of Judah - he proceeded to fast and mourn over the sin of the nation.

- Ezra was a Levite, a scribe, but he's acting in the capacity of a priest: He is a spiritual leader - title or not.

[Describing how Moses responded to the sin of the nation:](#)

Deuteronomy 19:18-19 "18 And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the Lord was wroth against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also."

- Ezra loves God, he loves the sheep, he's a good shepherd.

V: 7-8 Invoking some of the authority vested in him by Artaxerxes the nation is summoned to appear in Jerusalem under penalty of excommunication and forfeiture of all their assets.

V: 9 The people responded in obedience, gathering on the 20 of Chislev - just a few days away from what would later be Hanukkah (25th, Nov / Dec)

- They trembled not knowing what was going to happen, and because there was a cold driving rain.
- Sometimes obedience to God's word is not comfortable or convenient. They didn't get a rainy day pass.

V: 10-11 The official charge or challenge, this is what you've done, taking strange wives and increasing the sin of Israel.

- Confess it, repent of it, and make it right.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness."

Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

- Forgiveness comes through open confession - not holding back.

Jesus describes two men that went to the Temple to pray:

Luke 18:10-14 "¹⁰Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹²I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

- Separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the wives you've taken from them.

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,..."

V: 12-14 The people agree that they must obey Ezra, and honor God.

- They point out the practicality of their numbers and the inclement weather and that it will take a little time to sort out.
- So often it take us time to get into trouble, or things build up over time - and just as often it takes time to get out of it - God's never in a rush.
- The suggestion or decree is that each man who had taken a strange wiv will have to make an appointment with the elders and judges of the cities and deal with the issue that the fierce wrath of the Lord be turned away.

V: 15 Specific men, 4 men are appointed to judge over these matters

1. Jonathan: "God is gracious"
 2. Jahaziah: "Jehovah sees" or "Jehovah reveals"
 3. Meshullam: "Reconciled"
 4. Shabbethai: "Rest of the Lord" or "Sabbath of the Lord"
- God is gracious, He sees all things, He has provided us a Way to be reconciled to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ that we might rest in Him - He is our Sabbath.

V: 16 They were obedient, they did it.

1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

V: 17 They made an end of it, they dealt with it in a Biblical way, it was resolved in accordance with God's will.

- It was more than just a day or two, it took 4 full months - from the first day of the 10th month (Tebeth) to the 1st day of the first month (Nissan), just in time for Passover.

V: 18-19 The High Priests sons are named, they gave their hand, they swore an oath to put away their pagan wives.

1 Peter 4:17 "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?"

- Knowing they were guilty of this "trespass" they each offered a ram of their flock
- A trespass being an intentional or willful transgression of God's Word - which is and should be the final authority in our lives.

V: 20-44 Ezra, like Paul, names those who were in the transgression - no privacy or confidence in this matter.

- Not that we should be gossips or tale bearers, or talk about other people's sins but there is a scripture that is often misused.

1 Peter 4:8 "And above all things have fervent charity / love among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

- In context this verse is about how we relate to others, but the love that covers sin isn't our "hiding" their sin, or even keeping their confidence in these matters - there are other verses that cover this. The love that covers the multitude of sins is the love of Jesus Christ and the expression of that love on the cross, His love, His blood that covers over the multitude of our sins.
- Peter is saying that we should deal lovingly with each other because that is what Jesus has done in paying the price and forgiving our sins.

1.	Priests:	4
2.	Son's of Immer:	13
3.	Levites:	6
4.	Singers:	1
5.	Porters:	3
6.	General citizens:	88

Total: 115 50,000 + 1,500. = 51,500 1%

Galatians 5:9 "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

- They made a solemn commitment to forsake their pagan wives and children and walk in the ways of the Lord without compromise.

2 Corinthians 7:10 "For Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

- Jesus is teaching on what it takes to be his disciple, Peter then says they've forsaken all and followed you, what shall we have?

Matthew 20:29 "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

- We can't out-give or out sacrifice God!