

We will now begin the fifth lecture on the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah. /Today we will begin with Ezra chapter 9. /In verses 1-2, /the sins of the leaders of Judah are revealed. /The Israelites were prohibited from intermarrying foreign peoples.

/The priests and the Levites engaged in this as well. /These leaders of Israel actually took the lead in such activity. /The construction of the temple went well. /God's kingdom was well.

/Thus, the devil tried to bring down God's kingdom. /This happened in the early church as well. /The devil brought in the sins of greed for honor, hypocrisy, and lies into the church through Ananias and his wife.

/The devil brought in the sin of adultery into the church at Corinth. /This also happened in the time of the exodus. /Korah rebelled against Moses. /We must be careful when God's works go well.

/When there is grace, there is the work of the devil. /Therefore, we must always be awake and be careful that we do not fall to the devil.

/Here it says, "detestable practices." /The "detestable practices" refer to idolatry. /It also refers to the hollow customs of foreigners. /The Israelites intermarried foreigners and performed detestable practices of foreigners.

/Deuteronomy 7:3-4 says, do not intermarry with the Canaanites. /However, the Israelites went against God's word. /The Israelites intermarried foreigners, and they did things that God hated.

/Genesis 6:2-3 says, /"the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, /and they married any of them they chose." /God's people abandoned their faith /and they chased after the desires of the flesh and lust of the eyes. /God's men took daughters of foreigners as their wives.

/Revelation 16:12 says, /the Euphrates River dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. /The Euphrates River is the border line between Israel and the Gentiles. /This symbolizes that there will be no boundary between God's church and the world in the last days.

/This prophesied that the church will make compromises with the world, /and the world will enter the church. /God is filled with wrath /when the customs of the world enter the church. /That is why we believers today must not marry unbelievers.

/In verses 3-4, /Ezra grieved over the sins of the Israelites and repented. /The Israelites intermarried foreign women. /Ezra heard that the holy people mingled with the foreign people around them.

/Ezra was appalled, /and he tore his tunic and pulled hair from his beard. /Ezra considered

the peoples sins to be his own sins. /This showed that Ezra considered the people to be his own body.

/This was similar to what is written in Exodus 32:32. /When the Israelites sinned and were to die, /Moses asked God that his name be erased from the Book of Life. /Of course, a chosen believer's name is not erased from the Book of Life because he sins.

/This means that spiritual gifts, blessings, and splendor all fade away when one sins. /Paul said in Romans 9:3, /"For I could wish /that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ /for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race."

/Paul considered himself cut off /because the Israelites did not believe in Jesus Christ, /and they were cut off from Christ. /This was proof that Paul loved his neighbors like himself.

/The apostle Paul rebuked the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 5 /for not getting rid of the sin of adultery that entered the church.

/In verses 3-4, Ezra tore his tunic and pulled hair from his head and beard. /When Ezra sat appalled, those who trembled at God's word came to him.

/Those who trembled at God's word came to Ezra. /They were godly believers. /When leaders tremble at God's word, /believers will come to them.

/In verses 5-15 /is Ezra's prayer of repentance. /Ezra fell to his knees and lifted his hands up to God and prayed. /Ezra fell to his knees, which shows that he had a humble attitude. /He also poured out his energy before God.

/Ezra lifted his hands, which shows that he surrendered his heart to God. /In this way, Ezra repented /and he prayed with humility to God with his entire heart. /Then from verse 6 is Ezra's prayer of repentance.

/Ezra spoke. /He said that the sins of Israel were higher than their heads /and their guilt reached to the heavens, /and he was too ashamed and disgraced to lift his face to God.

/This showed that Ezra always lived for God. /This showed that Ezra met God. /In Luke 18:9-14, /the Pharisee prayed to God by showing off his righteous deeds and with an arrogant heart.

/However, the tax collector could not even look up to heaven, and he beat his breast and prayed. /"God, /have mercy on me, /a sinner." /Jesus said that the tax collector was more righteous than the Pharisee.

/Psalm 51:17 says, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. /"A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." /Ezra remembered God's grace on the Israelites in the past and repented.

/In verse 7, the Israelites sinned and hence, were pillaged by the king of Babylon. /The Israelites were taken captive, /and they returned from captivity by God's grace.

/In verse 8 it says that God revived them. This applies to us as well. /It was right for us to receive destruction because of our sins. /In verse 9, it says God freed us from sin and from bondage from the devil.

/God gave us spiritual freedom. /God allowed our spiritual eyes and ears to open. /Hence, we understood the truth. /God revived our spirits. /This is God's love and mercy.

/This is God's special grace. /It is impossible not to be faithful to God when we think about this grace. /God allowed the Israelites from bondage in a foreign land.

/God allowed them to build the temple /and gave them the wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem. /The "wall of protection" refers to a wall or fence. /This is the location in which the Israelites could preserve their lives.

/This is also the place where the Israelites could live in peace. /This applies to us today as well. /God freed us from sin and death. /God allowed us to understand the truth, and he led us into the world of spiritual rest.

/Therefore, we must be faithful to God /because we cannot pay him back for all the grace he's given us. /In verse 10 it says that the people received God's great grace, and yet, they forgot and disregarded God's grace. /Ezra repented of the people's sin of breaking God's command.

/In verse 11, it says that God once spoke through the prophets. /God said, do not intermarry with foreign peoples /because they served detestable gods. /God said this in Exodus 34:15-16.

/However, the Israelites disobeyed. /In verse 12 it says, the Israelites intermarried with foreigners. /Israel practiced detestable things.

/In verse 15 it says, "O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous!" /In verse 13 it says that God punished the Israelites less than what their sins deserved.

/God saved them, /and yet, the Israelites sinned by intermarrying with foreign peoples. /Hence, Israel would not be able to avoid God's wrath. /Ezra also confessed in verse 15 that they could not stand in God's presence.

/In 10:1, many people joined Ezra /in his contriteness. /Ezra threw himself down before the temple and wept and repented of his sins /because of the sin of the Israelites. /Ezra considered the Israelites' sin his own sin.

/Many people then gathered and joined Ezra by weeping bitterly. /There was a repentance

movement like in the time of Samuel. /When leaders first repent, the people will repent. /The same goes for churches today.

/If pastors are afraid of sins, the people will be afraid of sins as well. /If pastors pray a lot, /believers will pray a lot. /If pastors repent of their sins, /the believers will repent of their sins as well.

/If pastors stand upright, /believers will be moved to stand upright, and there will be works of life.

/In verses 2-4, Shecaniah proposed a solution for sins. /Shecaniah made a good suggestion to Ezra. /Shecaniah was son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam. /This is in verse 2.

/Shecaniah said that Israel sinned before God and married foreign women, /but in spite of that, there was still hope for Israel. /Shecaniah suggested /that all the foreign women be sent away.

/The Israelites were subject to punishment and destruction for their sins. /There was hope because /there was a chance for them to repent before God's judgment would be upon them.

/John 11:39-40 says, /there was a bad odor because Lazarus was dead for four days. /Then Jesus said, /whoever believed and obeyed God's word /would see God's glory.

/Even though it had been a while since Lazarus died, /there would be hope if the people obeyed Jesus /and removed the stone from the tomb. /Man cannot feed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

/However, there was hope when they obeyed and brought the food to Jesus. /The same happened to Abraham. /Abraham had hope when he obeyed /and left his country, his people, and his father's household.

/Even if one was subject to destruction because of his sins, /he could have hope if he grieved over his sins and trembled as he obeyed God's command. /The Israelites married foreign women.

/These people married people of the world whom God did not approve of because they were greedy for honor and goods. /There is hope only when we throw these things away. /There is hope when we throw away greed of the flesh and lust of the eyes.

/Verse 4 says, /"Rise up; this matter is in your hands. /We will support you, so take courage and do it."

/Shecaniah said that everyone would support Ezra /if he took charge. /A similar thing happened when Zerubbabel took charge in building the temple. /The people cooperated

and built the temple when Zerubbabel took charge.

/Now, the people would work through Ezra. /The people cooperated with Ezra. /It was God's will that the people help Zerubbabel in his time. /It was God's will that the people help Ezra in his time. /The people who returned in the first return were not to disregard Ezra because they returned before him.

/In verses 5-9, /it says that all of Judah and the exiles gathered in Jerusalem. /Ezra made the priests, the Levites, and all Israel take an oath. /The oath stated that /all foreign women who married the Israelites were to be sent away according to God's laws.

/Then in verse 6, Ezra withdrew to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. /The room was a room for discussion. /It was a room /where people who obeyed God's command and teachings gathered.

