

Ezra 9-10

George was 28 years old, single, and still living with his parents. One Sunday morning, George told his mother he wasn't going to church. "First," he said, "I'm tired. Second, the people there don't like me. And third, the sermons are dull."

But George's mother wouldn't take no for an answer. "George," she said, "you have to go. First, we always worship on Sunday. Second, it doesn't matter whether they like us or not. And third, you are the pastor!"

- In serving the Lord, we don't seek out positions of leadership; they seek us
 - Ezra has come to Israel to serve the people by teaching them to know and obey the Word of God
 - It's a role he embraced as the Lord revealed it to his heart
 - And he has made personal sacrifices to leave behind his way of life and return to Jerusalem
 - His return marked the second stage of God's purpose in restoring the people of Israel in their land
 - First, they re-learned to worship with true hearts
 - So now, it's time to worship through a life of obedience
 - Because worship can't just be a one-day per week activity
 - But as we saw last week, Ezra's commission to teach in Israel came with a demand to judge Israel
 - Ezra came, hoping to instruct the people into righteous living
 - But when that fails, Ezra has the authority to compel compliance with the Law of God
 - Disciplining disobedience is the hard part of leading God's people
 - Ezra may not have signed up for this duty, but nonetheless, he can't shrink back from it
 - He can't look the other way

- He can't worry whether someone likes him

Ezra 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.

Ezra 9:2 "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."

Ezra 9:3 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.

Ezra 9:4 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.

- Shortly after arriving, Ezra discovers a problem in the camp of Israel
 - Ezra says "now when these things have been completed..."
 - He is referring to the events at the close of Chapter 8
 - The traveling party has arrived in the city and presented their gifts to the temple authorities
 - They also delivered the king's edict and they made an offering of bulls, rams, lambs, and goats
 - And now at the conclusion of those events, which may have taken a few days, Ezra hears the shocking news
 - The princes of Israel, which refers to the tribal leaders or elders, inform Ezra that the people of Israel had not kept themselves separate from the people of the land
 - The people were intermarrying with the various enemies of Israel, including Canaanites, Egyptians and Moabites
 - This behavior was a direct violation of the Law and Covenant the Lord established with Israel

Ex. 34:10 Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

[Ex. 34:11](#) “Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

[Ex. 34:12](#) “Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst.

[Ex. 34:13](#) “But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim

[Ex. 34:14](#) – for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God –

[Ex. 34:15](#) otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

[Ex. 34:16](#) and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.

- The Lord specifically named the people of the land of Canaan
 - There are numerous sub-tribes of Canaanites
 - You can always distinguish the Canaanite peoples by the “ites” ending to their names
 - So in the list of Ezra 9, we find the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, and Amorites
 - These are all Canaanite peoples, which the Israelites were specifically prohibited from marrying
 - The Lord forbade the Israelites from marrying these peoples because they were a cursed people
 - The Canaanites descended from Canaan, the grandson of Noah
 - Canaan’s father was Ham, the son of Noah who showed disrespect for his father’s nakedness
 - Because of his behavior, Noah spoke prophetically in cursing Ham’s line through his grandson Canaan
 - A curse is a pronouncement by the Lord of eternal damnation
 - When someone is cursed, they will never be redeemed
 - And when a people are cursed, then they are all assured of destruction

- Ham himself was spared being cursed because he was a believer, according to Scripture
 - The Lord will never curse His children, for we are saved for eternity
- But the Lord cursed Ham's line in Canaan
- Therefore, the Canaanites are a cursed people with no future in God's providence
 - They were specifically called out for destruction so that the land Israel entered would have a worthy enemy due destruction by God's decree
 - Furthermore, the Lord instructed Israel to not intermarry with these cursed people as they entered the land
 - Instead, the Lord called the nation to destroy the people in the land, as He intended by His curse
 - Israel was to be the instrument God used to do His will concerning the Canaanites
 - The Lord told Israel in advance that if they succumbed to the temptation to marry the Canaanites, they would be cut off as well
 - Furthermore, since the Canaanites were an ungodly and cursed people, they would lead Israel into idolatry if given the opportunity
 - So the nation was told never to marry with the Canaanites
 - Unfortunately for Israel, the people did intermarry in a previous time
 - That decision produced the outcome God foretold
 - Israel played the harlot and was carried away by idolatry
 - As a result, they were judged and scattered outside their land
- But now, a remnant has returned to Israel
 - The Lord has been gracious to provide for them in many ways
 - He has permitted them to rebuild a temple and re-establish their lives in the land
 - He has sent them wealth

