

EZRA CHAPTER 9 – Not Separate From Abomination of Surrounding Nations – Intermarriage with Pagans

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

EZRA – Chapter 9 MAIN POINTS:

1. Ezra felt a **strong call** from the LORD to go from Babylon to Jerusalem to teach those now living back in the land. Why? We see here the reason!!
2. 57 years after the temple was rebuilt and the First Passover, upon Ezra's coming to Jerusalem from Babylon with the “second wave” of returning exiles, we see the shocking return to the **committing of abominations** by intermarriage with pagans. The priests, Levites, rulers of the Israelites were the leaders in the trespass.
3. How could this have happened? **What is Ezra to do** about the situation?

SUMMARY OF SITUATION: Before Israel ever became a nation, God warned them that if they should turn away from Him and follow after the gods of the people around them, they would be dispersed by God from the land that he had given to them. They were commanded by God, when they came into the Promised land, not to make any marriages or alliances with the inhabitants lest their hearts would be driven to worship the gods of those people. It was **for their abomination that God was driving them out**. The children of Israel came into the land that God had promised them, becoming a great nation, blessed of God **but they had a problem, an attraction towards evil. An attraction towards the gods** of the Amorites, the Moabites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Canaanites. **Gods of pleasure;** the gods of **power** the gods of the **intellect**. God sent prophets warning them unless they would turn away from their abominations, from their evil practices, from the worship of these false gods, that God would judge them and they would be driven from the land. Jeremiah and Isaiah began to prophesy that soon God was going to dispossess them out of this land, that He would use the Babylonians to be the instrument and that they would be carried away to Babylon for seventy years in bondage and captivity. As God warned, the Southern Kingdom was defeated by the Babylonians and the Northern Kingdom destroyed by the Assyrians much earlier. After seventy years in Babylon, God's mercy and grace was extended to them. As prophesied by Isaiah, God raised up a king, Cyrus, who issued the decree that allowed the Jews to return to the land of Israel, to re-build their temple and to commence worship. About fifty thousand men, plus families came back to the land, rebuilt the temple and began offering the sacrifices, reinstituting worship.

Fifty seven years later, king Artaxerxes' heart was moved to make another decree that Ezra might lead a new contingency of Jews back to Israel, as sort of a second wave of people returning. Ezra was given orders that he was to be one of the leaders and governor in the land. Having the power of capital punishment, He was to see that the righteous standards of God were maintained within the land. Ezra came to Jerusalem, bringing back great wealth with him and great authority from the Persian king. Ezra was established in Jerusalem. **Suddenly they had come to him with this shocking news. The priests, the Levites, the rulers, have not obeyed the commandment of God, which was they were to be separate people. In direct disobedience to the commandment of God, they began to marry into the inhabitants of the land, taking the daughters of the Canaanites and so forth for their sons, giving their daughters to them. They began this mixture, this interracial marriage.**

STEPS IN RESTORATION: For a nation or for an individual!

1. Coming back! (Letter to the Ephesians)
2. Rebuilding the altar – sacrifices, shedding of blood, the cross
3. Back to the House of God - Commencing worship - the body of Christ – service, testimony!
4. Resistance! Enemy offers to join! Compromise; Direct Hindrance; Misrepresentation; Push Through Resistance with God's Help! The necessity of bringing God's work back, to stir up revival and ending lethargy.
5. **Revival of the Word of God – Reading/ mediating, hearing, teaching God's word**

STEPS IN Recognizing and Responding to Trespassing the Word of God!

1. **Overcoming “why try”; Easier to pull down than build up. Take it to God!**
2. **As a believer, don't be worldly**
3. **Pray and Confess**
4. **Do His will, His pleasure**
5. **Separate yourself**
How could they do it?
What to do now that I know?
Confront leaders? Confront the trespassers?
v. 3 absorb in all humiliation and sorrow
Take it to God.
Fast and prayer

TIME LINE – BOOKS OF EZRA – (“Bible Hub” online)

