

Ezra Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Damian Kyle, Jon Courson, Warren Wiersbe, Matthew Henry, and NIV Study Bible.

Introduction:

Ezra means “help.” And the theme of the book of Ezra is “restoration.”

Ezra is most likely the author of this book, (he may have also authored Chronicles and Nehemiah, which was originally one book with Ezra,) but he doesn't appear until chapter 7 (80 years after 1:1). Chapters 1-6 happen under the leadership of Zerubbabel. According to the tradition view, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the 7th year (Ezra 7:8) of Artaxerxes I (458 BC), followed by Nehemiah, who arrived in the king's 20th (Neh. 2:1) year (445 BC).

- Ezra was a priest (7:21; 10:10) of the line of Zadok (7:1-2)
- Ezra was also a scribe (7:21; Neh. 12:26) and a “skilled scribe” (7:6). It was his teaching in Neh. 8 that spurred on the great work of repentance among the captives.
- Ezra 7:10 seems to give the clearest description of this man.
- Ezra also had a contrite heart at the sinful condition of his people. (10:1,6)

Ezra is a picture of grace and truth mingled together; the word of God and a broken heart.

- “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” (Ps. 126:5-6)

Ezra is the account of the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. Nehemiah gives the account of the rebuilding of the wall of the city.

- Ezra is current with Haggai and Zechariah. Nehemiah is current with Malachi.

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “the first year of Cyrus” – This is 538 BC and moves through 70 years of Babylonian captivity.

- The book of Daniel takes place between Chronicles and Ezra.
- “the mouth of Jeremiah” – Jeremiah prophesied the time of the captivity being 70 years. (Jer. 25:11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2)
- “the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus” – This is supposedly a result of Daniel presenting Cyrus with a copy of the prophesy concerning him from Isaiah 44:28-45:4 written about 200 years previous.
- Babylonians usually displaced those they conquered, but the Persians usually sent the defeated back to rebuild their Temples so they could pray to their gods for the favor of the Persian kings and empire.

- 1:2 – “the Lord God of heaven” – Of the 22 OT occurrences of this phrase, 17 occur in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel.
- This is a Persian king speaking of the Jewish God.
 - “commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem” – Cyrus will not only send the Jews back, but he will also supply them with everything necessary for a successful journey and the construction of the Temple.
 - Israel returns to its land cured of its idolatry. They will eventually turn to Phariseeism, but from this time forth they will work hard at maintaining orthodoxy from the Scriptures and refraining from idolatry.
 - Israel has been in captivity for 70 years; anyone who remembers the Temple must be over 80 years old.
- 1:3 – “Who is among you of all His people?” – Cyrus is seeking for those who are willing to go back to Israel.
- It is a 900 mile journey of about 4 months through desert to return to ruins.
 - The majority will not leave the comfort of captivity to work at restoring Israel.
- 1:4 – “the men of his place help him with silver and gold” – Cyrus expects those Jews who stay behind to financially support those who are going out.
- 1:5 – “priests” – These have maintained their lineage and calling, but have never offered a sacrifice or performed a service. They remained sanctified in captivity.
- “whose spirits God had moved” – The open door meets with stirred hearts.
 - They are responding to the call of God.
 - “build the house of the Lord” – This is quite a task representing many hours of hard work, sweat, blood, and tears. At this time, the Temple is merely a pile of burned out rubble.
- 1:8 – “Sheshbazzar” – Likely the Persian name of Zerubbabel.
- Josephus said Zerubbabel was the same as Sheshbazzar.
- 1:9 – “the number of them” – God has all this numbered and recorded.
- 1:11 – “from Babylon to Jerusalem” – It must have been a remarkable sight to see these nearly 50,000 people leaving the civilization of Babylon for the ruins of Jerusalem.

Chapter 2:

Ezra 2 and Neh. 7:6-73 present nearly identical lists of returnees.

- 2:2 – “Jeshua” – This is Joshua the high priest, who is mentioned 23 times in the post-exilic writings. He served at the side of Zerubbabel the governor.
- “Nehemiah...Mordecai” – These are not the men from Nehemiah and Esther.
- 2:3-20 – The number of people is listed by the family heads.
- 2:21-35 – The number of people is listed by the towns.
- 2:36-39 – The number of the priests is listed here. (4,289)
- 2:40-42 – The number of the Levites is listed here. (341)

2:43-54 – The number of the people is listed of those who serve in the Temple.

2:55-58 – The number of the people is listed of those with a lineage to the time of Solomon.

