

- B) When confronted by the sin of the people, Ezra repents before God, recognizing that the return from exile is an indication of God's temporary mercy (Ezra 9:8).
- C) Ezra's repentance inspires the Israelites toward both renewal and a removal of evil from the community. This included the shocking solution of "putting away" all of the foreign wives and children from intermarriage (10:3).

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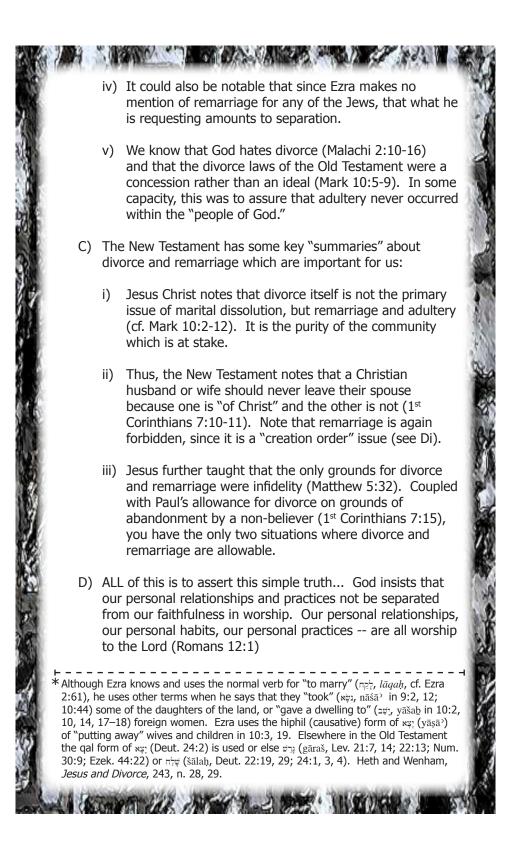
D) While the idea appears to come from Shecaniah (10:2-3), in fact he affirms that Ezra was its source, and as such, Ezra should have the confidence to carry out the task (10:4).

E) Inspired by the support, Ezra finds the "courage to act" and calls on the leaders to support the action against foreign wives and their children (10:5). Ezra continues to fast and pray in mourning for the resolution of this problem (10:6).

2) Excursus On Ezra's Plan & Biblical Divorce

- A) Many of the returnees had divorced their "covenant" wives in favor of marrying the women who were in the land (Malachi 2:10-16). Ezra's reforms may have been a "correction" of this problem in the community.
- B) It is notable that Ezra never asks the people to "divorce" their foreign wives. This could be for one or more of several reasons:
 - i) As noted in 2A, we are certain that some men were married to Jewish wives but had treacherously divorced them, and re-married foreign wives. This was clearly against God's plan (cf. Mark 10:11-12).
 - ii) The "bill of divorce" provided in Deuteronomy 24:1ff was clearly a community guideline for the <u>Jews</u>. Marrying foreign women was out of the question, it was clearly prohibited (Deuteronomy 7:1-6). Thus, from Ezra's perspective, the unions were illegal in the first place.
 - iii) It is notable, despite significant variations in English translations, that Ezra never calls the unions with foreign wives marriages, nor does he ask for divorces.* He doesn't "honor" the unions by addressing them as though they were a marriage "covenant."

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THE RETURN FROM EXILE	EVENTS OF THE RETURN	 Burnt offerings were made. Durnt offerings were made. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated. The rebuilding of the temple was begun. Persian ruler ordered re- building to be ceased. Darius, King of Persia, ordered rebuilding to be re- sumed in 520 B.C. Temple was completed and dedicated in 516 B.C. 	Men of Israel intermarried with foreign women.	 (1) Rebuilding of wall of Jerusalem was opposed by Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab. (2) Rebuilding of wall was completed in 52 days. (3) Walls were dedicated. (4) Ezra read the Book of the Law to the poople. (5) Nehemiah initiated reforms.
	EXTENT OF THE RETURN	 Anyone who want- ed to return could go. The temple in Jerusalem was to be rebuilt. Royal treasury (3) Royal treasury provided funding of the temple rebuilding. Gold and silver worship articles taken from temple by Nebuchadnezzar were returned. 	 Anyone who want- ed to return could go. Royal treasury provided funding. Jewish civil magistrates and judges were allowed. 	Rebuilding of Jerusalem was allowed.
	PERSIAN RULER	Cyrus	Artaxerxes Longimanus	Artaxerxes Longimanus
	JEWISH LEADER	Zerubbabel Jeshua	Ezra	Nehemiah
	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	Ezra 1–6	Ezra 7–10	Nehemiah 1-13
	DATE	0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0. 0	458 B.C.	444 B.C.
	PHASE	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD