

Ezra Chapter 9

Ezra on Confession

Ezra “returned” to Judea to teach God’s Law

6 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and **he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses**, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him. ... 10 For **Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.** (Ezra 7:6, 10 NASB)

Ezra returned with Artaxerxes' financing and commission

25 "You, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, *appoint magistrates and judges that they may judge all the people who are in the province beyond the River, even all those who know the laws of your God; and you may teach anyone who is ignorant of them.* 26 "Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of goods or for imprisonment." (Ezra 7:25-26 NASB)

Ezra refused to return without Levites

15 Now I assembled them at the river that runs to Ahava, where we camped for three days; and when I observed the people and the priests, I did not find any Levites there. 16 So I sent for...20...all of them designated by name. (Ezra 8:15-16, 20 NASB)

Ezra prayed for God's protection and handled assets wisely

21 Then *I proclaimed a fast* there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God *to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions.* ... 23 So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty. ... 32 Thus we came to Jerusalem and remained there three days. ... 34 *Everything was numbered and weighed, and all the weight was recorded at that time.* (Ezra 8:21, 23, 32, 34 NASB)

John on confession

*9 If we **confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NASB)*

- This was written to saved people
- The context is *fellowship* with God (and each other)

The context of 1 John 1:9 is *fellowship with God* (and each other)

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3 NASB)

That fellowship is interrupted by two things:

- 1) Our *sin*
- 2) Our *sayings*

Fellowship is interrupted by our sin

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:6-10 NASB)

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 - *homou*: (adverb) the same; together
 - *logos*: (noun) something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; derived from the verb *legō*
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 - *legō*: to “lay” forth, related in words (translated **“say,”** “speak,” “call,” “tell”)
- **confess** = “to say the same thing”
- I.e., to agree with what God says about us

Fellowship is restored not so much by our ceasing to sin as by our “sayings” alone—our heartfelt and open agreement with God about both our sin problem and our individual sins

Ezra's approach to confession

- 1) Expression of Grief
- 2) Expression of Shame
- 3) Confession of the General and
Acknowledgment of God's Grace
- 4) Confession of the Specific and
Acknowledgment of God's Justice

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

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. 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. (Ezra 9:3-4 NASB)

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

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; 6 and I said, "O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God... (Ezra 9:5-6a NASB)

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

6 ...for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. 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 9:6b-7 NASB)

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

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. 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 9:8-9 NASB)

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

*10 "Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For
we have forsaken Your commandments, ... (Ezra
9:10-14 NASB)*

Expression of Grief

Expression of Shame

Confession of the General and Acknowledgment of God's Grace

Confession of the Specific and Acknowledgment of God's Justice

*"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.**" (Ezra 9:15 NASB)*

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