2:59-62 – The number of the people is listed of those who could not trace a legal lineage.

- The inability to trace a legal lineage is a problem because priestly position and land and inheritance rights depended on genealogies.

6:63 – “governor” – (Heb. “Tirshatha”) This is Zerubbabel.

- “Urim and Thummim” – There is no record of the use of the Urim and Thummim after the exile.

2:64 – “The whole assembly” – The total of those returning at this time is 49,897.

- It is estimated that there were nearly 2 million Jews in captivity at this time.
- The first step in any ministry is showing up. The greatest ability is availability.
- Their pilgrim nature is stronger than their desire to be comfortable. Their spiritual desire supersedes their natural inclinations.

2:66 – “Their horses” – There are only 736 horses among 50,000 people.

- This is much like the condition of the Jews that returned to Israel in 1948. While Israel was scattered among the nations, no one would sell them land. So instead of farming as they once did in Israel, they took professional jobs like doctors and bankers that were considered by the people of that time as dirty professions. But in the end, it caused the Jews to be rather prosperous.

2:68 – “came to the house of the Lord” – If there is going to be restoration at all, the first step has got to be returning to the altar.

- “offered freely” – They begin their time in Jerusalem with free-will offerings.

2:69 – “According to their ability” – Those who came now give from their resources.

2:70 – “all Israel” – This is not just Benjamin and Judah.

- The Bible knows nothing of the “10 lost tribes of Israel.” (Rev. 7)

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “seventh month” – This was a spiritual month for the Jews containing the Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, and Feast of Tabernacles. (Lev. 23:23-43)

- This was the first time these Jews would celebrate these feasts in their land.
- “gathered together as one man” – There would be tremendous unity here.
- The people of God unified for a work is a key theme of this chapter.

- 3:2 – “Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel” – He is the current governor of the land of Judah and is a descendant of king Jehoiachin.
- Zerubbabel is also of the line of the Messiah. (Matt. 1:12)
 - “built the altar of God” – This is as the Temple lay in ruins.
 - The Temple is worthless without the altar, but not the other way around. The Temple is not a place for God to live, but a place for man to meet God...and for that the altar is necessary.
 - The first thing that must happen is the rebuilding of the altar, the shedding of blood, and the returning to our first love.
 - “burnt offerings” – These are offerings of consecration.
 - “as it is written in the Law of Moses” – Worship is dictated by the Word of God.
 - They have chosen to return to the Word of God, which was the ultimate reason they were sent to Babylon in the first place. There is no real reason to build the Temple without first setting their heart on God and His Word.
- 3:4 – “Feast of Tabernacles” – The feast commemorating the journey through the wilderness and God’s faithfulness to bring them into their land.
- “as it is written” – Their response to the word of God is noted again.
- 3:5 – “willingly” – God wants the offerings for His work to be given without constraint. (2 Cor. 9:7)
- 3:6 – “although the foundation of the temple of the Lord had not been laid” – The Temple building only meant something because of what was done there.
- 3:7 – “cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea” – This is the same way Solomon got cedars to Jerusalem.
- It is likely that Cyrus is paying for all of this.
- 3:8 – “began work” – It takes them into their second year to even start building.
- The construction of the Temple begins in 536 BC.
- 3:9 – “as one” – They are moving to this work as a unified team. There are some things that cannot be done on our own.
- 3:12 – “old men” – They could remember Solomon’s Temple.
- “wept with a loud voice” – Haggai tells them that the “glory of the latter temple shall be greater than the former.” (Haggai 2:1-9)
 - It is greater, not because of the form, but because of the content. Jesus will come to this Temple (after it was remodeled and restored by Herod the Great).
 - “the foundation of this temple was laid” – This comes exactly 70 years after the first deportation of 605 BC.
- 3:13 – “people could not discern” – There is great joy and great brokenness in the same scene.

Chapter 4:

