

Ezra's 10 Step Program in confronting sin

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. **Empowered to Connect:** April 10,11 designed to help *parents, ministry leaders, churches, and professionals* better understand how to connect with **adopted & foster** children in order to help them **heal** and become all that God desires for them to be.

II. Slide2 Intro: *Ezra's 10 Step Program* in confronting sin

- A. **Recap:** The 2nd group made it back to Jerusalem, from captivity in Babylon. 8:31,32
- B. We are going to look at the steps in **confronting sin** (ch.9) & its **results** (ch.10).
- C. **What do you do** if you know of a Christian friend who is living in sin? How do you help them? How do I get out of a sin myself? *Ezra will lead us through steps that will help us.*
- D. This evening we are going to talk about racial/mixed marriages.
1. **Before we do...let's review a few reminders.** God was "only" concerned with **the Jews** intermarrying...& **that**...only for **a time**. (pre-Messiah)

III. Slide3 **A MESS MADE OF MIXED MARRIAGES (9:1-4)**

A. (1a) Their Sin Uncovered

1. Ezra's **Leaders** took oversight of the flock
 - a) **Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**

B. (1b,2a) Their Sin?

1. Lack of Separation
2. **What was the deal of the holy seed getting mixed?**
 - a) How could Messiah be born? (nationality/Jew, tribe/Judah, ancestry/son of David)
 - (1) Lev.19:19 **You shall not sow your field with mixed seed.**
3. **Unequally yoked** – they had taken **pagan wives**.
 - a) (NLT) **Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? 16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.**

C. (2b) **Their Sins depth**

1. The leaders & rulers had even compromised in this sin.
2. **Leaders**...that's for sure...**but** leading in the *wrong direction*.

a) These guys **led** the way, they **paved** the path of sin. *Discipleship at its finest!*

D. *Ezra's response is a good model for us to follow when confronting sin:*

1. **Ezra's 10 Step Program**...in confronting sin.

E. **Slide4 Step #1 – He Grieved** (3a)

1. He let it affect him personally.
2. **“The beard** is held in high respect and greatly valued in the East: The possessor considers it as his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it; and nothing can be more secure than such a pledge; for its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life. The beard was never cut off but in **mourning**, or as a sign of **slavery**.” (TSK)¹

a) 2 Sam.10:4 **Therefore Hanun** (king of Ammon) **took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards**, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks (mini-skirts), **and sent them away.**

b) Is.50:6,7 **I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.**

F. **Slide5a Step #2 – He Sat** (3b,4)

1. He sat, waited, & meditated before responding
2. I believe he was seeking the lord on what to do
3. We'll see he doesn't strike out against them in anger, **but** instead **sits...until Slide5b completely broken.**
4. Note the people respond to this intense grief of soul
 - a) **What do you think would be the outcome if he yelled & screamed at them?**
 - b) **Is this the secret of winning our children, or our backslidden friends, from the sin that entrapped them?**
5. **Application:** *Sit in silence. Hard, but just sit. Sit, wait, meditate.*

IV. **Slide6 EZRA'S PRAYER OF CONFESSION (9:5-15)**

¹ Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. Notes on 2 Sam.10:4.

A. **Slide7 Step #3 – He Fasted** (5a)

1. ½ day fast.

B. **Slide8 Step #4 – He Prayed** (5b)

1. He **physically** humbled himself before God (on knees/spread out hands).
2. **Before the people** vs.4
3. **Application:** *humble yourself before God. Change body position.*

C. **Slide9 Step #5 – He Confessed** (6-15)

1. He confessed...His **Shame & Humility** (6a)

- a) Mark Twain once said, *Man is the only animal that **blushes**, and the only animal that **needs to**. Does **anything** make us **blush** anymore?*

2. He confessed...**He's personally not excluded** from their sin (6b)

- a) Rather than strike out angrily at those who had sinned, Ezra identified **himself** with the sinners.
- b) *Have you ever fit into the category of the sin you are so disgusted with?*
- c) *Better yet, do you **expand** the category until you fit in it? That promotes humility.*

3. He confessed...The **Depth** of their sin (6c) [2 pictures]

- a) They were swimming in a sea of **sin...& drowning**.
- b) Their **guilt** was as high as *Jack's Bean stock*.

(1) Rev.18:5 *re: Babylon. For her **sins** have **reached to heaven**, and God **has remembered her iniquities**.*

4. He confessed...The **Reason** for their former captivity (7)

5. He confessed...The **Grace** shown to them in being freed (8)

- a) They didn't appreciate the Grace that was shown them.
- b) **Peg** – figurative. It inferred *to hang any kind of domestic utensils upon it.*

(1) Is.22:23 *I will fasten him (Eliakim) as a peg in a secure place, And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.*

(2) *What area of your life are you a secure peg for others?*

- (a) Friends can trust you won't **gossip** about their situation.
- (b) Friends can trust you'll be **straight/honest/forthright** w/them.
- (c) Friends can trust you will **genuinely care** about their situation.
- (d) *(fill in the blank)* Friends lean on me because _____.

