

# Painful Purity

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**NOW WHILE EZRA WAS PRAYING  
AND MAKING CONFESSION, WEEPING  
AND PROSTRATING HIMSELF BEFORE  
THE HOUSE OF GOD, A VERY LARGE  
ASSEMBLY, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN,  
GATHERED TO HIM FROM ISRAEL; FOR  
THE PEOPLE WEPT BITTERLY.**

**~EZRA 10:1 (NASB)**

## **1) True Repentance Inspires Revival**

- A) When Ezra is confronted with Israel's sin of intermarriage with people who were from "outside of the covenant" he:
  - i) Confesses the sin of the people as his own (Ezra 9:5-7).
  - ii) Accepts God's discipline as good and righteous (9:7).
  - iii) Recognizes that salvation and forgiveness for sin is God's to provide, not Ezra's to demand (9:8-9).
  - iv) Pleads with God for forgiveness (9:10-15).
  - v) Continually mourns the loss of relationship with God, not "getting over it" until resolution is reached (10:1).
  
- B) Ezra's response to sin inspires his fellow Israelites (10:2) to both agree with Ezra's confession and make a determined decision for purity, a revival within the community.

## 2) A Shocking Solution Toward A Painful Purity

- A) Shecaniah, a leader who states his agreement with Ezra (10:2), proposes a renewal of the broken covenant with God by "putting away" the foreign wives and their children (10:3).
- B) The renewal of the covenant "according to the Law" (10:3) is both concerned with renewal, and concerned with the removal of evil amongst the people.
- C) Summarizing this process which Ezra is progressing through reveals that **true repentance**:
  - i) **Is initiated by God through revelation.** By Scripture (Ezra's knowledge of God's Word), through proclamation (Ezra's repentant call to purity), and through the Spirit of God (conviction, cf. John 16:8).
  - ii) **Conviction produces confession.** Confession doesn't demand forgiveness, but does ask for God's mercy and forgiveness. Confession embraces repentance.
  - iii) **Forgiveness for sin brings renewal.** Renewal is a restoration of a right relationship with God and others. Where there is no restoration, there has not been renewal (cf. Matthew 6:14-15).
  - iv) **Renewal actively removes evil.** When God initiates forgiveness which results in confession and forgiveness, it always results in the removal of sin. While a process, the result of repentance is always increased holiness.
- D) Purity seldom comes without the painful process removing sin from one's life as a response to God's gracious and loving forgiveness. Purity is normally quite painful.
- E) We should never be fooled into thinking "God does not care" (cf. Luke 17:25ff). The seriousness of God's grace is such that it **requires** an obedient response of holy living!