- 4:1 – “the adversaries of Judah” – Once the work gets started, opposition turns up.
- Moving forward in the sovereign plan of God is masked in opposition.
 - Paul noted “a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” (1 Cor. 16:9)
 - “adversaries” – These are the Samaritans, the mixture of the foreign peoples displaced by the Assyrians and the remnant of the Jews that remained. They were a mixed people with a mixed worship. (2 Kings 17)
 - This is the opposition that comes from those who want to say that all roads lead to the same God and every religion is as viable an option as another.
- 4:2 – “Let us build with you” – The first step of opposition is compromise, permitting sin and ungodly lifestyles so the work can get done faster.
- We don’t need the help of the world to do the work of God.
 - The letter to the church at Pergamos dealt with compromise in the church. (Rev. 2:12-17)
 - “Esarhaddon” – The Assyrians placed the various peoples in Samaria in 669 BC.
- 4:3 – “You may do nothing with us” – After 70 years of exile, the Jews aren’t going to be deceived into compromise.
- “King Cyrus” – He reigned from 559-530 BC.
- 4:4 – “tried to discourage the people of Judah” – Their reaction is proof that they didn’t really want to help. Motivation can be tested with a “no.”
- “They troubled them” – The next step of the opposition is discouragement through trouble.
- 4:5 – “hired counselors” – They get fancy lawyers.
- “Darius king of Persia” – He reigned from 522-486 BC.
- 4:6 – “Ahasuerus” – Also known as Xerxes.
- He reigned from 486-465 BC. (See Esther.)
 - “wrote an accusation” – The third step of opposition is open accusation.
- 4:7 – “Artaxerxes” – He reigned from 465-424 BC.
- “written in Aramaic script” – The original text for Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26 was originally written in Aramaic.
- 4:12 – “Jews” – This is the first mention of the word in the Bible.
- “finishing its walls” – The Jews are building the Temple, not the walls of the city.
 - This letter deals specifically with a later situation, but exemplifies the struggle.
- 4:13 – “the king’s treasury will be diminished” – They are acting as if they are concerned about the Persian pocketbook.
- 4:15 – “harmful to kings and provinces” – They are making the accusation that the success of the Jews will be a detriment to the nation they are living in.
- But the success of God’s people is always a blessing to the nation they are in.
- 4:16 – “you will have no dominion” – They are trying to manipulate through fear.

- 4:19 – “rebellion” – There is some truth in the accusation. Jerusalem had rebelled against the Assyrians in 701 BC (2 Kings 18:7) and against the Babylonians in 600 BC and 589 BC (2 Kings 24:1,20).
- 4:21 – “until the command is given by me” – Artaxerxes is going to take some time to look into this situation.
- 4:23 – “by force of arms” – This may include a Persian police force.
- 4:24 – “until the second year of the reign of Darius” – This is a delay of about 16 years. (Sept. 21, 520 BC) It looks like they have been defeated.
- God allows delays to prepare us for something better. The theme of this book is restoration, and part of restoration is burning off the dross.
 - The Temple must be rebuilt because the line of the Messiah must run through that Temple.

Chapter 5:

- 5:1 – “Haggai” – His initial message was “Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this Temple to lie in ruins?” (Haggai 1:4)
- The work of the Temple has been delayed. The Samaritans have turned the favor of the Medo-Persians away from the Jews bringing an official verdict against building the Temple. The Jews respond to the opposition by retreating. Instead of doing what they can to keep the work moving, they begin to focus on their own houses and personal desires.
 - The people have made comfort their God.
 - Haggai began delivering his prophetic message on August 29, 520 BC.
 - The people could respond to Haggai’s message by saying, “But we don’t have permission.” Yet with God, there is always something that can be done.
 - “the God of Israel, who was over them” – The Medes and Persians have issued a decree to stop the work, but God is sovereign over them too.
- 5:2 – “Zerubbabel” – This is a Babylonian name meaning “offspring of Babylon,” referring to his birth in exile. He was the son of Shealtiel and the grandson of Jehoiachin (1 Chron. 3:17), the next-to-last king of Judah. Zerubbabel was the last of the Davidic line to be entrusted with political authority by the occupying powers. He was also an ancestor of Jesus. (Matt. 1:12-13; Luke 3:27)
- “began to build the house of God” – They heed the word of God from the prophets and ignore the unfair decree of the government.
 - “the prophets of God were with them, helping them” – The prophets were working physically too. They put their life and service behind their words.
- 5:3 – “Tattenai” – Babylonian records indicate Tattenai (or Tatnai, KJV) was the trans-Jordan governor of Samaria.
- 5:5 – “the eye of their God” – God’s favor kept the project moving forward.
- “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech. 4:6)
- 5:12 – “our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath” – They have a proper view of their history...God’s view.
- 5:14 – “Sheshbazzar” – That is, likely, Zerubbabel.

5:17 – “let a search be made” – They cannot believe that Cyrus ever issued this decree.

Chapter 6:

Ezra 5 gives us the spiritual part of this scene, while chapter 6 focuses on the political part. God is governing the affairs of men. (Dan. 4:17)

6:1 – “Darius” – He was a Persian king that had a close relationship with Daniel. (Dan. 6)
- He reigned from 522-486 BC.