537 BC	The Proclamation of Cyrus	Ezra 1
537 BC	The Exiles Return	Ezra 2
535 BC	Temple Work Begins (70 yrs. from 605BC)	Ezra 3
534 BC	Adversaries Hinder Temple Work	Ezra 4
534 BC	Artaxerxes Orders Work Stopped	Ezra 4:17
520 BC	Tattenai's Letter to Darius	Ezra 5
520 BC	Temple Work Resumed by Darius' Decree	Ezra 6
(Books of Haggai & Zechariah occur here)		
515 BC	Completion and Dedication of the Temple	Ezra 6:16
(Book of Esther occurs here)		
BOOK OF ESTHER (about 60 yrs. from 1st return)		
483 BC	Queen Vashti Deposed	Esther 1
478 BC	Esther Becomes Queen	Esther 2
478 BC	Mordecai Thwarts a Conspiracy	Esther 2:21
474 BC	Haman Seeks Revenge on the Jews	Esther 3
473 BC	Mordecai Informs Esther of Haman's Plot	Esther 4
473 BC	Esther Prepares a Banquet	Esther 5
473 BC	The King Honors Mordecai	Esther 6
473 BC	Haman Is Hanged	Esther 7
473 BC	Xerxes' Edict on Behalf of Esther & Jews	Esther 8
472 BC	Purim Instituted	Esther 9
472 BC	Xerxes' Tribute to Mordecai	Esther 10
458 BC	Ezra to Jerusalem (147 years from 605; 79 years from 1 st return; 57 years from last verse of chapter 6!)	Ezra 7
458 BC	Ezra Commissioned by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:11
457 BC	Families Return to Jerusalem with Ezra	Ezra 8
457 BC	Ezra's reforms (80 yrs. from 1st return)	Ezra 9
456 BC	Ezra's Prayer About Intermarriage	Ezra 10

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH (about 100 years from 1st return)

445 BC	Nehemiah's Prayer for the Exiles	Nehemiah 1
444 BC	Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Nehemiah 2
444 BC	Builders of the Walls Named	Nehemiah 3
444 BC	Builders Overcome Ridicule	Nehemiah 4
444 BC	Nehemiah Abolishes Debt and Bondage	Nehemiah 5
444 BC	Sanballat's Plot	Nehemiah 6
444 BC	Completion of the Wall	Nehemiah 6:15
444 BC	Census of Returned Exiles	Nehemiah 7
444 BC	Ezra Reads the Law	Nehemiah 8
444 BC	Israelites Fast and Repent	Nehemiah 9
444 BC	Israelites Seal the Covenant	Nehemiah 10
444 BC	People Settle in Jerusalem	Neh. 11, 12
432 BC	Nehemiah Restores Laws	Nehemiah 13

Kings of Persia in Ezra-Nehemiah:

Cyrus (539-530-9yrs); Darius I (522-486-36yrs); Xerxes (Ahasueres – 485-464-21yrs); Artaxerxes I (464-423-41yrs)

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

EZRA CHAPTERS 9 – Intermarriage with Pagans:

*Ezr 9:1 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations (126X תועבה *tôw 'êbah*, to-ay-baw'; something disgusting (morally), especially idolatry or (concretely) an idol:—abominable thing), abomination) of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.*

Ezr 9:2 For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass (an extremely strong term meaning faithlessness)."

*Ezr 9:3 So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard (to be humiliated, be ashamed, to be put to shame, be dishonored, be confounded), and sat down astonished (89X devastated; שָׁמֵם *shâmêm*, shaw-mame' to stun (or intransitively grow numb), that is, devastate, stupefy: - make amazed, be astoried, (be, bring into, unto, lay, lie, make) desolate (-ion, places), be destitute, destroy, waste, wonder).*

vs. 1-2 The problem is exposed. *The people...the priests...the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands:* After his arrival and the proper accounting of all the gifts brought from Babylonia, Ezra received some really bad news. The spiritual condition of the Israelites there was bad! This was evident in their failure to separate from the pagan people in that region. ... *they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves...* Their failure to separate resulted in intermarriage with the surrounding pagan communities. To allow intermarriage with idolaters was to allow all these other areas of compromise. *...the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites:* The problem was they did not separate themselves from these **abominations**, especially the idolatry of these people. It was not just the act of having taken strange wives, but their having also joined them in their **abominations**. *...the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass:* Worst of all, it was their **leaders and rulers** who were **foremost** in this trespass!

