

The book of



chapters

9 – 10

Day 1

1. Please read these two chapters twice. In Ezra 1-6 we read about the first wave of God's people led by Sheshbazzar who returned to the land and rebuilt God's temple. In Ezra 7-8 we read about the second wave of Israelites, led by Ezra, and their four-month journey to Jerusalem. Now in chapters 9-10, the people are back in the land God had given them. They have not been faithfully following God's laws, and this is a problem that must be dealt with. Let's begin our time in these two chapters with humble hearts, asking God to open our eyes to truth and to help us apply all we see.

2. Ezra 9:1 begins by saying "After these things had been done." What things is he referring to?

What had Ezra, the leaders and the people done when they arrived?

Ezra 8:32

Ezra 8:33

Ezra 8:35

Ezra 8:36

3. As is often the case, momentum has just begun, and a problem arises. This was not the time to shrink back and let things slide. In Ezra we have a wonderful example of strong, godly leadership. Ezra and Moses share many of the same leadership qualities.

- a. They are both humble men who desire to live in obedience to God's plan.
 - b. They both were called by God to lead His people out of bondage.
 - c. They both faced difficult situations and trials along the way.
 - d. They both loved God's people and did their best to lead them well.
- Stop for a few minutes and consider the people around you, how would you describe your feelings for them?

How concerned are you about how you lead?

Pastor, Craig Groeschel, said, "One of the biggest myths of leadership is that you have to be in charge to lead." "Leadership is influence and everyone has influence."



Even if you do not see yourself as a leader. Here is a quote made by the sixth president of the United States, John Quincy Adams. “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

One of the greatest leadership teachers of our day is John Maxwell. John said, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

Take a few minutes to consider who you are leading and where you are leading them. One last quote, “Even the most gifted and well-trained athlete cannot, and will not hit their intended mark when headed slightly off track. So periodically check your course.” Anonymous

Perhaps this is a good opportunity for you to stop and consider the trajectory of your life to make adjustments.

4. The priest and the Levites had been appointed by God to care for the holy things of the temple and to lead the people in the worship of God. Ezra 9:1-2 tells us the leaders came to Ezra to discuss a problem. State the issue brought to Ezra’s attention in these verses.

5. Read Deuteronomy 7:1-4, what instructions were the Israelites given here?

Were the instructions in Deuteronomy 7 difficult to interpret?

6. Read Deuteronomy 7:3-4, why was God so serious about this command?

Was it out of love or selfishness? Take a few minutes to ponder and be specific in your answer.

7. Read Genesis 12:1-3, what had God promised to Abram when he made an everlasting covenant with him?

8. As we study these two chapters, we would do well to keep Genesis 12:1-3 in our thoughts. What was God's intended purpose for choosing Abram and promising him these blessings?

Look at Genesis 12:3 one more time. "...and _____ peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

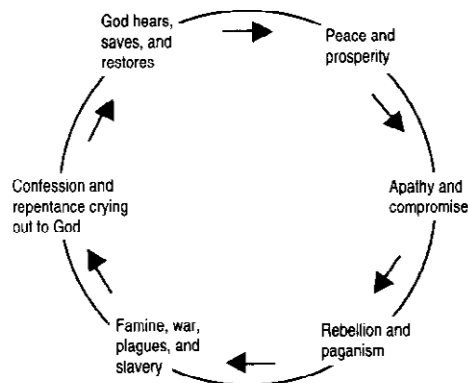
Abram's example to this, obedience to God brings his _____.

Day 2 9. The children of Israel (descendants of Abraham) were called to stand as a beacon of light pointing to God. They would obey God and God would bless them, and others would see the One True God. In your study of God's word would you say the Israelites lived up to the instructions given them?

10. Do you believe the chart below accurately describes the Israelites and their relationship with God?

Do you believe this chart accurately describes believers today?

Our disobedience and slavery may look slightly different today, but the cycle of apathy, rebellion, and bondage to sin are the same. The way back to a right relationship with God has not changed. What is required?





