

A TIME TO BUILD

Let us rise up and build ... Nehemiah 2:18

The Book of

EZRA

Restoring The Heart of The Nation



Problem of Compromise

Ezra 9

Lesson 7

Background Information

As a result of reading and understanding God's law, the people were roused to a renewed determination to seek God. True restoration and rebuilding almost always requires a painful process of taking apart what has gone before. But four months after his arrival, he learned that all wasn't well in Jerusalem, both the leaders and the people were guilty of deliberately disobeying the law that Ezra had come to teach. They had intermarried with the idolaters in the land.

Ezra didn't react first, he sat before the Lord in humility and prayed a prayer of confession and praise to God for His faithfulness and mercy. He confessed Israel's history of continual turning from God and their present guilt. With the true heart of an intercessor, he stood in the gap and watched God work in the heart of a nation.

Treasures of the Heart

*You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.
For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods;*

Deut. 7:3-4

What does it say?

The first step is getting the lay of the land. Carefully observe the text looking to see where you might dig to find hidden treasure. Studying a narrative requires following the key characters and paying special attention to what God says and does. Mark your text looking for repeated words, contrasts or similarities. **Does a key verse stand out in each section?** Look for answers to: Who? What? When? Where? Why or How?

Ezra 9:1-4

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 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 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." 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, and sat down astonished. 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.

Digging Deeper

Dig deeper using other resources such as a dictionary, concordance, maps and cross-references. **Notate** where you found it to share with the group. Look for commands to obey or questions to be answered. **What does God want you to know about Himself?**

Something to think about when looking up a word or topic: *The principle of first mention teaches that the first time a word or phrase appears in Scripture often establishes a precedent, pattern, or biblical concept that occurs throughout the rest of the Bible. Be careful not to ignore the context.*

Ezra 9:5-9

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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Ezra 9:10-15

10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, 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. 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.' 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, 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? 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!"

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What does it mean?

What lesson can I draw from my observations? Ask yourself, "What was the intended meaning of the original author?" Is there a command to obey, a warning to heed, or an example to follow or avoid? State each lesson in a simple sentence that you could share with someone else.

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 9:1-4 _____

Ezra 9:5-9 _____

Ezra 9:10-15 _____

How can I apply it?

Ask yourself, "What course of action do I need to take to apply each lesson?" How should it change me? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions?

(aim for 10 words or less)

Ezra 9:1-4 _____

Ezra 9:5-9 _____

Ezra 9:10-15 _____

What did God say?

See if you can discover what God wants us to understand about His character and His ways? Which of His attributes is He displaying? When we are questioning the circumstances that surround us, understanding Who God is helps us trust Him when we don't see Him working. Simply state what God is trying to communicate about Himself **and how it affects your thinking**.

What words or phrases are repeated? Repeated words help us discover the main point.

Getting the point!

Discover the "Big Idea" of each section. The main point of the passage is like a topic sentence in a paragraph. See if you can boil down the meaning of each section into one or two words. This helps you fully understand what the author is trying to convey. (It's fun to alliterate if you want to try) Did you find the "Big Idea"

Ezra 9:1-4 _____

Ezra 9:5-9 _____

Ezra 9:10-15 _____

Title

State the main point of the entire passage in the form of a title.

Flex Your Muscles

From your title Can you discover a N.T. example of this O.T. truth?

Time to build

Take note of how each challenge is met. Ask yourself: How was it responded to? How did it affect those who interacted? What building materials were used? (prayer, confrontation, standing firm, waiting etc.)
What did you learn that can help you next time you meet a similar challenge?

Radiating His Truth

If God's people defile themselves, the only remedy is repentance, for their can be no intermingling of good and evil.

James Hamilton Jr.