- And He provided a teacher, in Ezra, to teach and judge them
- But now, in fewer than 100 years, the people have reverted to the very problem that led them to be scattered in the first place
 - They are intermarrying with Canaanites
 - Moreover, they have intermarried with two other enemies of Israel: Moabites and Egyptians
 - In these cases, the issue isn't a curse, but still, these people are historical enemies of Israel and likely to corrupt the people in the same way
 - At the end of the day, the issue is maintaining Israel's purity and holiness, which is lost when they disobey the Word and marry idolaters
- And once again, the sin runs all the way up to the top of the chain
 - Even the princes and the priests had participated in the sin of intermarrying
 - It seems the people are quickly in danger of repeating the sins of the past
- Ezra reacts in the predictable way, especially for a man who devoted his life to knowing, teaching and obeying the Lord
 - He mourns in the traditional fashion
 - He tears his clothing, pulls hair from head and beard
 - And then he sits down appalled
 - The word "appalled" means "astonished and ruined"
 - We can imagine what Ezra was thinking, can't we?
 - Haven't they learned anything?
 - Was their worship sincere?
 - Were their hearts still true?
 - Or perhaps these people are no better than their forefathers
 - And what would God do next?

- Will this test His patience to the point of breaking?
 - What kind of punishment awaits the people for this sin, especially in light of what the Lord had done the first time?
 - Ezra collapses, seemingly without a hope
 - Or maybe this is exactly the reason the Lord sent Ezra down to Jerusalem in the first place?
- I'm reminded of another book of Scripture, one that is set in virtually the same point in history
 - Mordecai tells Esther, who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?
 - He was saying she must understand her circumstances as having been orchestrated by the Lord to ensure Israel's preservation
 - Likewise, Ezra has just arrived in the city for the preservation of Israel
 - So, we know the sins of the exiles had been ongoing well before Ezra was called to go to Jerusalem
 - Clearly, the Lord brought Ezra back here, knowing exactly what he would find when he arrived
 - So we can conclude that Ezra's intervention is the response the Lord planned for Israel's sin
 - Here's an important distinction between how the Lord works with the rebellious vs. the foolish
 - Israel's forefathers had been given the Law, and they chose to disobey
 - Then, the Lord brought them prophets to warn them and call them to repent, but they killed them
 - Then the Lord brought famines and allowed Israel's enemies to attack them, but they persisted in disobedience
 - So the Lord drove the rebels out of the Land
 - Just as the Lord drove Adam out of the Garden
 - But here, we have a remnant of Israel who remain largely ignorant of the Law and the penalties for disobedience

- And they have yet to receive the counsel of teachers and prophets
 - And they are without judges and leaders to hold them accountable
 - They are led by their flesh into sin, but then aren't we all?
- They certainly realized that intermarriage wasn't approved
 - Just the fact that some princes brought the matter to Ezra's attention, tells us that some knew better and wanted Ezra to intervene
 - But overall, the people were in a far different situation than their forefathers
 - Which led God to respond in a far different manner
- God sends Ezra to Israel as a response to their sin, so he can bring them out of it
 - Of course, that doesn't mean there won't be a consequence for their sin
 - They must be taught the right thing to do
 - They must be called to repent
 - And they will be expected to act in keeping with repentance
 - It begins as soon as the people take note of Ezra's response to the news
 - In v.4, the people tremble at the words of the God of Israel
 - Ezra recites the Lord's Word to the people, concerning the prohibition of marrying Canaanites
 - Perhaps the words of Exodus 34
 - And as the people hear the Word of the Lord and see a man of God react to their sin, they are convicted on the spot
 - And so they tremble in fear for what the Lord might do in response
 - This response, recorded in v.4, is an important verse to understanding all that follows in this chapter and the next
 - The union of the Word of God and the admonishment of a godly man, combine to bring the fear of God to the people of Israel

