
EZRA 10: 1 Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before God's house, there was gathered together to him out of Israel a very great assembly of men and women and children; for the people wept very bitterly.

The people are greatly afflicted by Ezra's prayer, Ezr 10:1. Shechaniah proposes that all who have taken strange wives should put them away, and the children they had by them; and make a covenant to serve God, Ezr 10:2-4. Ezra is encouraged; and make a proclamation to collect the people, to find who had transgressed, Ezr 10:5-8. They come together on the twentieth day of the ninth month, Ezr 10:9. Ezra exhorts them to put away their strange wives, Ezr 10:10. The people agree to it, and require time, Ezr 10:11-14. This being granted, the business is completed by the first of the first month, Ezr 10:15-17. Some of the priests had taken strange wives; their names, and the names of all who were in the same trespass, vv. 18-44.

Verse 1

The people wept very sore - They were deeply affected at the thought of God's displeasure, which they justly feared was about to light upon them, because of their transgressions.

EZRA 10: 2 Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have married foreign women of the peoples of the land. Yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing.

Verse 2

Shechaniah the son of Jehiel - He speaks here in the name of the people, not acknowledging himself culpable, for he is not in the following list. It is in the same form of speech with that in James, Jam 3:9. With the tongue curse we men. He seems to have been a chief man among the people; and Ezra, at present, stood in need of his influence and support.

Yet now there is hope in Israel - מִקְוֵה mikveh, expectation, of pardon; for the people were convinced of the evil, and were deeply penitent: hence it is said, Ezr 10:1, that they wept sore.

EZRA 10: 3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God. Let it be done according to the law.

Verse 3

Let us make a covenant - נִכְרַת בְּרִית nichrath berith, let us cut or divide the covenant sacrifice. See the notes on Gen 15:10.

EZRA 10: 4 Arise; for the matter belongs to you, and we are with you. Be courageous, and do it."

Verse 4

Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee - By the decree of Artaxerxes, he was authorized to do everything that the law of God required: see Ezr 7:23-28. And all officers were commanded to be aiding and assisting; hence Shechaniah says, We are with you.

EZRA 10: 5 Then Ezra arose, and made the chiefs of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they would do according to this word. So they swore.

Verse 5

And they swore - The thing was evidently contrary to the law of God; and now he bound them by an oath to rectify the abuse.

EZRA 10: 6 Then Ezra rose up from before God's house, and went into the room of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came there, he ate no bread, nor drank water; for he mourned because of their trespass of the captivity.

Verse 6

Johanan the son of Eliashib - Eliashib was high priest, and was succeeded in that office by his son Joiada, Neh 12:10. Probably Johanan here is the same as Jonathan in Nehemiah, who was the son of Joiada, and grandson of Eliashib. Some suppose that Johanan and Joiada were two names for the same person.

EZRA 10: 7 They made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together to Jerusalem;

EZRA 10: 8 and that whoever didn't come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the assembly of the captivity.

Verse 8

All his substance should be forfeited - To the use of the temple.

So the Septuagint understood the place: Αναθεματισθησεται πασα ἡ ὑπαρξις αυτου, "All his substance shall be devoted to a holy use."

Himself separated - Excommunicated from the Church of God, and exiled from Israel.

EZRA 10: 9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together to Jerusalem within the three days; it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month: and all the people sat in the broad place before God's house, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain.

Verse 9

Ninth month - Answering to a part of our December.

Trembling because of - the great rain - Απο του χειμωνος, Because of the winter, Septuagint; it was now December, the coldest and most rainy part of the year in Palestine.

EZRA 10: 10 Ezra the priest stood up, and said to them, "You have trespassed, and have married foreign women, to increase the guilt of Israel.

EZRA 10: 11 Now therefore make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his pleasure; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign women."

Verse 11

Make confession - Acknowledge your sins before God, with deep compunction of heart, and the fullest resolution to forsake them.

EZRA 10: 12 Then all the assembly answered with a loud voice, "As you have said concerning us, so must we do.