Ex.34:11-16; Dt. 7:1-4

Spiritual distinctiveness!!! So they would not lose that Through them, through the Jewish blood line, the Messiah would be brought in. No small commandments!! All things prohibited, need to be prohibited. Here they have no concern for His promises, His heritage, bringing the Messiah! Absolutely reckless, self-centeredness Solomon – tremendous spiritual heritage, but married foreign state. They brought in their pagan gods Despite Solomon's heritage, he violated God's commandments and became involved with his wives' idols! Marriage is to be a nurture and encourager for worshipping and living according to the Word. Not to have to always come against opposition. Always easier to pull down and the to lift up.

v. 3 Ezra's was completely astonished. *When I heard...* Ezra had just been so blessed on his journey. He likely had expected to find something completely different than the idolatrous compromise that he found. ...*sat down astonished*, appalled or in a stupor! Ezra would have remembered that it was these sins of idolatry and compromise that caused the tribes of Israel to be exiled before. How in the world could the people endanger themselves like this again, committing the same trespass for which they were sent into exile.

v. 1 We see here the ministry that the LORD has called Ezra into! Those Israelites were engaged in the very things that the LORD had just sent them into the Babylonian exile for 70 years. **There is wisdom behind everything He is talking about! So the Jews would not lose their spiritual significance, bringing in the Messiah into the world!**

v. 2 Notice is much easier for the people to be pulled down spiritually down than to lift them up! We see them doing exactly what the Lord had warned them not to do in **Ex.34:11-16; Dt. 7:1-4 Mixing the holy seed – contaminating the line of the Messiah!**

Sin – missing the mark

Iniquity – speaks of our nature as marred children of Adam & Eve! Our fleshly nature!

Trespass – speaks of our deliberately doing what we know we should not do! Stepping over the line!

This totally applies to us, as well today! Notice what the New Testaments says: - 2Co 6:14-7:1! How important is separation from the world for you?

How is your “spiritual distinctiveness”?

How important to you is your spiritual heritage-what Christ has done for you?

How different am I from the world?

v. 3 Ezra now realizes why he was brought back to Jerusalem! God doesn't always give a reason why He gives us His commandments. But there is wisdom, reason of everything He ever gives us! ...*when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard and sat down astonished* (devastated). Notice two things regarding God's call: 1 God calls us because He wants to use us! Ezra was needed there! 2 We see how God works on both ends of a call! Where do you go when your leaders are the chief violators of the word of God? Where do I go? Like Ezra, go to God! **When was the last time you did this, over hearing of the committing of a grievous sin?**

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Ezr 9:4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

Ezr 9:5 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.

Ezr 9:6 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.

Ezr 9:7 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.

v. 4 *Everyone who trembled....assembled:* Some were horrified at the sin of their community. These who were marked by their respect for God’s word *assembled* together with Ezra. ***Because of the transgression...who had been carried away captive:*** An interesting title to give to those who had sinned. Historically, though most had been born in Babylon, they were among the captives who returned from exile. In a spiritual sense they were *carried away captive* by their sin of partnership with idolaters and idolatry. ***Sat down astonished:*** Partly for grief and shame at the sin; and partly for fear of some great and dreadful judgment which he expected and feared for it. Not again!

v. 5 *At the evening sacrifice* (about 3PM) *I arose....* Ezra knew there was a time to mourn, but he also knew that there was a time to pray, and now he would begin his prayer. Ezra likely became aware of this problem in the morning, so that he must have sat in this position for many hours. ***Fell on my knees...spread out my hands...*** Ezra was one of many in the Bible who prayed on his *knees*. The Bible tells us that David, Solomon, Daniel, Jesus, Stephen, Paul, Peter and early Christians all prayed on their knees. The Bible also shows us that it isn’t required, but it also has enough prayer *on* the knees to show us that it is good.

v. 6 *....too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face....:* Though Ezra’s hands were raised his face was down in shame and humiliation before the LORD. The sins of the people of Israel had weighed his head down so much that he could not lift his head (*our iniquities have risen higher than our heads*). He prayed saying “*our iniquities*” instead of “*their iniquities*.” Ezra had just arrived to this community and he had not shared any kind of life or conduct with them. Yet he knew that because they were bound together in the same covenant before God, *their iniquities were in fact his*. ***Is. 66:1-***

v. 7 *....been very guilty:* Ezra recognized the generally sinful past of the tribes of Israel, and how their exile was a righteous work of God against His sinful people which resulted in *the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day*.

v. 4 Do we “tremble” at the words of the God of Israel?

