

11/10/19

Do Not Marry An Unbeliever
Ezra 9:1-10:1

Ezra having arrived at Jerusalem received a very disturbing report, the people of God had intermarried with people of the land. Ezra 9

* This is probably the most ensnaring and destructive sin to believers in every generation believing they are the exception to the rule!

Let's look at the unequally yoked condition of God's people at the arrival of Ezra that is characterized by three things. Ezra 9:1-10:1

- I.** The revelation to Ezra about the compromise of the people. vs. 1-4
 - II.** The confession of Ezra over the guilt of the people. vs. 5-9
 - III.** The intercession of Ezra for the rebellious people. vs. 10-15, 1
- I. The revelation to Ezra about the compromise of the people. vs. 1-4**
- A.** The general evil report was about God's people being joined to the pagans of the land. vs. 1
 - 1.** The time of the bad news is given, "When these things were done." vs. 1a
 - a.** This statement refers to the arrival of Ezra on the 1 of August 457 B.C. and then rested three days. Ezra 8:32

- b.** The statement also includes the following day, the fourth, as Ezra and the the people that returned with him delivered the articles and offering for the temple, and the report of the delegated authority to Ezra by Artaxerxes. Ezra 8:33-36
- 2.** The accusation was delivered to Ezra by some men, "the leaders came to me." vs. 1b
 - a.** These were men that had probably returned with Zerubbabel.
 - b.** These men had not been part of failure.
 - 3.** The accusation was that some of the people had been unfaithful to Yahewh, "saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land." vs. 1c-d
 - a.** The common people.
 - b.** The priest.
 - c.** The Levites.
 - d.** These had compromised their loyalty to God by not living apart in a sanctified life from the pagans of the land.
 - 4.** The general charge was one of an ungodly lifestyles with eight pagan nations, "with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites." vs. 1e-l
 - a.** Seven were in the land God had distributed to them except for the Egyptians and God had prohibited Israel

to join themselves to any of them. Deut. 7:1; Acts 13:19

- b.** God also told the Jews never return to Egypt to multiply horses or depend on them, the arm of flesh. Deut. 17:16; Is. 19:22; Jer. 37:7
- c.** The word abomination “tow’ ebah” means a disgusting thing that was wicked in the sight of God.
 - * Certain unclean animals, foods, idol gods and homosexuality are called an abomination to God. Lev. 18; 11; 20:13; Duet. 7:25

B. The specific evil report was about being unequally yoke in marriage. vs. 2

- 1.** The people had disobeyed the clear teaching of Scripture, “For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons. vs. 2a
 - a.** When they entered the land they were to destroy all the people, children and altars of the pagan for they were a holy people, but they did not. Ex. 24:13-16
 - b.** The reason was they were a special treasure above all the people on the face of the earth, a holy people. Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:3-6
 - c.** They went into captivity for 70 years and now at their return they again disobey God after the same manner.

- 2.** The people had endangered Israel’s pure bloodline, “so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands.” vs. 2b
 - a.** The holy seed indicated the pure line of the twelve tribes for the Messiah would come through the tribe of Judah.
 - b.** This is the year 457 B.C. , Nehemiah would come to Jerusalem 12 years after in 445 B.C. , he returned to Persian in the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, 433 B.C. and when he returned he dealt with the same sin of being unequally yoked. Neh. 13
 - d.** The prophet Malachi prophesied in 430 B.C. confirming this unfaithful disloyalty of Yahweh and the wives of the Hebrews that were being divorce for pagan wives.
 - 1)** “Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD’S holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.” Mal. 2:11
 - 2)** “And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the

wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.” Mal. 2:13-14

3) “But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks **godly offspring**. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.” Mal. 2:15

3. The greatest cuprits were the leaders, “Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.” vs. 2c
 - a. These men leading the people were the most blameable, as bad examples to all.
 - * He has already mentioned the common people, the priest and Levites. vs. 1
 - b. These had had not sinned, but trespassed.
 - 1) Sin is a missing of the mark through human weakness of sin nature.
 - 2) Trespass “ma’ al” a willful disobedience!

C. The demonstrative response of grief. vs. 3

1. The Scribe Ezra ripped his vestment, “So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe.” vs. 3a
 - a. An expression of distress and grief.
 - b. Mordecai tore his clothes, Hezekiah and the High Priest at the trial of Jesus. Esth. 4:1; Is. 37:1; Matt. 26:65

2. The Scribe Ezra demonstrated his despair and anger, “and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard.” vs. 3b

a. He could not believe the nerve and arrogance of the people.

b. Nehemiah instead struck the people and pulled out their hair. Neh. 13:25

3. The Scribe Ezra was dumbfounded and overwhelmed, “and sat down astonished.” vs. 3c

a. The word astonished “shamem”, means appaled, stunned, awestruck, stupified.

b. Over the presumptuous arrogance of the people and destructive consequences of their trespass

D. The people of like mind joined Ezra. vs. 4

1. Those that feared God regarding the trespass of being unequally yoked, “Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me.” vs. 4a

* The fear of God is key!