Verse 12

As thou hast said, so must we do - They all resolved to do what Ezra then commanded, they did put away their wives, even those by whom they had children; Ezr 10:44 : this was a great hardship on the women and children. Though by the Jewish laws such marriages were null and void, yet as the women they had taken did not know these laws, their case was deplorable. However, we may take it for granted that each of them received a portion according to the circumstances of their husbands, and that they and their children were not turned away desolate, but had such a provision as their necessities required. Humanity must have dictated this, and no law of God is contrary to humanity. After all, there is some room to doubt whether they did put them finally away, for several years after Nehemiah found Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; Neh 13:23. And if these were not the same women, we find that the same offense was continued.

EZRA 10: 13 But the people are many, and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand outside; neither is this a work of one day or two; for we have greatly transgressed in this matter.

EZRA 10: 14 Let now our princes be appointed for all the assembly, and let all those who are in our cities who have married foreign women come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and its judges, until the fierce wrath of our God be turned from us, until this matter is resolved."

EZRA 10: 15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikvah stood up against this; and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

EZRA 10: 16 The children of the captivity did so. Ezra the priest, with certain heads of fathers' households, after their fathers' houses, and all of them by their names, were set apart; and they sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

EZRA 10: 17 They made an end with all the men who had married foreign women by the first day of the first month.

Verse 17

The first day of the first month - So they were three whole months in examining into this affair, and making those separations which the law required.

EZRA 10: 18 Among the sons of the priests there were found who had married foreign women: of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brothers, Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

EZRA 10: 19 They gave their hand that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their guilt.

Verse 19

They gave their hands - They bound themselves in the most solemn manner to do as the rest of the delinquents had done; and they made all acknowledgment of their iniquity to God by offering each a ram for a trespass-offering.

EZRA 10: 20 Of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

EZRA 10: 21 Of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah.

EZRA 10: 22 Of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasa.

EZRA 10: 23 Of the Levites: Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah (the same is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

EZRA 10: 24 Of the singers: Eliashib. Of the porters: Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

EZRA 10: 25 Of Israel: Of the sons of Parosh: Ramiah, and Izziah, and Malchijah, and Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

Verse 25

Moreover of Israel - That is, as Calmet observes, simple Israelites, to distinguish them from the priests, Levites, and singers, mentioned in Ezr 10:18, Ezr 10:23, Ezr 10:24.

EZRA 10: 26 Of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Elijah.

EZRA 10: 27 Of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

EZRA 10: 28 Of the sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, Athlai.

EZRA 10: 29 Of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, Jeremoth.

EZRA 10: 30 Of the sons of Pahathmoab: Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

EZRA 10: 31 Of the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

EZRA 10: 32 Benjamin, Malluch, Shemariah.

EZRA 10: 33 Of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, Shimei.

EZRA 10: 34 Of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

EZRA 10: 35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Cheluhi,

EZRA 10: 36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

EZRA 10: 37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu,

EZRA 10: 38 and Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

EZRA 10: 39 and Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

EZRA 10: 40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

EZRA 10: 41 Azarel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

EZRA 10: 42 Shallum, Amariah, Joseph.

EZRA 10: 43 Of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Iddo, and Joel, Benaiah.

EZRA 10: 44 All these had taken foreign wives; and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

Verse 44

Some of them had wives by whom they had children - This observation was probably intended to show that only a few of them had children; but it shows also how rigorously the law was put in execution.

According to a passage in Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, Ezra offered a paschal lamb on this occasion, and addressed the people thus: "And Ezra said to the people, This passover is our Savior and our Refuge; and if ye will be persuaded of it, and let it enter into your hearts, that we are to humble ourselves to him in a sign, and afterwards shall believe in him, this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the Lord of Hosts: but if ye will not believe in him, nor hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles." - Dial. cum Tryphone, sec. 72.

This passage, Justin says, the Jews, through their enmity to Christ, blotted out of the book of Ezra. He charges them with cancelling several other places through the same spirit of enmity and opposition.

In the Hebrew text this and the following book make but one, though sometimes Nehemiah is distinguished as the second book of Esdras. In the Masoretic enumeration of sections, etc., both books are conjoined. This may be seen at the end of Nehemiah. I can add nothing of importance to the character of Ezra, which has already been given so much in detail in the introduction to this book.

Corrected, March, 1828. - A. Clarke.