/Ezra went into the room /to discuss with important people. /Paul did something similar in Galatians 2:2. /Paul met and spoke with important apostles before he went before the Council in Jerusalem.

/Important issues must be discussed among important people for there to be a good discussion. /Thus, Ezra spoke with important people /and proclaimed that all people gather in Jerusalem.

/In verse 8 it says that anyone who did not appear within three days would forfeit all his property. /He would also be expelled from the assembly of the exiles. /This was a punishment that is like excommunication from the church today.

/This applies to believers today as well. /When we disobey God's servants, /we will lose spiritual things. /We will also be chased away from God's blessings. /In verse 9, the Israelites gathered in the square before the house of God as Ezra ordered.

/The people gathered in the square before the house of God in three days as Ezra ordered. /This was the twentieth day of the ninth month. /The Israelites were greatly distressed because there was rain. /The rain was /a great distress to the Israelites.

/When we attempt to obey God's commands, there will be obstacles. /There will be obstacles when we attempt to go pray in the mountain for a week. /There will be temptations.

/We will fail if we stop praying and return home in such times. /We will receive great grace if we persevere and return home only after having prayed the decided time.

/In verses 10-15, some agreed with Ezra and some disagreed with Ezra. /There will always be people who agree and disagree in any case. /Ezra told the people to cut out all foreign women and the children of foreign women.

/The foreign women were to be sent away because marriage with foreign women went against God's word. /Mark 10:28-30. /Mark 10:28-30 say, /one can only become a true disciple of Jesus /if he leaves his parents, brothers, sisters, /homes, or fields for the Lord.

/There was a pastor named Joo, Kicheol, who was a father of faith in South Korea. /Pastor Joo was imprisoned for his opposition of Japan's Shintoism /during Japanese imperialism. /The pastor left behind his aged mother, wife, and children, and was imprisoned.

/We can normally treat our parents and children well. /We can have houses and fields. /However, when we need to throw all that away to obey God's word, /we must throw away all materials and empathy.

/The people agreed with Ezra that all foreign women needed to be sent away. /However, in verse 13, the people said that they could not at the moment /because it was raining heavily.

/Hence, they selected officials and a certain time, /investigated all who married foreign women, /and then decided to take care of the matter. /This was a good way to take care of the sin of disobedience to God.

/However, verse 15 says that there were some who opposed this. /Jonathan, Jahzeiah, Meshullam, and Shabbethai opposed this. /God brought the people to repentance through Ezra, /and God's movement was taking place, /but there were some who opposed.

/There are always people who oppose when we do God's works. /Yet, we must not be afraid of those who oppose us. /When we continue to do God's works, /God will help us with his mighty hand /so that his works succeed.

/In verses 16-17, they investigated the men who married foreign women. /Ezra selected men who were family heads to take care of the matter. /The men then investigated all who married foreign women.

/The investigation took three months, /from the first day of the tenth month to the first day of the first month. /It took this long because they wanted to be thorough with their investigation. /It is important that we are thorough when doing God's work.

/In verses 18-44 /are the names of those who married foreign women. /The investigation began /with the priests. /There were five men who were descendants of the high priests. /Verse 18.

/There were 13 men who were descendants of the priests. /Verses 20-21. /In this way, even the leaders of the people fell to this sin.

/In verses 23-24 /are the names of ten men from the Levites. /There were also 86 men from the Israelites. /There were 114 men in total. /The foreign women that they married

were sent away.

/Then they each gave a ram from their flocks as a guilt offering to God. /The guilt offering symbolizes forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. /Why were the names of these sinners recorded?

/Luke 10:20 /and Revelation 20:12 /say that the believers' names are written in the book of life in heaven. /The book records the faith of each believer /and also the sins of each believer.

/If a believer sins and then repents, /he will be forgiven with the blood of Christ. /However, a trace will remain. /There are many traces in the Bible. /There is the trace of Abraham and his acquiring of a concubine.

/There is the trace of Jacob's lowly and cunning actions. /Traces of David's adultery and murder are recorded in the Bible. /After believers repent, the traces are not something to be ashamed of.

/The grace of Christ shines even brighter because Christ washed away the sins. /This applies to us today as well. /Even if we sinned in the past, /the wound of our sins will heal /when we resent the sins, repent, and grow in faith.

/The traces of sin will become glory and honor /when we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

/Here we will conclude the fifth lecture on Ezra and Nehemiah. /Thank you.