- By the Word of God's Law, the people came to understand their sin
 - As Paul says, where there is no Law, there is no knowledge of sin
- And then, when they see a man of character and authority demonstrate horror at their behavior, they come to realize the seriousness of their actions
- In a nutshell, this is the role of a teacher in service to God's people
 - A teacher must bring the truth of God's Word to arm them with a knowledge of God's expectations
 - He explains the rules and corrects mistaken understandings
 - He reminds them when they forget and answers their questions along the way
 - Secondly, he sets an example through his own life, so that his words carry weight
 - In leading by example, he becomes a model to show the truth lived-out
 - Without a testimony of obedience, the teacher lacks the authority to command others
 - Finally, he exhorts and admonishes when necessary, to prompt repentance
 - This last step is entirely dependent on the first two working together
 - A teacher can't compel obedience to standards his students don't know
 - And he can't critique disobedience of standards he won't keep himself
 - Ezra's teaching of God's Word, and his principled display of disgust over their disobedience, leads to their conviction
- Equally important, their willingness to demonstrate a fear of God in response is itself a huge departure from their forefathers

- While their forefathers mocked and persecuted the prophets sent to correct them, these people show immediate remorse at their actions
 - God delights to see His people acting righteously in the first place
 - It is better that we obey, rather than we sacrifice for sin
 - But should we sin, He calls us to repentance so that we may be restored in fellowship
 - Teachers are a means for God to bring us to the place of repentance
- In fact, the process of restoration presupposed relapses and missteps, which is why the Lord provides teachers in the second step of restoration
 - He is fully aware that our hearts are prone to wander
 - He knows we need correction from time to time
 - And He sends us those who can instruct and guide us as we continue to strengthen in our walk with Him
- The thing to remember is to make full use of the teachers the Lord sends our way, especially as we may emerge from a period of discipline in our lives
 - Instruction involves, by definition, a reshaping of our understanding
 - And so, if we are to benefit by God's instruction, we must remain prepared to change our thinking, even on issues we assume are settled fact
 - Surely, someone in Israel must have argued with the leaders that it was permissible to marry these foreigners
 - But now, they are learning the truth from Ezra, and the question is how would they respond to learning they were wrong?
 - If they were to benefit from the Lord's grace, they must be ready for conviction and respond with repentance
- But in the case of Israel, the outcome is far from certain
 - They are presently married to foreign wives and some have children

- They feel sorrow, but that doesn't address the real issue
- There's no indication the Lord is prepared to forgive
- So Ezra takes another step on behalf of the people

Ezra 9:5 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; **Ezra 9:6** 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.

Ezra 9:7 "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.

Ezra 9:8 "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.

Ezra 9:9 "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.

Ezra 9:10 "Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments,

Ezra 9:11 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.

Ezra 9:12 '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.'

Ezra 9:13 "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,

Ezra 9:14 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?

Ezra 9:15 "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."

- As the teacher and a leader of sorts, Ezra offers an intercessory prayer for the people

- Remember, Ezra is also a priest, so he is especially qualified to make this intercession
 - He rises at about 3:00 PM, the time of the evening offering
 - He's in a disheveled state, clothes torn and head and face bleeding from torn hair
 - And he stretches out his arms to his sides in prayer
- Does anything about Ezra's situation strike a bell in your memory?
 - Mid-afternoon sacrifice?
 - Torn clothing?
 - Bleeding body?
 - Arms outstretched?
 - Interceding for the sins of Israel?
- Ezra's actions are a clear picture of the Christ to come
 - Jesus was crucified to win forgiveness for the sins of the people
 - He was a sacrifice at 3:00 PM
 - His clothes were torn
 - His body bloodied
 - And His arms outstretched
- Ezra is the priest, the prophet and the leader of Israel in this moment
 - And in these similarities, he pictures the work of the Lord in a future day
 - Another time when Israel was astray and needed someone to save them from their sins
- Ezra's prayer is one of the great intercessory prayers in the Old Testament
 - In a heartfelt and impassioned voice, Ezra calls upon the Lord to overlook Israel's sin
 - He begins his prayer by associating himself with the people and their sin

- Ezra did nothing wrong
- Nevertheless, he throws himself in with their lot
- He's recognizing an essential characteristic of the Covenant between Israel and the Lord
 - It bound everyone in the nation to meet the same standard, or suffer a common penalty
 - In other words, Ezra was going to suffer in whatever response the Lord took under the terms of the Covenant
 - Just as righteous Daniel suffered when Israel sinned in a previous generation
- Then, Ezra recounts the mercy and patience of the Lord through past generations
 - Israel had sinned in this very way before, Ezra says
 - And in that earlier moment, the Lord brought the people to discipline
 - And following that, the Lord showed the people mercy and restored them to the land
 - In v.8, Ezra says for a brief moment, the Lord has shown grace to Israel
 - It resulted in a remnant escaping their captors
 - Ezra is emphasizing that all this mercy could evaporate in an instant
 - Israel had been taking the Lord's mercy and grace for granted when they sinned
 - The Lord kept their enemies at bay
 - He brought them wealth from the kings of Persia
 - But all the while, the people were sinning against the Lord, daring Him to remove His favor from them
 - Then, in v.10, Ezra offers a group confession and appeal for mercy
 - He asks "what can we say?"
 - We have no excuse or defense

