

## Ezra Discovers the Remnant Has Intermarried Unlawfully (December 16, 457 BC)

Ezra 9:1–10:8

### Ezra Told of the Sin of the Remnant

9:1 After finishing these things the officials approached me saying, “The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated from the people of the lands with their detestable things, and from the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites.  
 2 For they have taken from their daughters for themselves and their sons. So the holy seed has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands, and the hand of the officials and prefects were foremost in this sin.  
 3 When I heard this I tore my garment and my robe, and I pulled the hair out from my head and beard, and I sat appalled.  
 4 Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel because of the sin of the returned exiles were gathered around me and I sat appalled until the evening offering.

### Ezra’s Prayer

5 At the evening offering I got up from my mourning posture and, with my garment and robe torn, I fell down on my knees and I spread out my palms to Yahweh my God  
 6 and said, “My God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face to you, my God. For our sins have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.  
 7 From the days of our ancestors until this day we have been in great guilt, and because of our sins we ourselves, our kings, and our priests have been handed into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to utter shame, as it is this day.  
 8 But now for a brief moment mercy has been shown by Yahweh our God, who left behind for us a remnant, and given us security in his holy place—for our God to brighten our eyes and to give us brief relief in our bondage.  
 9 For we are slaves and in our bondage our God did not forsake us, and he has extended to us loyal love in the presence of the kings of Persia, to give to us deliverance *and* to set up the house of our God, to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judea and Jerusalem.  
 10 “And now our God what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments,  
 11 which you commanded by the hand of your servants the prophets saying, ‘The land that you are entering to possess is a land of impurity with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their detestable things which they have filled from end to end with their uncleanness. [cf. [Lev 18:25](#)]  
 12 Therefore, do not give your daughters to their sons, and do not take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek their peace and prosperity so that forever you may be strong and eat the good of the land and may give it as an inheritance to your sons.’ [cf. [Deut 7:1–5](#)]  
 13 After all that has come upon us for our evil practices and for our great guilt—you, our God, have held back less than our guilt *deserved* and you have given us a remainder such as this.  
 14 Shall we again break your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who practice these detestable things? Would you not be angry with us until you destroy us with no remnant or remainder?  
 15 Yahweh, God of Israel, you are righteous, for we have been left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, for none can stand before you because of this.”

### Covenant to Divorce the Foreign Women

10:1 While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men, women, and children from Israel gathered to him. And the people wept bitterly.  
 2 Shecaniah son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, “We ourselves have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, and even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this.  
 3 So now let us make a covenant with our God to send away all of these women and their offspring, according to the advice of my lord and those who tremble at the commandment of our God. Let it be done according to the law.  
 4 Arise, for it is your task and we are with you. Be strong and do it.”  
 5 Then Ezra stood up and made the chief priests, Levites, and all of Israel swear to do according to what was said. So they swore this oath.  
 6 Ezra rose from before the house of God and went to the chamber of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He did not eat food nor drink water because he was mourning over the sin of the exiles.

### A Proclamation is Circulated Calling the Men to Jerusalem

7 And they sent a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to all the returned exiles to assemble in Jerusalem.  
 8 Anyone who did not come within three days, by decision of the officials and elders, all of his possessions would be devoted to God, and he himself would be excluded from the assembly of exiles.

### A Course of Action is Decided (December 19, 457 BC)

Ezra 10:9–15

9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled in Jerusalem within the three days. It was the ninth month on the twentieth day of the month. All the people sat in the public square of the house of God trembling because of this matter and from the rains.

10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have broke faith and married foreign women, increasing the guilt of Israel.

11 Now make a confession to Yahweh the God of your ancestors and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign women.”

12 Then all the assembly answered with a great voice and said, “It is so. We must do according to your words.

13 But the people are many, and it is the time of rain; we are unable to stand outside. The task is not for one day or two, for we greatly rebelled in this matter.

14 Please let our leaders stand for the whole assembly, and let all that are in our cities who have married foreign women come at set times, and with them the elders of and judges of each city, until the fierce wrath of our God because of this matter is averted from us.”

15 Only Jehonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah stood against this, and the Levites Meshullam and Shabbethai supported them.

### Inquiry Into Unlawful Marriages (December 29, 457–March 27, 456 BC)

Ezra 10:16–44

16 The returned exiles did so. Ezra the priest selected men, the heads of the families according to the house of their fathers, all of them by name. They sat down to examine the matter on the first day of the tenth month.

17 They finished *investigating* all the men who married foreign women by the first day of the first month.

18 There was found from the sons of the priests those who had married foreign women, from the sons of Jeshua son of Jehozadak and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 They pledged themselves to put away their wives, and their guilt offering was a ram of the flock for their guilt.

20 From the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

21 From the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uziah.

22 From the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Eleasah.

23 From the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 From the singers: Eliashib. From the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25 And from Israel, the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah, and Benaiah.

26 From the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

27 From the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza.

28 From the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

29 From the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

30 From the sons of Pahath-Moab: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 From the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshiah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Simeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

33 From the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

34 From the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasu,

38 Bani, Binnui, Shimei,

39 Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,

40 Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

43 From the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Iddo, Joel, and Benaiah.

44 All of these had married foreign wives, and some from among the wives bore children.

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