### Ezra

## Chapter 9

1Well after that, the leaders came to me and pointed out that we hadn’t yet separated the people of IsraEl (or even the Priests and Levites) from the peoples of the land and the disgusting things of the CanaAnites, Hittites, Pherezites, Jebusites, AmMonites, MoAbites, Moserites, and Amorites.  
  
2For [many] had taken these people’s daughters [as wives] for themselves and for their sons! So, the offspring of what is holy had become mixed with the peoples of the land… And even the governors and generals had become involved in this breach-of-contract.  
  
3Well when I heard about this, I ripped my clothes and underwear, and I was so furious that I ripped hair from my head and beard!  
  
Then I had to sit down to calm myself.  
  
4And all those who had gathered around me started trembling because of what the God of IsraEl had said about a breach-of-contract in the resettlement [of our people].  
  
So I just sat there calming myself until [it came time for] the evening sacrifice... 5Then I got up and I felt ashamed over ripping my clothes and underwear.  
  
So, I fell to my knees and spread my arms towards my God Jehovah, 6and I said:  
  
 ‘Lord, I’m so ashamed… I’m too ashamed to stand up and face You, O my God, because we’re in over our heads with lawbreaking, and our errors are so bad that they’ve reached into the heavens!  
  
 7‘For from the time of our ancestors down to this day, we’ve been guilty of great sins. And it’s because of our lawbreaking that our kings, our Priests, and [our people] were handed over to the kings of the nations to be killed with swords and carried off into captivity…  
  
 ‘Yes we were seized, and our faces have been shamed to this day.  
  
 8‘Now, O Jehovah our God,  
  
 ‘You’ve been patient with us and You’ve allowed us to return [to our land] so that we could be taught to rely on Your Holy Place, to open our eyes, and to put a little life into our service [to You].  
  
 9‘And because we’re Your servants and we haven’t abandoned our service to our God, the kings of Persia have been merciful to us and given life to us, so that we could return to our deserted [homes] and rebuild the Temple of our God, and to fence Judah and JeruSalem off [from the surrounding nations].  
  
 10‘So, what can we say to our God after this?  
  
 ‘For we’ve abandoned the Commandments 11that You gave to us through the hands of Your servants the Prophets when You said:  
  
 ‘The land that you’re returning to as its heirs is a land in motion... For the people who once inhabited that land have been removed from it because of the disgusting things and the filth that spilled from their mouths.  
  
 12‘Therefore, you must not give your daughters to them or take their daughters for your sons… Nor should you expect peace with them throughout the ages!  
  
 ‘So now, to grow stronger, you must eat the good [produce] from this land, which you’ll share with your sons throughout the ages!’  
  
 13‘Then after all of these things that happened to us because of our own wickedness and great errors, and after You (our God) [forgave] us for our lawless actions and delivered us, 14we still turned around and disregarded Your commandments by creating alliances with the people of these lands through marriages.  
  
 ‘But, please don’t become angry with us and destroy us, so that none of us remain!  
  
 15‘O Jehovah, the God of IsraEl,  
  
 ‘You are righteous, for you’ve preserved us down to this day.  
  
 ‘And look:  
  
 ‘Here we stand before You in our errors… And we know that no one can stand before You in such a condition.’