

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Ezra: Encouraging God's People Unto Spiritual Renewal

VIII. Overcoming Pressures To Compromise The Truth

(Ezra 9:1-10:8)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Following the January 6 U. S. Capitol riot, we have faced increased, unjust pressures to compromise the truth:

(1) A week ago, one of our attenders became alarmed over a report he was emailed on remarks by a journalist about President Trump's supporters, and he forwarded it to me. I researched the matter only to learn that "Washington Post columnist and MSNBC contributor Eugene Robinson" has "referred to President Donald Trump's supporters as 'members of a cult,'" that "(t)here are millions of Americans, almost all white, almost all Republicans, who somehow need to be deprogrammed." (Trent Baker, "WaPo's Robinson: Trump Supporters 'Need To Be Deprogrammed,'" January 12, 2021; breitbart.com) In addition, Public Broadcasting Service lawyer "Michael Beller" was caught on tape saying, "We go for all the Republican voters, Homeland Security will take their children away and we'll put them into reeducation camps." (Megan Fox, "PBS Lawyer Caught on Tape Saying Trump Supporters' Kids Should Be Taken Away And Thrown In Camps," January 13, 2021; pjmedia.com) The PBS Press Room later tweeted that Beller "no longer works for PBS," but one wonders why a taxpayer-subsidized service would hire such an extremist!

(2) First, calling to deprogram all who voted for Mr. Trump, many of whom were conservative Christians, due to the Capitol riot, is unjust on several counts: (a) Christine Flowers' column, "Capitol riot wasn't about race" (Republican-American, January 16, 2021, p. 8A) noted, "After the Jan. 6 assault on the Capitol . . . some . . . are trying to suggest liberals don't cause the type of damage, nor do they storm government entities, the way conservative 'cultists' do." However, at "the 2018 nomination of Brett M. Kavanaugh to the U. S. Supreme Court . . . crazed women (and some men) . . . tried to charge the Senate floor . . . to deprive a duly nominated, eminently qualified nominee of his legitimate right to a seat. They marched up and down the Capitol halls, unfurling banners, chanting obscenities and . . . even trapped then-Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. on an elevator, and others made death threats against Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine . . . Fortunately, more than 200 of these . . . commandos were arrested." (Ibid.) (b) Also, storming the Capitol violates federal law in disobedience to 1 Peter 2:13-17, what we have long taught is sin and what the vast majority of conservative Christians would not do. (c) Then, the call to deprogram anyone of his views and beliefs violates the freedoms that are guaranteed for all Americans under the Bill of Rights.

(3) Yet, far more significantly, shocking, offensive words and deeds by leftists expose the Marxists' tactic of trying to manipulate others to *compromise* with them: "Marxist dialectics" think "progress results from the constant struggle between contrary elements" (Brannon S. Howse, Marxianity, 2018, p. 243, citing J. R. Nyquist and Dr. Anca-Maria Cernea, "Russian Strategy and Europe's Refugee Crisis. Center for Security Polity, Washington, D. C., p 10), and leftist Julian Huxley in 1946 explained how this works, writing: ". . . (T)wo opposing philosophies confront each other . . . Christianity versus Marxism. Can . . . this antithesis be resolved in a higher synthesis? I believe . . . that through the inexorable dialectic of evolution, it must happen." (Ibid., Howse, p. 20) Marxists keep pressuring Christians with provocative words and acts to tire Christians into compromising with the Marxists to keep the peace!

(4) On the other hand, to defeat the Marxist "opposition," some evangelicals try joining "false teachers and even theological cults." (Brannon Howse, The Coming Religious Reich, 2015, p. 211) This occurred on "July 27, 2012 . . . in Dallas at High Point Church" where Dallas Seminary graduates and pastors "David Jeremiah" and "Tony Evans" met "with Roman Catholics, Word of Faith false teachers" and "neo-evangelicals" in an "ecumenical rally" on "reclaiming America" held "in conjunction with the [Mormon] Glen Beck 'Restoring Love' gathering July 28 in Cowboy Stadium." (Ibid., p. 17-18) To oppose the Marxist ideology of the Obama administration, David Jeremiah and Tony Evans compromised their testimonies by violating Scripture in practicing unbiblical associations with Catholics and a Mormon who teach false gospels in violation of Galatians 1:8-9 and in gathering with Word of Faith false teachers and neo-evangelicals in violation of Second Degree Separation taught in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14!

Need: So, we ask, "*How do we overcome increased, unjust pressures to compromise the truth?!*"

- I. Ezra faced great compromise of the truth in his Hebrew people, Ezra 9:1-2 with Deuteronomy 7:3-4:**
 - A. After "Ezra had been in Jerusalem about 4 1/2 months" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Ezra 9:1-4), some officials told him that some of the people, priests, Levites and rulers had married pagans, Ezra 9:1-2.
 - B. Deuteronomy 7:3-4 forbade such marriages because they led to the corrupting of Israel with pagan idolatry.
- II. The gravity of this sin led Ezra to tear his clothes, pull out his hair and sit appalled, Ezra 9:3 ESV.**

- III. Ezra's reasons for his intense reaction to Israel's sin is clarified in his subsequent prayer, Ezra 9:5-15:**
- A. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Ezra confessed that Israel had sinned greatly in history (Ezra 9:5-9) only now to compromise Scripture and violate its prohibition against marrying pagans, Ezra 9:10-14; Deut. 7:3-4.
 - B. Though he had personally not sinned, as part of a theocracy, Ezra confessed his nation's great guilt, Ezra 9:15.
- IV. Ezra's example as governor moved Israel's people to side with his view and take action, Ezra 9:4; 10:1-4:**
- A. When Ezra first tore his clothes, pulled out his hair and sat appalled (Ezra 9:3), every Hebrew who revered the Lord and trembled at His Word gathered around him, identifying with his viewpoint, Ezra 9:4.
 - B. After Ezra had voiced his confession to God, the crowd had grown large and was weeping bitterly, Ezra 10:1.
 - C. Accordingly, the man Shechaniah spoke on behalf of the crowd, admitting to Ezra that Israel had greatly sinned, but that there was still hope for the nation before God if they would correct their sinful way, Ezra 10:2.
 - D. Shecaniah suggested that they covenant before the Lord to annul their unbiblical marriages to align with the Mosaic Law, that they were willing to follow Ezra's lead in how to perform these annulments, Ezra 10:3-4.
- V. Ezra then had the priests, the Levites and all Israel take an oath to correct the problem, planning to address it in three days in a nationwide assembly, Ezra 10:5-8. [Note: This event does *NOT* allow for divorce in the Church, for we are not under the Law that restricted the marriage of Jews just to Jews!]**

Lesson: *Ezra's knowledge of Scripture and his devotion to heeding it out of deep reverence for the Lord led him to react so strongly to Israel's sinful compromise that he influenced his Hebrew people to depart from their sin.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) To overcome pressures to compromise the truth, (a) may we study Scripture (b) and fully heed it in respect for God (c) that He might use our devout example to disciple others.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We apply this sermon to avoid compromising the truth of God's Word on issues noted in our introduction:

- (1) On rioting, 1 Peter 2:12 ESV directs that our conduct must always be peaceable and lawful to protect our testimony before the world. Participating in riots does not heed this directive, so we should not participate in riots.
- (2) On efforts by Marxists to get us to compromise with Marxist ideology, Exodus 20:15 and 17 condemn both stealing and covetousness, the two major sins of Marxism ("Goals, 'Communist Manifesto,'" learn-usa.com), so Scripture directs us **NOT** to compromise with sinful Marxism!
- (3) On facing Marxists' efforts either to goad us to compromise with them or to "deprogram" us, 1 John 5:18 claims the new nature God begets in us at salvation cannot sin, so Satan cannot "touch so as to harm" (middle voice of *hupto*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 102) it. If we then heed Galatians 5:16-23 to rely on the Holy Spirit, living in the new nature instead of our old sin nature, we will not be subject to Satanic and Marxist manipulation, but will overcome Marxist and Satanic efforts since He Who is in us is greater than Satan, 1 John 4:4b!
- (4) On Roman Catholicism and Mormonism, both faiths teach salvation by faith plus works, false gospels (Ephesians 2:8-9), and Galatians 1:8-9 prohibits us from associating with those who hold to false gospels!
- (5) On the Word of Faith movement, though it errs on several major fronts, it holds that experience is of greater weight than written Scripture in defining truth, *Ibid.*, Howse, *The Coming Religious Reich*, p. 413. 2 Timothy 3:13-17 with Deuteronomy 13:1-3 counter this, teaching that written Scripture is to be followed even above miracles!
- (6) On "neo-evangelicals," they often interpret Scripture subjectively according to their own feelings and ideas instead of consistently heeding the literal, grammatical, historical or "normal" method of interpretation. They end up with an "all-inclusive, pluralistic" view that is often "committed to . . . socialism," *Ibid.*, p. 234-235. Opposite this, Jesus held Scripture was God inspired and authoritative down to the very letters ("jot" KJV = the tiny Hebrew letter *yodh*) and parts of letters ("tittle" KJV = the small protrusion of a letter that distinguishes it from another letter) in the autograph manuscripts (Matthew 5:18). He also used the literal, grammatical, historical method to interpret Exodus 3:6 in critiquing the Sadducees' error in Mark 12:18-27. (Jesus taught God was still [literally "am"] the God of the then [history] dead fathers, though "am" is not written, but understood in Hebrew [grammar] text, to counter the Sadducean view that the soul ceased to exist at death so that there was nothing left to resurrect! Jesus thus proved from Scripture that Israel's fathers still existed in Moses' day ["am"] though dead, exposing the Sadducees' error!)

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we then overcome increased, unjust pressures to compromise the truth by coming to know the Scriptures well and being devoted to heeding them out of reverence for God. This will not only keep us from compromise, but our exemplary devotion can be used of God to influence others to follow Him.