

Ezra 9

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Intermarriage with Neighboring Peoples (Nehemiah 13:23–31)

¹Now when these things were done, the princes drew near unto me, saying: 'The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ²For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands; yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been first in this faithlessness.' ³And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down appalled. ⁴Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of them of the captivity; and I sat appalled until the evening offering.

Ezra's Prayer of Confession

⁵And at the evening offering I arose up from my fasting, even with my garment and my mantle rent; and I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God; ⁶and I said: 'O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our guiltiness is grown up unto the heavens. ⁷Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to spoiling, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. ⁸And now for a little moment grace hath been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in His holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹For we are bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the ruins thereof, and to give us a fence in Judah and in Jerusalem.

¹⁰And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken Thy commandments, ¹¹which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying: The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land through the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, through their abominations, wherewith they have filled it from one end to another with their filthiness. ¹²Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their prosperity for ever; that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. ¹³And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great guilt, seeing that Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a remnant, ¹⁴shall we again break Thy commandments, and make marriages with the peoples that do these abominations? wouldest not Thou be angry with us till Thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape? ¹⁵O LORD, the God of Israel, Thou art righteous; for we are left a remnant that is escaped, as it is this day; behold, we are before Thee in our guiltiness; for none can stand before Thee because of this.'