6:2 – “Achmetha” – (“Ecbatana” – NIV) The capital of the Medes, located about 300 miles to the northwest of Babylon, was largely unused after the taking of Babylon.
- King Cyrus used Achmetha as his summer home in 538 BC.
- Achmetha is located in what is today the Iranian city of Hamadan.
- “a scroll was found” – God never lost that scroll.
- The Medes and Persians held a policy that no official decree could be reversed or rescinded. That is the reason why Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den.

6:6 – “keep yourselves far from there” – This is an Aramaic legal phrase that serves as a restraining order.

6:8 – “from taxes on the region” – Now Tattenai must designate a portion of his government’s revenue to support the work of the Temple.
- This is the best of government stimulus spending.

6:10 – “sacrifices of a sweet aroma” – These sacrifices are a savor of rest and peace.

6:11 – “hanged” – That is impaled.
- Herodotus records another time that Darius impaled 3,000 people who failed to obey a decree. This is a serious threat.
- “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever he wishes.” (Prov. 21:1)

6:12 – “let it be done diligently” – The work of the enemy has been completely reversed.
- It has taken 15 years for the plan of the enemy to backfire on them.

6:15 – “the temple was finished” – This comes to completion about 22 years after the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return to their land and 4½ years after Haggai started preaching.
- This is the theme of Ezra 6: The work gets done.
- In a culture given to impatience, it is important to learn patience and steadfastness in our ministries.
- “sixth year of the reign of King Darius” – March 12, 516 BC.
- Exactly 70 years after Nebuchadnezzar’s final deportation of Judah.
- This is also about 11 days from the beginning of Passover.

6:16 – “dedication” – This is the word translated from the Aramaic word “hanukkah.”

6:17 – “they offered sacrifices” – A total of 712 offerings.
- Solomon offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep at the inauguration of that Temple.

6:18 – “the service of God in Jerusalem” – The priests probably never imagined that they would be at this work again.

6:19 – “And” – Here the original text returns to the Hebrew language.

6:21 – “separated themselves...in order to seek the Lord” – These two things go together; separated from the world and separated to God.

6:22 – “with joy” – “When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.” (Ps. 126:1)

Chapter 7:

7:1 – “after these things” – There is a gap of about 58 years between chapters 6 and 7. The events of the book of Esther take place in the interim.

- Chap. 1-6 focused on rebuilding the Temple.
- Chap. 7-10 focus on rebuilding the people.
- “Seraiah” – He was the high priest under Zedekiah who was killed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC (2 Kings 25:18-21) some 128 years before Ezra’s arrival.
- “Hilkiah” – He was the High Priest under Josiah and found the book of the Law in the Temple. (2 Kings 22:4)

7:2 – “Zadok” – He was a priest under David (2 Sam. 8:17). Solomon appointed Zadok as High Priest in place of Abiathar, who supported the rebel Adonijah. (1 Kings 1:7-8; 2:35)

7:5 – “Phinehas” – He was zealous for the Lord at a time of national decline. (Num. 25:10-15)

7:1-5 – “Ezra the son of...Aaron” – Ezra is of the high priestly line.

- This is a calling. He is ordained by God to take this position.

7:6 – “skilled scribe” – Ezra had committed to knowing the word of God. Everything in his life centers on and grows out of this one thing.

- The Temple has been reconstructed. Now worship has to be restored as well. Ezra will help to bring the word of God to Israel.
- All of God’s great men and women throughout church history have been people who thoroughly know the revealed word of God.
- “the Law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given” – Ezra is convinced that the Scriptures were given and preserved by the Lord.
- “according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him” – This is a phrase used 6 times in chapters 7 and 8. (7:6,9,28; 8:18,22,31)
- Ezra submits to the calling of God on his life.

7:8 – “the seventh year of the king” – Ezra would have arrived in Judah in 458 BC.

- Ezra began his journey on the first of Nisan (April 8, 458 BC) and arrived in Jerusalem on the first of Ab (Aug. 4, 458 BC). The journey took 4 months, including an 11-day delay indicated in 8:3.

7:9 – “the fifth month he came to Jerusalem” – Ezra travels four months through the desert to teach Bible studies. This is an amazing sacrifice.

7:10 – “prepared his heart” – Lit. “set his heart firmly.”