2. The reason was they also grieved over the evil of the people, “because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive.” vs. 4b

* They understood what displeased God!

3. The sin of the people affected Ezra deeply, “and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.” vs. 4c

- a. The word astonished “shamem” is the same as in verse three, appaled, stunned, awestruck or supified.
- b. The duration was till the evening.

Illustration

Jehoshaphat had an unequally yoked friendship with evil Ahab and Jezebel that at first seemed the corrupt influence had not affected him, but his son Jehoram ended up marrying Ahab’s daughter Athaliah, being unequally yoked in an ungodly marriage alliance that obligate Jehoshaphat to help Ahab in war against Syria that almost cost him his life, but God delivered Jehoshaphat in the battle. 1Kings 22

Application

1. The sin of being unequally yoked with unbelievers in marriage is the most destructive sin.
 - a. Being joined to an unbeliever as boyfried or girl friend will compromise your walk with God.
 - b. The unbeliever does not know or live for God or standard, they live for self and pleasure.
 - c. Emoitions being deceptive breakdown the resistance of purity and the constant pressure will prevail, throwing your purity away.
 - e. The end result are many, getting pregnant by an unbeliever, having a difficult life as a single mother or marrying the unbeliever and having a divided home.
- * “Do not be **unequally yoked** together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has

righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?”
2Cor. 6:14-15

2. Our society has removed all guilt and shame from the public square or private lives of people.
 - a. People are not embarrases or ashamed to tell people they are living together or promiscuous.
 - b. The amoral world we live in sees the intimate sexual union of a man and a woman as natural and normal, nothing being wrong about it.
 - c. But God says every woman that has sex before marriage, even by the man she marries is humbled by that man and has played the whore while in her fathers house. Deut. 22:29
 - d. God says that a man plays the fool, as Amon who force his sister Tamar, and gave his honor away. 1Sam. 13:13-15; Prov. 5:8-9; 7:22
* “Then Amnon **hated** her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he **hated** her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Arise, be gone!”

The revelation to Ezra about the compromise of the people was unbearable!

II. The confession of Ezra over the guilt of the people. vs. 5-9

- A. The posture of Ezra in prayer. vs. 5

1. The time of his prayer, “At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting.” vs. 5a
 - a. Ezra had deprived himself of eating food to demonstrate to God his grief over this serious matter and listen to him.
 - b. Ezra also wanted to hear from God on the matter.
 - c. Solomon also lifted up his hands at the dedication of the temple that God would hear and answer him. 1Kngs 8:22
2. The outward sign of grief and humiliation in prayer, “and having torn my garment and my robe.” vs. 5b
 - a. In utter dispare finding Joseph was sold to the Medianites, “Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he **tore** his clothes.” Gen. 37:29
 - b. In utter horror of the lie that Joseph had died by a wild beast, “Then Jacob **tore** his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. Gen. 37:34
3. The humility in prayer, “I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God.” vs. 5c
 - a. Kneeling indicates humble helplessness.
 - b. Lifting his hands indicates a total surrender and dependence on God.

B. The perception of Ezra in prayer. vs. 6

1. The brokenness before God in prayer, “And I said: “O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God.” vs. 6a-b
 - a. Ashamed “buwsh”, disgraced.
 - b. Humiliated “kalam” confounded or blushing in embarrassment.
 2. The confession of Ezra in prayer, “for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.” vs. 6c-d
 - a. The seriousness of the matter was described figuratively by “our iniquities had risen over their heads” indicative of the overwhelming unbearable consequences to them.
 - 1) Referring to the totality of their disobedience.
 - 2) Referring to their betrayal of God.
 - b. Their unquestionable guilt had been going on so long and become so great as to reach the heavens.
 - 1) The evidence was undeniable!
 - 2) Their unfaithfulness was undisputable!
- C. The reflection of Ezra over their sinful rebellious history against God. vs. 7**
1. About their constant disobedience to God, “Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty.” vs. 7a

* Daniel and Nehemiah prayed the same.

Dan. 9:4-19; Neh. 9:5-38

- a. Acknowledging their high privilege.
 - b. Acknowledging their guilt before God.
2. About their deserved judgment by God, “and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands.” vs. 7b-d
 - a. From the common people.
 - b. To the kings.
 - c. To the priests.
 3. About the various ways God had judged them, “to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is this day.” vs. 7e-i
 - a. By taking their lives, the sword.
 - b. By enslaving their lives, captivity.
 - c. By taking everything for life, plunder.
 - d. By bringing them to the lowest place of life, humiliation.
 - 1) Through Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Turks and the British.
 - 2) Only from the Maccabean Revolt in 165 B.C. till Pompey’s intervention in 63 B.C. did the Jew enjoy autonomy, until the independent state of Israel in May 1948.