11. The problem brought to Ezra's attention was many of the men, including their spiritual leaders had taken foreign wives. Look at the end of Ezra 9:2, how was their sin described?

This was the polar opposite of what these leaders and officials were supposed to be doing.

Do you see why this would be a serious problem for God's people?

12. Ezra 9:2 NIV translation says, "They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the _____ with the peoples around them." If we check the original Hebrew word in this sentence it is seed. Read Genesis 17:7-9, God had established a covenant with Abram and his _____. What was the time mentioned concerning this covenant in Genesis 17:7? It was an _____ covenant.

13. Since we have seen that the covenant between the children of Israel and their God was an everlasting covenant, they are breaking God's clear command. But it was not only their marriage to these women. What did Ezra 9:1-2 tell us about their actions and lifestyle?

These leaders have forgotten their calling. They have placed other relationships above their relationship with God. We must pay close attention to this example. Sin left unattended leads others to follow. Do you believe these leaders and officials woke up one morning and thought, let's disobey God and find a wife who will corrupt our relationship with Jehovah?

If not, how did they get to the place where they were leading the way in unfaithfulness?

What might we learn from this example?



14. What did Ezra do when he heard this report?

How do you respond when you hear about sin in the family of God?

15. It is important for us to take the time to process bad news. Ezra sat all day until the evening sacrifice.

He took time to talk to God and to listen for his voice and direction. Then he led others to seek God on this matter. In your Bible mark the pronouns used by Ezra in verses 6-7.

Think about your prayer life. When we talk to God about a brother or sister in the faith who has been caught in sin, we must remember that we too are sinners. Sin is the transgression of God's law and His commands. Do you come to the Lord with a humble and repentant heart, seeking God's mercy ?

Day 3

16. In Ezra 9:8-9, we see Ezra praises God for his mercy and kindness to a people who did not deserve his grace. What did he say God, in his loving kindness, had done for his people? Be as specific as possible.

17. Ezra takes time to count the blessings of God. This is always a good practice. List some of God's blessings to your nation. What does focusing on the blessings of God do for us?

18. Do you ever feel a bit overwhelmed by the sin of your nation, as Ezra did in verse 10?

I can almost see Ezra looking up to heaven and begging God, what are we to do with our sin?

19. How had God described the land in Ezra 9:11?

What had these inhabitants done while they lived there?

20. Have you ever stopped to consider the effect sin has on the land where we live?

Are there men today, like the prophets of old, who try to remind God's people of his goodness and holiness?

It is the choice of every person to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution. When you hear the man of God encouraging a time of searching one's own heart, do you pause, pray, and repent?

21. Read Ezra 9:12, do you find this wording difficult to understand?

If these words are not difficult what led the people to commit this grave sin of disobedience?

Satan longs to steal our focus on God, to kill our desire to live pleasing to him, and to destroy every good thing God has for us. Quite often we make his work easy. We take our eyes off our great and merciful God and focus on something of temporal value. Take a minute to consider, are there areas of your life where Satan has distracted you and has gained a foot in the door?

Satan is an unwelcome visitor. What should we do?

22. What had God done for these undeserving and so often rebellious people? (Verse 13)

What is it called when one is guilty and yet punishment has been withheld?

23. Do the words of Ezra's prayer in verses 14-15 sound like your prayers for our nation?

24. What do we learn about God in Ezra 13-15?

Day 4 25. Ezra 10 opens with this humble man of God struggling over what to do. It is heartbreaking. A crowd of Israelites has gathered, what are they doing?

26. A man steps forward to speak, who is it?

How specific is he in his confession?

What specific sin did he confess?

27. Almost like the first ray of light breaking through the clouds after a tremendous thunderstorm, what truth did he share? (Ezra 10:2)



28. Are you able to do this?

Do you know your God well enough that even when all seems lost, you are there to remind others that there is hope?

29. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, these verses speak of a hope specifically in death of a believer. But I believe we can find comfort in many other situations, since we do not grieve “as those who have no hope.” Our hope is in Christ who promised, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” It is true, our hope in Christ is eternal life with him, but it is so much more. It is forgiveness of sins and grace to live out our remaining days knowing we have his Spirit to guide us. Read Matthew 28:18-20, what are Believers to remain focused on and busy doing?