v. 5 Visualize Ezra at this point. At the evening sacrifice time, 3 pm, he has been sitting there dazed and astonished. Now he kneels down, his clothes are torn; his hair and his beard have been plucked out. He lifts up his hands to heaven. **What would we have been doing at this point, if we were Ezra?**

v. 6 Notice how he begins his prayer, “*I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to you my God!*” What humility he shows here, especially for someone else’s trespasses! **How likely would we have begun our prayer this way? When is the last time, that sin in this world or in our country, caused us to cry out to God in this manner?**

v. 7 Here we see Ezra continuing to view the trespass of Israel in a personal manner. He correctly reviews the history of Israel, bringing out how this very trespass that they are committing, led *to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day*. **Do you see the present condition of the U.S. in a similar manner?**

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Ezr 9:8 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.

Ezr 9:9 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.

*Ezr 9:10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,
Ezr 9:11 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.
Ezr 9:12 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.'*

v. 8now for a little while grace has been shown: He reflected on the remarkable goodness of God in bringing a *remnant* of His people back from exile and allowing them to live in the Promised Land again. *To give us a peg* (like a Jael's tent stake, *Judges 4:21*) *in His holy place*: The idea is that Israel **once again had a safe position**,

a position of being anchored in God's favor and in His temple. But now, because of their trespass, Ezra was afraid that their casual disregard for this blessing would once again stir up the righteous anger of God. *a measure of revival in our bondage*: Ezra rejoiced to see even a *measure of revival*, know that this was an emblem of God's mercy and favor that should not be despised with disobedience and compromise.

v. 9 *To revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins*: Ezra was impressed by all these signs of God's mercy and favor to His people, signs he had only seen a few days before for the first time. It made him appreciate how good God had been to His people, and how dangerous it was for them to sin and compromise in response to His goodness. *To give us a wall*: A little grace had been granted by God to his people; a small remnant had found its way back home and driven a single peg into its soil; a solitary ray of light was shining; a faint breath of freedom lightened their slavery.

vs. 10-11 *What shall we say after this?* Ezra offers no excuses and not even an explanation. Their conduct was indefensible and a direct disobedience to what God *commanded by His servants the prophets*.

v. 12 ... *that you may be strong*: Although you may think that this way of making leagues and marriages with them is the only way to establish and get settled yet it will weaken and ruin you and a course of obedience will make you stronger.

v. 8 Obedience always leads to freedom! Compromise with the flesh, the world, always leads to bondage!

v. 9 “To give us a wall in Judah & Jerusalem!” Oh, the *grace* and mercy of God!



v. 10 When we become aware of sins of others, *what shall we say after this?* **What are we to do when we are convicted of sin, ours or others?**

vs. 11-12 Ezra now clearly sees why he was called from Babylon back to Jerusalem! The land was becoming full of abominations, which had been strictly forbidden by the Lord. How devastating to see the rulers and leaders were leading in the prohibited practice of bringing in abominations through interracial marriage.

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Ezr 9:13 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,

Ezr 9:14 should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations?

Ezr 9:15 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!"

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.

v. 13 *You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve:* As severe as the exile was, Ezra recognized that it was *less than* what the people of God deserved. As he looked at their present disobedience, he understood that it was a way of despising the great mercy God had shown in the past and made them deserving of a complete and final judgment.

v. 14 *should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations?....* That are guilty of abominable idolatries, and of all uncleanness.

v. 15 *O LORD God of Israel:* Here Ezra wisely appealed to the LORD as the *God of Israel*. Though they had been unfaithful to Him, Ezra still hoped for covenant mercies from the LORD because He was their God. *You are righteous:* Ezra also wisely appealed to God's righteousness, especially in leaving a *remnant* in fulfillment of His prior promises ([2Ch 30:6](#); [Isa 10:20-22](#)). Ezra is far too much in earnest simply to wish to help his people to escape from the consequences of their conduct. This would not be salvation. The great need is to be saved from the evil conduct itself. *Here we are before You in our guilt:* Ezra wisely did make an excuse or a reason for their sin. Israel had sinned and they were *guilty*. The appeal must be made for mercy to the guilty, not as a favor to the deserving (or semi-deserving). Note here that Ezra also did not claim special circumstances or did not tell God that their difficult environment made their present compromise understandable, or that all their other good works or faithfulness somehow excused their idolatry. He simply realized that *no one can stand before You because of this!* Ezra had not even the heart to plead, as Moses had, that God's name would suffer in such a case. His prayer was naked confession, without excuses, without the pressure of so much as a request.

v. 13 "Much better than we deserve"! Acknowledgement is given that although Israel had committed evil deeds, God's punishment was *less than our iniquities deserve!* **Is this not precisely what God has done for us? Are we not in a much better spiritual position than we deserve?**

v. 14 *So as we repeatedly sin, what shall we expect from God? What should we do?*

v. 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!"*

We can certainly apply this personally as well as to our own nation!

Lord, Your hand of judgment has not yet fallen on the United States. Lord, you are so good not to have wiped us out completely already!

But we see the present sharp decline of godliness and a rapidly growing resentment and outright rebellion to anything Biblical in this nation.

What are we to do? What did Ezra do?

SUMMARY:

- Ezra's actions and response are excellent examples for us to follow.
- 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"
- 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 didn't make excuses! The appeal must be made for mercy to the guilty, not as a favor to the deserving (or semi-deserving).
- Ezra ended his prayer not by asking for forgiveness, but by declaring that God was righteous.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Comments re Chapter 9: MAIN POINTS:

1 Ezra’s call confirmed (reason, be obedient-in faith, God works both ends)

2 Israel’s sin (most serious trespass; leaders, priests foremost in leading of this trespass, same at that which caused exile)

3 Ezra’s response (astonished, fasted & prayer)

The leaders have been foremost in leading in this trespass of taking of pagan wives, mixing the holy seed! Marrying into their blood, into their paganism
Trespass is willful, deliberate sin! Deliberately crossing the line, knowing better, not done in ignorance, but I’m going to do it anyway

1 Ezra’s call confirmed

Now Ezra is finding out why he was called to Jerusalem and teach the word of God! Why me, why send me 900 miles. there must be a 100 men to do the same thing, but God know there wasn’t anyone! God knew better!

God, I get it! I see now why you put this on my heart.

Now we see two examples here: 1 God calls us because He wants to use us! Ezra was needed there! 2 We see how God works on both ends of a call!
Ezra’s love for the word of God and his dedication to the word of God will be what is needed!

2 Israel’s sin

The people are now drawn to Ezra, who would have the heft to handle their leaders in this trespass. His presence most likely stirred up their consciousness.

Where do you go when your leaders are the chief violators of the word of God? Where do I go? Like Ezra, go to God!

Marrying in to paganism, following the death of Zerubbabel.

Major prohibitions Ex 34 11-18 worship no other gods. You have joined with them! Dt. 7:1-4

God doesn’t always give a reason why He gives us His commandments. But there is wisdom, reason of everything He ever gives us!

God wanted Israel to have Spiritual distinctiveness!!! So they would not lose that

Through them, through the Jewish blood line, the Messiah would be brought in. No small commandments!! All things prohibited, need to be prohibited.

Here they have no concern for His promises, His heritage, bringing the Messiah!

Absolutely reckless, self-centeredness

Solomon – tremendous spiritual heritage, but married foreign state. They brought in their pagan gods

Despite Solomon’s he violated and became involved with his wives’ idols! He married them in pagan state. In spite of his spiritual heritage, he ended up like a pagan.

New Testament Application too! 2 Cor. 6:14-18 don’t be unequally yoked

Come out from among them! Be separate!

Marriage to be a nurturer and encourager for worshipping and living according to the Word. Not to have to always come against the opposition
Always easier to pull down, than to lift up.

God did not bring them back from Babylon to over time, to have them assimilate back into the pagan society.

Same with a believer, marry an unbeliever and gradually over time, and you go back to the living the life of an unbeliever! A slightly Christianized version of the world!

Too much massaging of the word of God by pastors!

I’m going to lower the Christian standard in my life as much as I can to be as near to the world as possible and still be a Christian! NO WAY!

EZRA CHAPTER 9 – Not Separate From Abomination of Surrounding Nations – Intermarriage with Pagans

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

How different am I from the world?

There nothing wrong with holiness, being more like Christ. People are looking for reality. They want to see that truth in action!

Nothing scary about obeying God's word.

