

EZRA: STARTING OVER WELL AFTER GROUP FAILURE
Part IX: Thriving Through Aligning Our LIVES At ALL COSTS With Scripture
(Ezra 10:2-44)

I. Introduction

- A. It is one thing to repent of our sins as we come under conviction by God that we have violated His Word. It is quite another thing, however, to **adjust** our *lives* in accord with His Word.
- B. However, the **BLESSING** of heeding the Lord occurs only when we **unconditionally align** our lives with Scripture, and this fact is illustrated clearly in Ezra 10:2-44 as follows:

II. Thriving Through Aligning Our LIVES At ALL COSTS With Scripture, Ezra 10:2-44.

- A. When the returned exiles faced their sin of unbiblical mixed marriages, they focused on the **hope of restoration** were they to **repent completely**:
 - 1. After the spiritual leader and scribe, Ezra had led the nation into an **attitude** of repentance, Shechaniah, a spokesman for the wrongdoers who had married Biblically forbidden partners admitted to Ezra a great wrong had occurred, but that there was **hope** for God's blessing in the **future**, Ezra 10:2.
 - 2. This **hope** was most likely based on the Deuteronomy 30:8-10 divine promise that **were** Israel to **repent** wholeheartedly following God's discipline, God would supply her livelihood blessings once again, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, footnote to Ezra 10:2.
- B. Accordingly, they offered to **align** their **lives** at **great personal PRICE** to heed the Lord:
 - 1. Spokesman Shechaniah suggested the exiles make a covenant before God to put away their foreign wives and children born by them in keeping with the Mosaic Law for the Hebrews, Ezra 10:3.
 - 2. He also encouraged Ezra to take the lead in such a big and costly step for the wrongdoers, that they as a people would support his lead in his doing so, Ezra 10:4.
- C. Ezra then took an oath from the people present that they would meet in three days to arrange for the family realignments to occur under pain of excommunication for not doing so, Ezra 10:5-8.
- D. Well, the people all gathered together within three days, and the sign of God's **blessing** was already abundantly present, for the people trembled in the open court of the temple partly from fear of the Lord, but partly from the **pouring rain**, Ezra 10:9. The latter was a direct evidence of divine blessing under the Mosaic Covenant according to Deuteronomy 28:12, so **God** was **very PLEASED** at this demonstration of total repentance as it applied to a change in the people's **LIVES** at great emotional and mental **PAIN!**
- E. As Ezra addressed the crowd, pointing to their sin of mixed marriages, the people unitedly with a loud voice admitted their sin, and agreed to put away their foreign wives and the children by them, 10:10-12.
- F. **However, due to the drenching rain and great numbers of people who had to take this step, the people requested an ORDERLY program under delegated leadership to accomplish these family adjustments, Ezra 10:13-14.**
- G. As it happened, only a few men refused to comply in full with the plan, but the vast majority of the exiles submitted to this orderly but very emotionally and mentally difficult realignment of their families to obey of the Word of God, Ezra 10:15, 16. In fact, the whole nation had the matter completely settled in two months and ten days, the time needed to make the practical record changes for the sake of keeping the chronological records straight for the thousands of people involved, Ezra 10:16-17, 18-44.

Lesson: In **HOPE** of God's **BLESSING**, the people of Judah **REALIGNED** their **FAMILY LIVES** at **GREAT PRICE** in terms of emotional and mental pain. In **DOING** so, they **SUBMITTED** to the **LEADERSHIP** of God's spiritual human overseer in Ezra, and to his **DELEGATED** leadership in the officials who helped him in the implementation of the realignments of the families. Thus, God's **BLESSING** became **ABUNDANTLY** evident to them as a **PEOPLE!**

Application: God's **BLESSING** to a **GROUP** of His people, be they a family, a marriage, a church, a business or other kind of institution, comes when (1) they **HOPE** for God's **BLESSING** for **FULL** obedience to His Word, a hope that leads to (2) **VERBAL** and then (3) **LIFESTYLE** repentance (4) at **ALL** costs, even if they are **GREAT**, (5) an obedience that is in accord with full Biblical submission to the Biblical leadership of godly leaders arranged by God to lead them in the institution so involved.