- We have disobeyed your commandments
- If you only permitted a remnant to remain following the last time we sinned, how can we expect you to allow even one to remain now?
- And still, we throw ourselves on your mercy
- Here's a wonderful model for confessional prayer
 - Admit your guilt and shame for having disobeyed the Word
 - Recognize that your sin was a matter of disobedience, not ignorance nor circumstances
 - Acknowledge the Lord's right and willingness to punish sin
 - Confess your sin of testing the Lord's patience and kindness
 - And seek His mercy, conditioned on a sincere desire to repent
- So in the final chapter, we find the people's response

Ezra 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.

Ezra 10:2 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.

Ezra 10:3 "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.

Ezra 10:4 "Arise! For this matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act."

- Even as Ezra is interceding for the people, the large assembly recognizes they must act in accordance with repentance
 - They are weeping bitterly at the recognition of their mistake and at the prospect of what they must do to avoid the Lord's wrath
 - Two men step forward to speak on behalf of the people
 - They admit their unfaithfulness to the Lord in marrying foreign women

- And then, they spontaneously stir the people to act courageously to bring themselves back into compliance with the Covenant
 - Specifically, they know they must put away the foreign wives and children
 - The term “put away” is a term that always carries the same meaning, wherever it appears in the Bible
 - It means to permanently separate or divorce
 - It’s the same word used in Deuteronomy, in conjunction with a certificate of divorce
 - This is the act that Abraham took to separate from Hagar and Ishmael
 - And in this case, it’s for a similar purpose: to put an end to an illicit relationship that stood in the way of obedience to the Lord
 - These two men make this proposal to Ezra and the people, so now it remains for Ezra to decide how to respond

Ezra 10:5 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.

Ezra 10:6 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.

Ezra 10:7 They made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the exiles, that they should assemble at Jerusalem,

Ezra 10:8 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.

Ezra 10:9 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.

- Ezra rises, and as a priest, he leads all the priests in accepting this proposal
 - They take an oath on the spot that any who have foreign wives and children would put them away
 - Next, Ezra calls an assembly of all Israel in Jerusalem so that the rest of the nation could address this sin as well

- In fact, if a man refuses to come in response to the call, he will be automatically excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and forfeit his possessions
 - So one way or another, the nation was going to be purged of their foreign wives and disobedient families
- Next, Ezra begins a period of fasting and prayer in the home of a fellow priest
 - He is seeking the Lord's wisdom and mercy in the midst of this process
 - Meanwhile, the people are assembling in a mere three days
 - They assemble and are trembling out of fear over the matter and because of the heavy rain
- The mention of the rain is an interesting detail
 - Falling rain presents a consistent picture in Scripture
 - It's used in parables to represent the grace of God
 - And in the Old Testament, the Lord withheld rain when His people were in rebellion
 - But he brought beneficial rain when fellowship was restored
 - The detail of heavy rain serves as a commentary on God's point of view on the proceedings
- Then Ezra addressed the assembly

Ezra 10:10 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.

Ezra 10:11 "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."

Ezra 10:12 Then all the assembly replied with a loud voice, "That's right! As you have said, so it is our duty to do.

Ezra 10:13 "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.

Ezra 10:14 "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."

[Ezra 10:15](#) Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah opposed this, with Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supporting them.

- Ezra's command to the people of Israel is simple, yet bold
 - He says they have sinned and they must confess that sin and do His will
 - In other words, the only solution to their problem is to admit they are wrong and then do the right thing
 - No wonder Ezra has been in fasting and prayer for the past three days
 - He must have been terrified at what the nation might do in response to his call
 - It could have divided the nation, led to further rebellion
 - Prophets have been killed for less
 - But Ezra demonstrates the courage to call for the people to do God's will
 - Anytime we call for God's people to do God's will, we're risking alienating ourselves from them
 - Inevitably, some people will respond favorably, while others will reject us in response to the conviction God's Word creates
 - If we can't stomach the rejection that comes from preaching God's Word, then we need to be in a different line of work
 - God's people can't repent from sin while persisting in the sinful relationships that got them into trouble in the first place
 - This was especially true, given the reason for the prohibition in the first place
 - God's instructions were for their good, to protect them from idolatry
 - Had they been allowed to continue in these relationships, it meant the end of Israel
 - There was simply no compromise possible
 - Remember Jesus' own commands

