
EZRA 9

**READING DIFFICULT
SCRIPTURES**

1 PETER 1:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

ROMANS 8:22-24a (NLT)

²²For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴We were given this hope when we were saved.

EZRA 9:2-4 (NLT)

²For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage.”

³When I heard this, I tore my cloak and my shirt, pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat down utterly shocked. ⁴Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel came and sat with me because of this outrage committed by the returned exiles. And I sat there utterly appalled until the time of the evening sacrifice.

EZRA 9:6-14 (NLT)

⁶I prayed,

“O my God, I am utterly ashamed; I blush to lift up my face to you. For our sins are piled higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens. ⁷From the days of our ancestors until now, we have been steeped in sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today.

EZRA 9:6-14 (NLT)

⁸“But now we have been given a brief moment of grace, for the Lord our God has allowed a few of us to survive as a remnant. He has given us security in this holy place. Our God has brightened our eyes and granted us some relief from our slavery. ⁹For we were slaves, but in his unfailing love our God did not abandon us in our slavery. Instead, he caused the kings of Persia to treat us favorably. He revived us so we could rebuild the Temple of our God and repair its ruins. He has given us a protective wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

EZRA 9:6-14 (NLT)

¹⁰“And now, O our God, what can we say after all of this? For once again we have abandoned your commands! ¹¹Your servants the prophets warned us when they said, ‘The land you are entering to possess is totally defiled by the detestable practices of the people living there. From one end to the other, the land is filled with corruption. ¹²Don’t let your daughters marry their sons! Don’t take their daughters as wives for your sons. Don’t ever promote the peace and prosperity of those nations.

EZRA 9:6-14 (NLT)

If you follow these instructions, you will be strong and will enjoy the good things the land produces, and you will leave this prosperity to your children forever.'

¹³“Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve, for you, our God, have allowed some of us to survive as a remnant. ¹⁴But even so, we are again breaking your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Won't your anger be enough to destroy us, so that even this little remnant no longer survives?

EZRA 10:2-5 (NLT)

²Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, a descendant of Elam, said to Ezra, “We have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. But in spite of this there is hope for Israel. ³Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law of God. ⁴Get up, for it is your duty to tell us how to proceed in setting things straight. We are behind you, so be strong and take action.”

EZRA 10:2-5 (NLT)

⁵So Ezra stood up and demanded that the leaders of the priests and the Levites and all the people of Israel swear that they would do as Shecaniah had said. And they all swore a solemn oath.

EZRA 10:9c (NLT)

They were trembling both because of the seriousness of the matter and because it was raining.

EZRA 10:12-13 (NLT)

¹²Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, “Yes, you are right; we must do as you say!” ¹³Then they added, “This isn’t something that can be done in a day or two, for many of us are involved in this extremely sinful affair. And this is the rainy season, so we cannot stay out here much longer.

1

LOOK FOR WISDOM,
NOT METHOD

ONE HOPE

STELLENBOSCH

PSALM 1:1-3 (ESV)

¹Blessed is the man

**who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;**

²but his delight is in the law of the Lord,

and on his law he meditates day and night.

³He is like a tree

**planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.**

In all that he does, he prospers.

1

**LOOK FOR WISDOM,
NOT METHOD**

2

**READ BIG PICTURE,
NOT MINUTE DETAIL**

ONE HOPE

STELLENBOSCH

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

3

STORYTELLING DOES NOT EQUAL
ENDORSEMENT

4

**HAVE GRACE FOR
CONTEXT**

ONE HOPE

STELLENBOSCH

EZRA 9:8 (NLT)

But now we have been given a brief moment of grace, for the Lord our God has allowed a few of us to survive as a remnant. He has given us security in this holy place.

EZRA 9:14 (NLT)

But even so, we are again breaking your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Won't your anger be enough to destroy us, so that even this little remnant no longer survives?

5

**TRUST WHAT YOU KNOW
TO BE TRUE OF GOD**

ONE HOPE

STELLENBOSCH

EZRA 9:15 (NLT)

O Lord, God of Israel, you are just. We come before you in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition none of us can stand in your presence.

EZRA 10:1 (NLT)

While Ezra prayed and made this confession, weeping and lying face down on the ground in front of the Temple of God, a very large crowd of people from Israel—men, women, and children—gathered and wept bitterly with him.

6

REMEMBER
HOPE + ANTI-CLIMAX

ROMANS 8:18-24 (NLT)

¹⁸Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. ¹⁹For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²²For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

ROMANS 8:18-24 (NLT)

²³And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it.