1Jn 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. [17] And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Rom 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Then, the kids....children in an unequally yoked marriage will naturally follow the unbelieving parent

3 Ezra's response

When is the last time you saw willful disobedience of a child of God and you so reacted as Ezra did! He responds every way possible – tearing his garment and his robe; pulling out his hair and his beard!

Stunned, nothing to say. Just silently processing with the Lord. He's just astonished, stupefied, devastated!

Then at evening sacrifice, Ezra rose from his fasting

This is one of the most powerful passages relating to holiness in the whole Bible

I just want to absorb as much as I can to the power, described here, of this reaction by Ezra!

I'm a nothing and a nobody, but I want to be an Ezra, not one of those priests or Levites in leading, walking in hypocrisy.

Whenever I walk into a situation involving carnality among believers, I don't want to be welcomed, patted on the back.

I want my presence, by the spirit of God, to create a discomfort among those trespassing. If I was living in that condition I would the same thing.

No one can be too obedient to the Word of God. No child of God can be too holy in this world, too Christ-like in this world. We cannot be too serious about God's work in the world!

It is an impossibility related to our lives. It should not be a concern of single Christian that we would be too holy, too serious, too obedient because it will frighten off people. It will never frighten off the right people.

Don't be afraid to be spiritual. In the context of Christians, who are looking every which way to massage the Scriptures to find a way around their clear teaching to accommodate their sin and their carnality, We need to change if that applies to us.

We need to be drop dead serious about the things of God. The younger the better- the sooner, the better!

I know what it is to be young and what it is to be old, but I've never recognized the importance of time the way that I do now for the rest of my life.

But don't wait to realize that we only get one crack at this life, one opportunity as a Christian, to live it as fully as we can. If we fritter that away, we will waste something that we will never get back again. That this is the way to live, without any regret at the end of our lives.

We don't want to be dumbed down by those living as carnal Christians.

Greatest danger to Ezras is not from the world, but it is from those who are professing Christian who do not want to live by the Bible.

They will paint us into a corner and make us look like nut cases, fanatics.

If that's the kind of Christian you are, you'll be the ones who will destroy my rightful walk as a Christian.

He begins to pray! Posture of humility!

This sin was not a small thing in his life. It is so great, that it overwhelms the righteous and reaches to heaven.

We know better!

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v. 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!"*

We can certainly apply this personally as well as to our own nation!

Lord, Your hand of judgment has not yet fallen on the United States. Lord, you are so good not to have wiped us out completely already!

But we see the present sharp decline of godliness and a rapidly growing resentment and outright rebellion to anything Biblical in this nation.

What did Ezra do?

What are we to do?

DANIEL’S PRAYER (539 BC) - 66 years after the deportation in 605 BC

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

Dan 9:2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Dan 9:3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Dan 9:4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

Dan 9:5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

Dan 9:6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

Dan 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

Dan 9:8 "O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

Dan 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

Dan 9:10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

Dan 9:11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

Dan 9:12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

Dan 9:13 "As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

Dan 9:14 Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

Dan 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

Dan 9:16 "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

Dan 9:17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.

Dan 9:18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

Dan 9:19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Gabriel Brings an Answer

Dan 9:20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

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Dan 9:21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

Dan 9:22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

Dan 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: The Seventy Weeks - Dan 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

Dan 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

Dan 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Dan 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate." Ezr 9:5 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.

EZRA'S PRAYER (456 BC) – 83 years later than Daniel's prayer

Ezr 9:6 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.

Ezr 9:7 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.

Ezr 9:8 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.

Ezr 9:9 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.

Ezr 9:10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,

Ezr 9:11 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.

Ezr 9:12 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.'

Ezr 9:13 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,

Ezr 9:14 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?

Ezr 9:15 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!"

NEMEMIAH'S PRAYER (444 BC)

The People of Israel Confess Their Sin

Neh 9:1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads.

Neh 9:2 Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Neh 9:3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God.

Neh 9:4 Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the LORD their God.

Neh 9:5 And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said: "Stand up and bless the LORD your God Forever and ever! "Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise!

Neh 9:6 You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You.

Neh 9:7 "You are the LORD God, Who chose Abram, And brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, And gave him the name Abraham;

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Neh 9:8 You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him To give the land of the Canaanites, The Hittites, the Amorites, The Perizzites, the Jebusites, And the Girgashites—To give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words, For You are righteous.

