

Next Week's Prayers



"...The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Jas. 5:16

▶ Prayer Exercise

Are there any specific sins you need to acknowledge, confess and for which you need to seek God's forgiveness?

If so, you must show God that your repentance is serious. This always calls for leaving the sin.

Make repentance, confession and forgiveness the focus of your prayers this week.



DEVELOPING STUDENTS
OF THE BIBLE

Sunday Morning Bible Class



▶ 40 Great Prayers of the Bible

Farmerville
Church of Christ

Ezra's Prayer for the Nation's Sin
Ezra 9:3 – 10:4

Prayer Study #24

Study Series by Bill Denton, D.Min.

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Farmerville Church of Christ
306 E. Franklin Street
Farmerville, LA. 71241

Phone: 318-368-8666
Email: rayy@bayou.com

Ezra's Prayer for the Nation's Sin

Ezra 9:3 – 10:4

Ezra was one of a handful of important leaders who brought the exiled Israelites back to Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity.

Ezra was both a scribe and a member of the priestly tribe, a descendant of Eleazar.

Ezra was important, not only for his practical leadership, but also in rebuilding the temple. But more importantly, it was his moral leadership that stands out. There came a time when it was discovered that many of the people and priests maintained marriages with foreign wives, something the Law prohibited. It demanded attention to the moral condition overall.

What Can We Learn?

1. The prayer was precipitated by the report of moral failure on the part of the people. What made this important was the fact that the nation was in the middle of restoration and reform.
2. Ezra's response may seem exaggerated, but as a leader, his response set the tone for the way others would respond to national sin.
3. After tearing his clothes and pulling hair from his head and beard, Ezra sat appalled. Evidently he sat this way for some time (few to several hours?).
4. Note several features of the prayer:
 - Shame and embarrassment
 - Overwhelming sense of sin
 - Awareness of past judgment
 - Awareness of God's grace
 - Open confession of sin
 - Admission of rebellion
 - Awareness of possible loss of blessing
5. This is a prayer of repentance.

Questions to Ponder

1. See Ex. 34:12-16 and Deut. 7:3-5. How serious was the problem of intermarriage for Israel?
2. Do you think this problem was unknown to Ezra, overlooked, or did he only recently come to understand that intermarriage was sinful?
3. If intermarriage to spouses from pagan nations was wrong, how do we explain some rather significant ones such as: Moses married a Cushite woman (Ethiopian); Salmon married Rahab of Jericho; Boaz married Ruth the Moabite?
4. Some suggest that while it appears that God prohibited "interracial" marriages, that God's real concern was "Inter-religious" marriages. What do you think about this explanation?
5. What was Ezra's main concern with regard to this problem of intermarriage with foreign women?
6. What modern-day application(s) do you think we can make?