6. He confessed...**Gods Mercy** that was shown (9)

- a) **Revive** (us) – **Repair** (temple) – **Rebuild** (ruins/wall)

7. He confessed...**Their Sin identified**...intermarriage w/pagans (10-12)
 - a) Never settle for the temporary peace or prosperity the world has to offer
8. He confessed...**Gods Mercy** that was shown (13)
 - a) **Anybody disagree with this statement? Its for 2 reasons:**
 - (1) You do not the understand **the Holiness of God**
 - (2) You do not understand **the seriousness of sin**
 - b) **Do you view sin from God's standpoint?** What was **His cost?** What was **yours?**
9. He confessed...understanding of **deserved captivity** again (14)
 - a) This time with no escape
- 10.He confessed...**Gods Righteousness** (15)
 - a) "No man can really know the righteousness of God, & in its light see sin, & remain quiet & calculating & unmoved."²
 - b) Yet now we **can** stand before Him..**How?**
 - c) **Rom.14:4** Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be **made to stand**, for **God is able to make him stand.**
- 11.**Application:** *confess your sin. Think about His rt & the seriousness of your sin.*

V. Slide10 **SHECHANIAH'S CHALLENGE (10:1-4)**

A. Slide11 Step #6 – He Listens (1-4)

1. Shechaniah **admits** their sin (2a). Shechaniah means, *dweller in Jehovah or Inhabited of the Lord. One of the Lord's people w/whom He is pleased to dwell.*
 - a) (similar to) *SheKIniah* (Chaldee word meaning *resting place*) – **Not** found in the bible, **but** Jews used this term later to describe, *the visible majesty of the divine presence.*
2. Shechaniah gives **hope** in spite of their sin. (2b)
 - a) When things look dark, there is always a ray of hope.
 - b) Every night in our sky is Gods reminder of that great truth. (stars)
3. Shechaniah challenges them to **covenant** with God. (3)
4. Shechaniah challenges them to **face their responsibility.** (4)
 - a) *Shech* was an honest man, a man of hope, an encourager, a man who loved the law.

VI. Slide12 **PUBLIC OATH (10:5-17)**

² G.Cambell Morgan; pg.189

- A. **Slide13 Step #7 – He makes a Proclamation** (5-9)
- B. **Slide14 Step #8 – He calls them to public repentance** (10-12)
- C. **Slide15 Step #9 – He questions them** (13-17)
 - 1. December 20, 457bc – cold & heavy rain season (13)
 - 2. Let's deal with the leaders 1st...then they can help.
 - 3. Not everyone agreed to obey (15)
 - a) The bibles so honest (no Cinderella story)
 - 4. No hearsay, 1 on 1 investigation. (16,17)
 - a) It took them from **December to April** to do this. All marriages were annulled.
 - b) 17 priests, 10 Levites, 87 other men were found guilty of marrying heathen wives.
 - c) **When the spiritual leaders are backslidden what can we expect of the rest of the people?**
- D. **Spiritual** building is just like the **physical** building projects...they take time,...they are a process.
 - 1. We actually won't be "complete" until we reach heaven.
 - 2. Meanwhile people are watching your spiritual building going up.

VII. **Slide16 THEIR SIN PUT AWAY (10:18-44)**

- A. **Slide17a Step #10 – Follow Up** (18-44)
 - 1. Those who did confess their sins publicly, offered a sacrifice, & put away their pagan wives & children.
 - a) This experience was **painful** for them.
 - b) It was the only way to keep the **nation pure**. [**"cut it off"..."pluck it out"..."cast it far from you"**]
 - c) There is **no easy way** to deal with sin...just shake it into the fire.
 - 2. **Slide17b Is there any sin you need to eradicate?**
 - 3. **Do you know how to exterminate it?**
 - 4. **Do you need accountability to make sure you will follow through w/it?**
 - 5. **When will you deal with it?**
- B. **How'd you like your name on this list?**
 - 1. I thought He'd remember our sin no more?
 - 2. This was a consequence here...**but** no list there.

C. **End** - Only one thing left...**Zerubbabel** rebuilt the **Temple**, **Ezra** rebuilt the **People**, now it is time to rebuilt the **Wall**.

1. The Lord chooses for his contractor, a Jew serving in the court of Artaxerxes. His name...**Nehemiah**.
2. He will lead the 3rd Holy Land trip. [**Departure:** Babylon. **Destination:** Jerusalem. **Purpose of trip:** Construction work-party on the wall around Jerusalem]