What is our great commission?

30. Shekariah was a very good friend to Ezra. He gave him sound advice and spoke words of affirmation to him. Fill in the blanks. Ezra 10:2-4

“We have been _____ to our God by _____
_____ from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still
_____.

³ Now let us make a _____ before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God.

Let it be done _____ ⁴

Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will _____ you, so take _____ and _____ it.”

31. What do we see Ezra do next? (Verse 6)



32. Ezra called the people together and explained the oath they were about to be called on to make. What was the response of the people?

33. It is one thing to talk about doing hard things, it is another to do them. The men of Judah and Benjamin (these are the two tribes personally involved in this problem) were given three days to come to the assembly in Jerusalem. This was not a long journey as the area of Benjamin and Judah were all around Jerusalem.

What was the two-part penalty for non-compliance?

34. This is a serious matter. Matters like these are best done with transparency. Not only does it give a chance for objections but also explanations to be made. It sets an example that following the commands of God fully are of grave importance. Have you ever learned a lesson by watching someone else receive correction?

How did learning this lesson serve you well through the years?

35. Besides the fact that this is a very sad day for many of these families, what else made this day even more miserable?

36. Verses 10-12 are very difficult verses to read. The question has been posed, “couldn’t these men have chosen to simply take their families and leave?” The answer is yes, they could, but what would that really mean. They would not merely be leaving the land they loved but they would no longer be an Israelite. There are times when we have sinned, left our first love, which then carried tremendous consequences. When we do come to our senses and choose to repent, there still may be some price tags attached that we will not enjoy having to pay. Can you think of a circumstance where something like this has happened?

Please do not use names, but if you have experienced this, then you will know how terribly painful it all can be.

Day 5

37. Because of the weather and the magnitude of the problem, it was going to take several days to go through all the details. What was the plan for dealing with this problem?

38. It is unclear whether the four men (Ezra 10:15) objected to the delay in dealing with this sin immediately or if they opposed dealing with the sin in this way. Whichever was the case it was a wise plan. What was the plan in verses 16-17?

39. Ezra 10:18 mentions Joshua son of Jozadak. We read about this man in Ezra 5:2. What did you learn about this man's character in Ezra 5?

40. Sometimes sharing the responsibility among several persons of character is a better and more efficient way to get a hard task accomplished. Ezra appointed certain family leaders to investigate each case and make a proper decision as to what they needed to do. Are you good at delegating?

What are some of the benefits of sharing the responsibility when doing a hard task?

41. It is important to point out these leaders took the time to hear each individual case. Please take a few minutes to ponder this situation. What might they have been looking for and questioning these foreign wives about?

42. These last two chapters were much harder chapters, but we got through them. What did you learn about the sovereignty of our God in Ezra 9-10?

43. What did you learn about sin?

44. The book of Ezra opened with God's people in captivity. This book describes the return and rebuilding of a temple and a people. Briefly state the events seen in these 10 chapters.

Biblical References

Day 1

Question 2 - Ezra 8:32, 33, 35, 36

³²So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

³³ On the fourth day, in the house of our God, we weighed out the silver and gold and the sacred articles into the hands of Meremoth son of Uriah, the priest.

Eleazar son of Phinehas was with him, and so were the Levites Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui.

³⁵ Then the exiles who had returned from captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs and, as a sin offering, twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD.

³⁶ They also delivered the king's orders to the royal satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, who then gave assistance to the people and to the house of God.

Question 5 - Deuteronomy 7:1-4

When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. ³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

Question 6 - Deuteronomy 7:3-4

³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, ⁴ for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

Question 7 - Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ² “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

Day 2

Question 12 - Genesis 17:7-9

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.” ⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.

Day 4

Question 29 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

Matthew 28:18-20 MSG

¹⁸ Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: “God authorized and commanded me to commission you: ¹⁹ Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.”

Day 5

Question 39 - Ezra 5:2

² Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.