[Luke 18:29](#) And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,
[Luke 18:30](#) who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”

[Matt. 10:34](#) “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

[Matt. 10:35](#) “For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW;

[Matt. 10:36](#) and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

[Matt. 10:37](#) “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

- In light of the eternal ramifications, allegiance to the Lord must take precedence over any earthly, fleshly relationships
 - While we can be sure these men loved their wives and their children
 - Their relationships were the consequence of disobedience to the Lord and they had to be put to an end
- Ezra’s courage is rewarded in v.12, when God’s people respond in unison that they must act according to the Word of the Lord
 - There is no more pleasing response for any teacher of God’s Word than the people of God responding in this way
 - However, the people do seek one minor concession
 - Since it’s the rainy season (late Autumn) and since there are many families impacted by this decision, they needed time to carry it out
 - In other words, the process of separating and sending the family away required some time to carry out
 - And given the cold and rainy season, travel would be more difficult
 - Also, it would be inhumane to send wives and children packing in cold, wet weather
 - So they are asking for an orderly process, with appointments before judges and time to set their affairs in order

- The process was one of legal divorce
 - We know the Lord declares elsewhere that He hates divorce
 - And New Testament Scripture forbids it
 - So, we can safely assume the Lord was not pleased to watch these divorces taking place
 - Nevertheless, it was Israel's sin that prompted the need for this outcome
 - These marriages were the sinful consequence of an earlier sin
 - In a sense, we can say that Israel had already made this sin necessary when they chose to enter into illegitimate marriages in the first place
 - Furthermore, these marriages couldn't stand without doing even greater damage to Israel's future and God's plan for His people
 - Those marriages were illegitimate
 - And as long as they persisted, the sin would continue
 - Only separation would end the sin once and for all
 - There were a few dissenters, as we might expect, under these circumstances
 - But their objections didn't overrule the majority
 - So the separations were ordered and carried out obediently

[Ezra 10:16](#) 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.

[Ezra 10:17](#) They finished investigating all the men who had married foreign wives by the first day of the first month.

[Ezra 10:18](#) 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.

[Ezra 10:19](#) They pledged to put away their wives, and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their offense.

[Ezra 10:20](#) Of the sons of Immer there were Hanani and Zebadiah;

[Ezra 10:21](#) and of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel and Uziah;

[Ezra 10:22](#) and of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad and Elasaah.

[Ezra 10:23](#) Of Levites there were Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah and Eliezer.

[Ezra 10:24](#) Of the singers there was Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem and Uri.

[Ezra 10:25](#) Of Israel, of the sons of Parosh there were Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah and Benaiah;

[Ezra 10:26](#) and of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth and Elijah;

[Ezra 10:27](#) and of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad and Aziza;

[Ezra 10:28](#) and of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai and Athlai;

[Ezra 10:29](#) and of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch and Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal and Jeremoth;

[Ezra 10:30](#) and of the sons of Pahath-moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui and Manasseh;

[Ezra 10:31](#) and of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

[Ezra 10:32](#) Benjamin, Malluch and Shemariah;

[Ezra 10:33](#) of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh and Shimei;

[Ezra 10:34](#) of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel,

[Ezra 10:35](#) Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,

[Ezra 10:36](#) Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

[Ezra 10:37](#) Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasu,

[Ezra 10:38](#) Bani, Binnui, Shimei,

[Ezra 10:39](#) Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,

[Ezra 10:40](#) Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

[Ezra 10:41](#) Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,

[Ezra 10:42](#) Shallum, Amariah and Joseph.

[Ezra 10:43](#) Of the sons of Nebo there were Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel and Benaiah.

[Ezra 10:44](#) All these had married foreign wives, and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

- Obviously, these separations were difficult, reinforcing the truth that sin has consequences
 - These families suffered as a result of the fathers' sins
 - The wives suffered, the children suffered
 - They endured the pain of separation
 - But it's not unexpected that putting away sin would be painful

- In the end, this moment is a reminder that a people restored without a leader is a people ripe to fall again
 - They needed to be restored in worship
 - They needed to be reminded of the truth of God's Word
 - And now, they need a leader who can build their character and perseverance in the face of temptation to sin
- Step three of restoration is about to begin...