- This is an inward work, in the deepest part of this man. He is driven from the inside to do these things.
- The Church is to “continue steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine.” (Acts 2:42)
 - Three things here:
 1. “seek the Law” – Ezra is seeking the word of God.
 - This is not a merely intellectual study, for the understanding of the written word of God is dependant on the relationship with the living word of God (Jesus Christ).
 2. “to do it” – Ezra determines to obey what he learns.
 3. “teach statutes” – Ezra also desires to pass along what God reveals to him.

7:17 – “offer them” – The emphasis this time is on worship, not just on building.

7:19 – “God of Jerusalem” – Artaxerxes is a polytheist. He thinks God lives in Israel.

7:21 – “treasurers” – The money is coming from the taxes of the trans-Jordan area.

7:22 – “one hundred talents of silver” – That is about 3¾ tons of silver.

7:23 – “why should there be wrath against the realm of the king” – Artaxerxes’ motivation.

- Historically, at this time Artaxerxes and the Medes and Persians are having difficulty with Egypt. Artaxerxes wants God’s help against the Egyptians.

7:25 – “Ezra...set magistrates and judges” – Artaxerxes trusts Ezra’s discernment.

- Greater discernment is one of the by-products of really knowing the word.
- “teach those who do not know” – Ezra’s mission is clear.

Chapter 8:

8:1-21 – About 1,756 people return to Jerusalem with Ezra.

- This is a very small number compared to the near 50,000 people that returned the first time. (Ezra 2)

8:15 – “we camped there three days” – Ezra pauses and surveys everything before starting the journey.

- “none of the sons of Levi” – There is no use in going back to Jerusalem to establish worship without anyone called or ordained to minister in that capacity.
- The Levites would have to give up land and business in Babylon to serve the Lord without any guarantee of land or payment in Israel.

8:16 – “Then I sent” – Ezra sends some back to recruit Levites to join them in the journey.

- “men of understanding” – Lit. “those who cause to understand.” This word is translated “teacher” (1 Chron. 25:8), “taught” (2 Chron. 35:3; Neh. 8:9).

8:17 – “the Nethinim” – These are the individuals responsible for the physical care of the Temple.

8:18-19 – Two Levitical families answer the call.

- 8:21 – “humble ourselves before our God” – They don’t assume they know how to do this.
- “the right way for us and our little ones” – This is the story of every pilgrim – seeking God for the right way for us and our little ones and refusing to leave our kids in Babylon.
- 8:22 – “ashamed to request of the king” – He didn’t want to contradict his confession of the Lord’s protection to the king by asking the king for help. He will not misrepresent God in this way.
- It is important for any teacher to be careful to live their teaching.
- 8:23 – “entreated our God for this” – They speak to God rather than speaking to the king.
- Thousands of soldiers will escort Nehemiah to Israel. Ezra goes alone.
 - There is no ark or pillar of cloud and fire on this journey. This is by faith alone.
- 8:26 – “I weighed into their hand” – Ezra gives everyone some of God’s treasure to carry on their journey. They will be responsible to give it to the priests in Jerusalem in full weight.
- This is similar to the Parables of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and of the Minas. (Luke 19:11-27)
 - “six hundred and fifty talents of silver” – That is about 25 tons of silver.
 - “articles weighing one hundred talents” – That is about 3¾ tons.
- 8:29 – “watch and keep” – Ezra devises a system of accountability for his and his leaders’ handling of the money and other physical resources.
- 8:31 – “the hand of our God was upon us” – The hand they submit to is also the hand that covers them. The authority and protection of God are in the same hand.
- 8:32 – “we came to Jerusalem” – This trip covers over 900 miles and takes 4 months.
- 8:35 – “burnt offerings” – There was a total of 197 sacrifices offered at this time.
- After all these months journeying, they start their time in Jerusalem with sacrifice.
- 8:36 – “they gave support” – They are there to strengthen and encourage the work of God.

Chapter 9:

- 9:1 – “When these things were done” – Ezra just completed a 4-month, 900-mile journey to teach these people the Scriptures and immediately finds out they are living in sin.
- It seems that Ezra has been in Israel for a mere 4 months. (Ezra 7:9; 10:9)
- 9:2 – “wives for themselves” – Some of these men had even divorced their Jewish wives in order to marry heathen women. (Mal. 2:10-16)
- “the holy seed is mixed” – Jews were supposed to marry within the Jewish faith to preserve the line of the Messiah.
 - “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” (2 Cor. 6:14)
 - The NT Church is not prohibited from inter-racial or mixed ethnicity marriages.
 - “leaders and rulers” – The religious and political leaders both. (“priests” – v. 1)
 - “trespass” – This is willful disobedience to the word of God. (v. 11-12)