D. The proclamation of Ezra about the goodness of God. vs. 8

1. The lovingkindness of God is acknowledged by Ezra, “And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God.” vs. 8a
 - a. A little while indicates the period of return to repatriate the nation.
 - b. The particular time period is identified as Grace “t@chinnah” means is unmerited favor, underserved!
2. The steadfastness of God is stated by Ezra, “to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place.” vs. 8b-c
 - a. Patiently waiting through the 70 years of captivity for the remnant, “p@leytah”, literally those who have escaped. vs. 8b
 - b. To fulfill His promise, “and to give us a peg in His holy place”.
 - 1) The metaphor of a peg “yathed”, refers to a tent stake, pin or nail.
 - 2) This indicated God had established them in Jerusalem, just as Eliakim was a secure peg to accomplish God’s purposes and for the glorious throne to his father’s house in Christ. Is. 22:23
3. The faithfulness of God was the hope of Ezra, “that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.” vs. 8d
 - a. The word enlighten “owr”, means to illuminate them spiritually to see the

things God did for them in their present bondage “abduwth” in servitude to the Persian kings, though they returned.

- b.** The purpose of the petition was that God might give them revival, an outpouring of God’s Spirit on the remnant.

* Like in the days of Haggai and Zechariah and return to the rebuilding of the temple. Ezra 5:1-2

- c.** Remember revival is for the people of God that have become complacent, indifferent, compromising and to be revived in their love for God and obedience through repentance!

- 1) God brought revival in the days of Asa. 2Chron. 14-16
- 2) In the days of Jehoshaphat. 2Chron. 17-20
- 3) In the days of Joash. 2Chron. 23-24
- 4) In the days of Hezekiah. 2Chron. 29-32
- 5) In the days of Josiah. 2Chron. 34-35
* The key to each reform through revival was repentance and returning to obey the Word of God. 2Chron. 15:8, 9; 17:3, 4; 23:16-21; 24:1-6; 29:3-36; 30:1, 15, 16; 34:18-21

E. The recognition of Ezra about the loving protection of God. vs. 9

1. God did not abandon them in captivity, “For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage.” vs. 9a
 - a.** The word forsake “azab” means to leave and depart from or desert.
 - b.** “And for their sake He remembered His covenant, And relented according to the multitude of His mercies.” Ps. 106:45
2. God was kind through their enemies after captivity, “but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia,” vs. 9b
 - a.** The word mercy “checed”, means lovingkindness and is a covent word.
 - b.** The Achaemenid Persian kings were favorable to the Jews by God’s grace.
3. God enabled them to have a living hope at the end of captivity, “to revive us.” vs. 9c
 - a.** God alone did this, Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes were mere instruments of God!
 - b.** The word revive “michyah” means to quicken or revitalize their spiritual life for God and the things of God!
4. God in reviving them provided everything and enabled them to rebuild the temple after captivity, “to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.” vs. 9d-f
 - a.** The house of our God in ruins was the temple.

- b. The word wall “gader”, means a hedge or fence used figuratively as a metaphor of protection to indicate the return to repatriate was God’s protection for them.

Illustration

Jehoshaphat thought he was right with God, since God had delivered him from the battle of helping Ahab in war against Syria, “Then **Jehoshaphat** the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King **Jehoshaphat**, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD is upon you.” 2Chron. 19:1-2

* The repercussions of being unequally yoked cannot be escaped and just get worst with time, not better!

Application

1. God looks at the posture of our heart in prayer.
 - a. If we come humble before God.
 - b. If we are genuine in our confession and repentance of sins against God and the persons we affected, evident by our asking forgiveness of those we involved or devastated by our sin.
 - 1) “If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1Jn 1:9
 - 2) “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be

healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Ja. 5:16

2. God forgives us of the sins we commit, but the consequences sometimes remain with us for life.
 - a. An unequally yoked date can result in losing your virginity, a pregnancy or getting an STD.
 - b. When you are going to get married with a believer, both should be honest about your past, so as not to jeopardize the stability and permanence of your marriage, peace and joy.
 - c. Such as having failed sexually, previous marriages, divorces, an abortion, these can devastate a person finding out after the marriage.
 - d. The time that you want to find out if the person loves you for who you are and not what they think or imagine you to be is before you say “I do”, not after, for it is better to have a broken heart than a broken life in marriage.
 - 1) “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his **flesh** will of the **flesh reap** corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit **reap** everlasting life.” Gal. 6:7-8
 - 2) “Bearing with one another, and **forgiving** one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” Col. 3:13: Eph. 4:32

The confession of Ezra over the guilt of the people was undeniable!

III. The intercession of Ezra for the rebellious people. vs. 10-15, 1

A. The overwhelming comprehension of Ezra about the entire matter. vs. 10

1. The nation had no defense before God, “And now, O our God, what shall we say after this?” vs. 10a-b
 - a. The historical evidence was stacked against the nation of Israel!
 - b. The attempt to justify or excuse their sins would be a greater insult to God.
2. The nation was guilty before God, “For we have forsaken Your commandments.” vs. 10c
 - a. The failure was on man’s part.
 - 1) Making a conscious decision to depart from the word of God.
 - 2) Making a conscious decision to not love God with all their hearts, mind and soul.
 - b. The failure of man was to consistently recognize the benefit of the word of God for life and practice.
 - 1) The authority for life is God.
 - 2) The standard for life is God’s word.

B. The citations of Ezra about the violated commands God. vs. 11-12

1. Ezra declared the prophets gave a general warning about the defilement of those in the land, “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.” vs. 11
 - * They had no excuse, God warned them and instructed them what to do, but the disobeyed and compromised. Lev. 18:24-30; Deut. 7:1-6
2. Ezra declared the prophets gave specific prohibitions about the people in the land. vs. 12
 - a. Never intermarry with them, ‘Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons.’ vs. 12a-b
 - * Ex. 34:6; Deut. 7:3; 11:8-9; Josh. 23:12-13
 - b. Never be one politically and commercially with them, “and never seek their peace or prosperity.” vs. 12c
 - * Ex. 23:32; Deut. 23:13
 - c. The reason was two-fold, “that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.” vs. 12d-e

C. The national blessing by God was due to His sovereign lovingkindness, “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.” vs. 13

1. If God had punished Israel in proportion to their sins, they would not have survived.
2. God in His mercy punished them less than they deserved.

D. The reflection of Ezra over the presumptuousness of the people. vs. 14

1. Ezra said can we be so brash in Your sight, “should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations?” vs. 14a-b
2. Ezra said can we take advantage of Your mercy, “Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor?” vs. 14c-d

E. The presentation of their guilt before God with no defense or excuse. vs. 15

- * This is the summary statement!
1. The one being prayed to is the covenant God of Israel, “O LORD God of Israel.” vs. 15a

2. The character of Yahweh is declared, “You are righteous.” vs. 15b
3. Their diminished number, “for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day.” vs. 15c-d
4. Their only hope, “Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!” vs. 15e-g

F. The response of the people was brokenness in view of repentance. vs. 1

1. The time was as Ezra was interceding for Israel, “Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God.” vs. 14a-d
2. The individuals that were also grieved joined Ezra, “a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.” vs. 14e-h

Illustration

The unequally yoked marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah resulted in Athaliah attempting to destroy all the royal seed of David after the death of her son Ahaziah, usurping the throne of Judah. 1Kings 11

* The unequally yoked compromises keep affecting the lives of people!

Application

1. The principle of unequally yoked includes business.

- a. You can be a Christian that hires unbelievers because you set the standards of the company and make the decisions that honors God.
 - b. But if you go into business with an unbeliever, now he is a partner and has equal authority and he may not want to do everything by the law and it will involve you and your character.
 - * “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people. Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” 2Cor. 6:16-17
2. We as believers are to intercede for unbelievers.
- a. For all men and women that are lost, as well as those in government and authority that they might be saved. 1Tim. 2:1-4
 - b. For those in our families and friends that have seen our lives transformed, but have not repented and called on Jesus to save them.
 - * Jesus said, “I say to you that likewise there will be more **joy** in **heaven** over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” Lk. 15:7
3. We have a loving obligation to pray for believers who are living in compromise and sin that they might repent and obey the word of God again.

- a. Like the young man that was sleeping with his step-mother, the wife of his father and if need be to turn him over to Satan, in hope of his repentance. 1Cor. 5:1-5
- b. For young singles that are staddling the fence and even jumping over the fence into the world.
 - * “**Flee** also **youthful** lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” 2Tim. 2:22
- c. For those compromising in their marriage and drifting from Christ.
 - * “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we **drift** away.” Heb. 2:1
- d. For those that are no longer committed to attend and serve in the church becoming indifferent.
 - * “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Heb. 10:23-25

The intercession of Ezra for the rebellious people was unstoppable!

Conclusion

The unequally yoked condition of the people of God at the arrival of Ezra is characterized by three things.

- I.** The revelation to Ezra about the compromise of the people was unbearable!
- II.** The confession of Ezra over the guilt of the people was undeniable!
- III.** The intercession of Ezra for the rebellious people was unstoppable!