

## 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 Now when these things had been completed, the princes approached me, saying, “The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, according to their abominations, *those* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites.  
 2 For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness.”  
 3 When I heard about this matter, I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled.  
 4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles gathered to me, and I sat appalled until the evening offering.

### Ezra’s Prayer

5 But at the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God;  
 6 and I said, “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens.  
 7 Since the days of our fathers to this day we *have been* in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings *and* our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as *it is* this day.  
 8 But now for a brief moment grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage.  
 9 For we are slaves; yet in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.  
 10 “Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,  
 11 which You have 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 end to end *and* with their impurity. [cf. [Lev 18:25](#)]  
 12 So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their peace or their prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good *things* of the land and leave *it* as an inheritance to your sons forever.’ [cf. [Deut 7:1–5](#)]  
 13 After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and our great guilt, since You our God have requited *us* less than our iniquities *deserve*, and have given us an escaped remnant as this,  
 14 shall we again break Your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would You not be angry with us to the point of destruction, until there is no remnant nor any who escape?  
 15 O LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we have been left an escaped remnant, as *it is* this day; behold, we are before You in our guilt, for no one can stand before You because of this.”

### Covenant to Divorce the Foreign Women

10:1 Now while Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God, a very large assembly, men, women and children, gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept bitterly.  
 2 Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, said to Ezra, “We have been unfaithful to our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this.  
 3 So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.  
 4 Arise! For *this* matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act.”  
 5 Then Ezra rose and made the leading priests, the Levites and all Israel, take oath that they would do according to this proposal; so they took the oath.  
 6 Then Ezra rose from before the house of God and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. Although he went there, he did not eat bread nor drink water, for he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

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

7 They made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the exiles, that they should assemble at Jerusalem,  
 8 and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the leaders and the elders, all his possessions should be forfeited and he himself excluded from the assembly of the exiles.

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

Ezra 10:9–15

9 So all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days. It was the ninth month on the twentieth of the month, and all the people sat in the open square *before* the house of God, trembling because of this matter and the heavy rain.

10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have been unfaithful and have married foreign wives adding to the guilt of Israel.

11 Now therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers and do His will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.”

12 Then all the assembly replied with a loud voice, “That’s right! As you have said, so it is our duty to do.

13 But there are many people; it is the rainy season and we are not able to stand in the open. Nor *can* the task *be done* in one or two days, for we have transgressed greatly in this matter.

14 Let our leaders represent the whole assembly and let all those in our cities who have married foreign wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of each city, until the fierce anger of our God on account of this matter is turned away from us.”

15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah opposed this, with Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supporting them.

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

Ezra 10:16–44

16 But the exiles did so. And Ezra the priest selected men *who were* heads of fathers’ households for *each of* their father’s households, all of them by name. So they convened on the first day of the tenth month to investigate the matter.

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

18 Among the sons of the priests who had married foreign wives were found of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah.

19 They pledged to put away their wives, and being guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their offense.

20 Of the sons of Immer *there were* Hanani and Zebadiah;

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

22 and of the sons of Pashhur: Eliezer, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad and Elasaah.

23 Of Levites *there were* Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers *there was* Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem and Uri.

25 Of Israel, of the sons of Parosh *there were* Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah and Benaiah;

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

27 and of the sons of Zattu: Eliezer, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad and Aziza;

28 and of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai *and* Athlai;

29 and of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch and Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal *and* Jeremoth;

30 and of the sons of Pahath-moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui and Manasseh;

31 and of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch *and* Shemariah;

33 of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh *and* Shimei;

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

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasu,

38 Bani, Binnui, Shimei,

39 Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,

40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah *and* Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo *there were* Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel *and* Benaiah.

44 All these had married foreign wives, and some of them had wives *by whom* they had children.

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