- 9:3 – “plucked out some of the hair” – Ezra grieves and mourns for the sin of his people. He allows this to hurt him.
- Ezra cares more for these people than they care for themselves.
 - “astonished” – The Hebrew carries the idea of “in silence.”
- 9:4 – “Then everyone” – Ezra’s response becomes a rallying point for others. He helps the more timid and lukewarm to take a stand.
- “trembled at the words of the God of Israel” – They had a fear of God and His word.
 - These people respond to this sin because of the place of the word of God in their lives.
 - The lack of conviction for sin in our lives is not a reflection on the righteousness of the sin, but of the wickedness of our own hearts.
- 9:6 – “O my God” – He goes to prayer before going to the people.
- “our iniquities” – Ezra is not blaming, but identifying with the sins of God’s people. Ezra did not marry a pagan woman, but chooses to identify with his fellow countrymen.
- 9:7 – “delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands” – This is what compromise produces in a life.
- 9:8 – “grace has been shown” – Ezra sees them trampling on the grace of God.
- “peg” – This word can also be translated “tent stake.” It is the same word used for the spike Jael used to kill Sisera. (Judges 4:21)
 - The word is synonymous with establishing.
- 9:9 – “a wall in Judah” – Could this be a prophetic reference to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem?
- 9:11 – “saying” – Ezra is quoting from the Scriptures now.
- The reference is not to a single OT passage, but to several passages such as: Exod. 34:15-16; Deut. 7:1-6; 11:8-9; Isa. 1:19; and Ezek. 37:25.
- 9:12 – “never seek their peace or prosperity” – They are not to make a treaty with the world.
- The struggle of compromise is in thinking that the world has something that we need. It comes when we think that we are missing out on something.
 - “that you may be strong” – This is what God desires His commands to accomplish in the lives of His people.
 - “an inheritance to your children” – The lives of parents directly impact the lives of their children.
- 9:14 – “Would you not be angry with us” – Ezra is honestly seeking God’s mercy.

Chapter 10:

- 10:1 – “while Ezra was praying” – They’re responding to Ezra’s praying, not his preaching.
- One man’s heart confession stirs up a national repentance.
- 10:2 – “Shechaniah” – Perhaps his father Jehiel is the Jehiel mentioned in v. 26 since he was also of the family of Elam. It may be that his father had married a non-Jewish woman.
- Six members of the clan of Elam were involved in intermarriage. (v. 26)
- 10:5 – “they swore an oath” – Ezra doesn’t seem to put much trust in their public commitment. He will believe it when he sees it.

- 10:8 – “all his property would be confiscated” – Ezra hits them in their pocketbooks.
 - “separated from the assembly” – Failure to appear was an admission of guilt.
- 10:9 – “the ninth month” – This is December. This is the cold and rainy season.
- 10:11 – “make confession” – Turning from sin.
 - “Confess” in 1 John 1:9 is the Greek word “homoligeo” and means “to speak the same thing.” Biblically, to confess is to agree with God on a matter.
 - “do His will” – Turning to the Lord.
 - God’s will is to have relationship and fellowship with us. (John 6:39,40)
 - “separate yourselves...from the pagan wives” – This is the practical step necessary to “make confession” and “do His will.”
 - There is something more important to God than our personal happiness. He wants us to be right with Him.
- 10:12 – “so we must do” – They have no doubt. There is a genuine conviction.
- 10:13 – “Nor is this the work of one or two days” – This is a lot of work. There are many scenarios to discuss and consequences to sort out.
 - There is no NT principle for believers to divorce from unbelieving spouses. (1 Cor. 7:14-15)
- 10:15 – “opposed” – God notes those of His people who oppose a move in repentance.
 - “Meshullam” – If he is the Meshullam of v. 29, he himself had married a pagan wife.
- 10:17 – “the first month” – It took them three months to sort all this out.
 - No doubt, they don’t just cut these wives off without any support or restitution.
- 10:18,23 – “priests...Levites” – The judgment begins with the religious leadership.
 - “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.” (1 Pet. 4:17)
 - “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” (James 3:1)
- 10:24 – “the singers” – Even the worship leaders are to lead separate lives.
- 10:25-43 – They discovered over 110 offenders.
 - The total number of offenders was probably less than 1% of the residents.
 - Some of the names from Ezra 2 are on this list. It has taken only 58 years for the returning captives to commit sin that would jeopardize their land again. The people had left Babylon, but Babylon hadn’t left all the people.