Neh 9:9 "You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, And heard their cry by the Red Sea.

Neh 9:10 You showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, Against all his servants, And against all the people of his land. For You knew that they acted proudly against them. So You made a name for Yourself, as it is this day.

Neh 9:11 And You divided the sea before them, So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; And their persecutors You threw into the deep, As a stone into the mighty waters.

Neh 9:12 Moreover You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, And by night with a pillar of fire, To give them light on the road Which they should travel.

Neh 9:13 "You came down also on Mount Sinai, And spoke with them from heaven, And gave them just ordinances and true laws, Good statutes and commandments.

Neh 9:14 You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, By the hand of Moses Your servant.

Neh 9:15 You gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, And brought them water out of the rock for their thirst, And told them to go in to possess the land Which You had sworn to give them.

*Neh 9:16 **"But they and our fathers acted proudly, Hardened their necks, And did not heed Your commandments.***

Neh 9:17 They refused to obey, And they were not mindful of Your wonders That You did among them. But they hardened their necks, And in their rebellion They appointed a leader To return to their bondage. But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness, And did not forsake them.

Neh 9:18 "Even when they made a molded calf for themselves, And said, 'This is your god That brought you up out of Egypt,' And worked great provocations,

Neh 9:19 Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, To lead them on the road; Nor the pillar of fire by night, To show them light, And the way they should go.

Neh 9:20 You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, And did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, And gave them water for their thirst.

Neh 9:21 Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; They lacked nothing; Their clothes did not wear out And their feet did not swell.

Neh 9:22 "Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations, And divided them into districts. So they took possession of the land of Sihon, The land of the king of Heshbon, And the land of Og king of Bashan.

Neh 9:23 You also multiplied their children as the stars of heaven, And brought them into the land Which You had told their fathers To go in and possess.

Neh 9:24 So the people went in And possessed the land; You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, The Canaanites, And gave them into their hands, With their kings And the people of the land, That they might do with them as they wished.

Neh 9:25 And they took strong cities and a rich land, And possessed houses full of all goods, Cisterns already dug, vineyards, olive groves, And fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and grew fat, And delighted themselves in Your great goodness.

*Neh 9:26 **"Nevertheless they were disobedient And rebelled against You.** Cast Your law behind their backs And killed Your prophets, who testified against them To turn them to Yourself; And they worked great provocations.*

Neh 9:27 Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, Who oppressed them; And in the time of their trouble, When they cried to You, You heard from heaven; And according to Your abundant mercies You gave them deliverers who saved them From the hand of their enemies.

Neh 9:28 "But after they had rest, They again did evil before You. Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies, So that they had dominion over them; Yet when they returned and cried out to You, You heard from heaven; And many times You delivered them according to Your mercies,

*Neh 9:29 And testified against them, That You might bring them back to Your law. **Yet they acted proudly, And did not heed Your commandments, But sinned against Your judgments,** 'Which if a man does, he shall live by them.' And they shrugged their shoulders, Stiffened their necks, And would not hear.*

Neh 9:30 Yet for many years You had patience with them, And testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets. Yet they would not listen; Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.

Neh 9:31 Nevertheless in Your great mercy You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them; For You are God, gracious and merciful.

Neh 9:32 "Now therefore, our God, The great, the mighty, and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and mercy: Do not let all the trouble seem small before You That has come upon us, Our kings and our princes, Our priests and our prophets, Our fathers and on all Your people, From the days of the kings of Assyria until this day.

Neh 9:33 However You are just in all that has befallen us; For You have dealt faithfully, But we have done wickedly.

*Neh 9:34 **Neither our kings nor our princes, Our priests nor our fathers, Have kept Your law, Nor heeded Your commandments and Your testimonies,** With which You testified against them.*

Neh 9:35 For they have not served You in their kingdom, Or in the many good things that You gave them, Or in the large and rich land which You set before them; Nor did they turn from their wicked works.

Neh 9:36 "Here we are, servants today! And the land that You gave to our fathers, To eat its fruit and its bounty, Here we are, servants in it!"

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Neh 9:37 And it yields much increase to the kings You have set over us, Because of our sins; Also they have dominion over our bodies and our cattle At their pleasure; And we are in great distress.

Neh 9:38 "And because of all this, We make a sure covenant and write it; Our leaders, our Levites, and our priests seal it."

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION