

## Dr. Tiberius Rata, Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5, Ezra 9-10

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Rata, Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5, Ezra 9-10, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Tiberius Rata's lecture** discusses Ezra 9-10, focusing on the sin of intermarriage among Israelites with foreign peoples who worshiped other gods. **The text highlights** Ezra's deep grief and his subsequent prayer and actions to address this issue. **Rata emphasizes** Ezra's leadership by example, identifying with his people and calling them to repentance, **noting** that this is a descriptive, not prescriptive passage. The lecture also **examines** the community's response, including both repentance and opposition, and the subsequent process of addressing the issue. Finally, **Rata stresses** the importance of prayer, confession, and action in addressing sin within a community.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Rata, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows  
media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and  
click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical  
Books → Ezra/Nehemiah).**



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ion05.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Rata, Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5, Ezra 9-10

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Tiberius Rata's teaching on Ezra 9-10:

#### Briefing Document: Ezra 9-10

##### Overview:

This document summarizes Dr. Tiberius Rata's analysis of Ezra chapters 9 and 10, focusing on the sin of intermarriage among the returned exiles, Ezra's response, and the subsequent actions taken to address the issue. Rata emphasizes the importance of leadership, repentance, and the need for both piety and action in dealing with sin.

##### Key Themes and Ideas:

#### 1. The Sin of Intermarriage:

- The returned exiles, including priests and Levites, have intermarried with people from the surrounding lands (Canaanites, Hittites, etc.). This is not just a societal issue but a problem within the religious leadership. "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations."
- The core issue is not ethnicity or race but religious impurity. The foreign wives were not Yahweh worshippers but practiced idolatry, posing a threat to the religious identity of Israel. "The problem here was not their ethnicity. The problem was that they were worshiping other gods."
- Intermarriage is a violation of God's law as detailed in Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 7, which explicitly prohibit such unions to prevent the corruption of Israelite faith and worship. "You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn away your sons from following me to serve the other gods."
- The influence of foreign mothers and their religious practices was seen as a threat to the preservation of the Jewish faith. "The influence of a foreign mother with her connection to another religion on her children would ruin the pure religion of the Lord and would create a syncretistic religion running contrary to everything in the Jewish faith. In the end, it was a question of the preservation of their identity, their religious identity."

### 1. **Ezra's Response:**

- Ezra reacts with profound grief, tearing his clothes, pulling his hair, and sitting in mourning. This symbolizes the depth of his anguish over the people's sin. "As soon as I heard this, I tore my garment and my cloak and pulled my hair from my head and beard and sat appalled."
- He leads by example, demonstrating true sorrow for the people's transgression rather than having a "holier-than-thou attitude". His actions are a form of self-identification with the people.
- Ezra engages in deep prayer, confessing corporate sin and identifying with the people, even though he is not personally guilty of the intermarriages. He uses "our" in his prayer to identify with the sins of the people. "O my God, I am ashamed and blushed to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to heaven."
- He acknowledges God's justice, grace, and righteousness, even in the face of national sin. He does this through a series of rhetorical questions that assume the answer 'no' to further sin and 'yes' to God's righteous anger if they do not turn from sin.
- Ezra's prayer serves as an example for Christian leaders, emphasizing the importance of prayer, confession of sin (both personal and corporate) and identifying with those being led. "Today's Christian leader, like Ezra, needs to spend a considerable amount of time in prayer, not as a last resort, as sometimes we do, but as a first impulse."

### 1. **The People's Response and Actions:**

- Inspired by Ezra's example and prayer, the people gather and weep, acknowledging their sin. "a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the people wept bitterly."
- A lay leader, Shecaniah, takes the initiative, confessing the sin and proposing a covenant to put away the foreign wives and their children. "We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land, but even now there is hope for Israel in spite of this."
- This action is presented as a descriptive account of what happened at the time, not as a prescriptive instruction for today. Dr. Rata states that the passage does

not mean that those married to non-believers should divorce their partners. "This is a descriptive passage. It tells us what happened."

- The people take an oath to follow this course of action, and Ezra issues a proclamation to assemble in Jerusalem. "Ezra arose and made the leading priests and Levites and all Israel take an oath that they would do as had been said. So they took the oath."
- The assembly agrees to confess and separate from the foreign wives, but they request time to complete this complex process.
- There is some opposition from Jonathan and Jahzeiah and their supporters who are identified as Levites, highlighting that even in times of repentance, there is dissent and resistance, sometimes even from within religious leadership. "Only Jonathan, the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah, the son of Tikvah opposed this...And Meshullam and Shabbethai, the Levites, supported them."
- Despite opposition, Ezra carries out the plan, appointing men to investigate and resolve 110 specific cases of intermarriage. This process takes three months.
- The book ends with a list of the people, including priests, Levites, and laity, who had married foreign women and that some of the women had even borne children. This list includes members of religious leadership, including priests and Levites highlighting that no one is exempt from sin.

#### 1. **Practical Application for Today:**

- Dr. Rata emphasizes that leadership requires identifying with the people you lead, not adopting an "us vs them" mentality.
- The importance of repentance of sin as well as separation from sin (holiness). "Separate yourselves here points to the idea of holiness."
- A strong prayer life is essential and must precede action. Piety and action must go hand in hand, and one is not a substitute for the other. "Piety, as someone said, piety is no substitute for preparation, and neither is preparation a substitute for piety. Both of them have to go together."
- The study of Ezra provides a model for how to deal with sin in the community.

**Conclusion:**

Ezra 9-10 demonstrates the severity of sin, the importance of godly leadership, and the need for genuine repentance. Ezra's example of prayer, grief, and action serves as a model for Christian leaders today. It also highlights the reality of opposition even in the midst of repentance and the importance of thoroughness in addressing sin. The narrative illustrates how faith is lived out in both piety and action.

## 4. Study Guide: Rata, Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5, Ezra 9-10

### Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5: Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What specific sin did the officials bring to Ezra's attention, and what was significant about the people involved?
2. According to the lecture, what was the primary problem with intermarriage, and what was it not related to?
3. What actions did Ezra take to demonstrate his grief, and what did those actions symbolize?
4. How does Ezra's prayer in chapter 9 demonstrate the qualities of a good leader?
5. What important point does Dr. Rata make about the nature of the passage concerning putting away wives and children in chapter 10?
6. What does the text indicate about the initial reaction of the people to Ezra's call for repentance?
7. What two things does Ezra ask the people to do in response to their sin in chapter 10?
8. What was the role of the officials in carrying out the actions that Ezra called for?
9. What is significant about the list of names at the end of Ezra 10, and who is specifically mentioned first?
10. According to Dr. Rata, what should a believer combine in their approach to faith and action?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The officials reported that the people, including priests and Levites, had intermarried with the people of the land, who were practicing abominations. This was significant because the leadership's involvement added a different level of problems.
2. The problem with intermarriage was not ethnicity, but that the foreign spouses worshiped other gods. This had to do with religious purity, not racism.

3. Ezra tore his garments, pulled out his hair and beard, and sat appalled. These actions symbolized mourning and deep pain over the people's sin.
4. Ezra identifies with the people, confessing *their* sin as "our" sin. He emphasizes the need for leaders to share the pain of those they lead and to pray for them rather than to criticize.
5. Dr. Rata states that this passage is descriptive, not prescriptive, meaning we should not interpret it as a rule that all believers married to non-believers should divorce their spouses. The context of the entire scripture, he points out, is necessary.
6. The people initially wept bitterly and gathered around Ezra. They recognized their guilt and responded positively to the call for repentance.
7. Ezra calls the people to confess their sins and separate themselves from the people of the land and their foreign wives. This is in keeping with God's commands to be holy and separate.
8. The officials were tasked with examining the cases of intermarriage, making appointments to hear all of the cases and overseeing the legal process to the point of issuing judgement.
9. The list highlights the widespread nature of sin and that it extended to the priests and other religious leaders. The names are important because it shows how pervasive the sin was and starts with the sons of the priests.
10. A believer should combine prayer and fasting (piety) with action or preparation. Both are needed in the life of a believer and neither can replace the other.

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Ezra's actions in chapter 9 (tearing his clothes, pulling his hair, etc.) as expressions of grief and leadership. How do these actions connect to his subsequent prayer?
2. Explore the concept of "corporate sin" as presented in Ezra's prayer in chapter 9. How does Ezra, a righteous man, identify with the sins of the people, and what does this teach about leadership and responsibility?
3. Analyze the challenges and complexities of the situation in chapter 10 regarding the removal of foreign wives and children. Consider the historical and religious context of the situation and discuss the tension between faithfulness to God and the practical implications of these actions.
4. Compare and contrast the roles of Ezra and Shecaniah in chapter 10. How do their actions demonstrate different aspects of leadership and response to sin?
5. Evaluate the significance of the ending of the book of Ezra. Why do you think it concludes with the list of those who had married foreign wives, and what does this ending suggest about the larger narrative of Ezra and Nehemiah?

## Glossary

**Abominations:** Practices or customs that are considered detestable or morally reprehensible according to God's law. In this context, they refer to the idolatrous practices of the foreign nations surrounding Israel.

**Corporate Sin:** The idea that a community or group of people shares in the responsibility and consequences of sin, even if not every individual is directly guilty.

**Descriptive Passage:** A text that describes what happened in a specific historical context rather than prescribing how to act in all situations. The author uses this language to say we shouldn't interpret this story as a rule that all believers married to non-believers should divorce their spouses.

**Exhortation:** An urgent appeal or strong encouragement. In the context of Ezra, it was the call for repentance and holiness.

**Holiness:** The state of being set apart for God, both in moral conduct and in religious practice. To be pure and separated from sin.

**Intermarriage:** The practice of marrying someone from a different ethnic or religious background, particularly between Israelites and non-Israelites. This was forbidden because of the non-Israelites idol worship.

**Lay Leader:** A member of the community who is not part of the clergy but has taken on a leadership role. Shecaniah is named as this in the text.

**Prescriptive Passage:** A text that provides rules or commands on how to act in all situations. It is an instruction to be followed at all times.

**Repentance:** The act of turning away from sin and toward God, involving a change of heart and action.

**Rhetorical Question:** A question asked for effect rather than to elicit an answer. It is used to emphasize a point or persuade the reader.

**Syncretism:** The blending of different religious beliefs and practices. In this context, the syncretism is where Jewish people combined their worship of Yahweh with the worship of other gods.

## 5. FAQs on Rata, Ezra-Nehemiah, Session 5, Ezra 9-10, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ on Ezra 9-10

1. **What was the primary sin that the returned exiles were committing in Ezra 9?**  
The primary sin was intermarriage between the Israelites and the people of the surrounding lands, specifically the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. This intermarriage violated God's law and was seen as a threat to the religious purity and identity of the Israelites because these surrounding people worshiped other gods. It was not an issue of race or ethnicity but of religious faithfulness.
2. **Why was intermarriage with these specific groups forbidden by God's law?**  
God's law prohibited intermarriage with these groups not because of their ethnicity, but because of their religious practices. These groups were idolaters, and intermarriage risked leading the Israelites away from worshipping Yahweh to worshipping false gods. The fear was that foreign wives would influence the Israelites to adopt syncretistic religious practices, thereby corrupting the faith.
3. **How did Ezra respond when he learned about the sin of intermarriage?** Ezra was deeply grieved when he heard of the intermarriage. He expressed his grief by tearing his clothes, pulling hair from his head and beard, and sitting appalled. He then led by example, identifying with the sin of the people even though he had not personally committed it and he publicly prayed for the people's sins. He was not vindictive, but rather shared in their pain, emphasizing prayer as a first impulse, not a last resort.
4. **What did Ezra's prayer in Ezra 9 reveal about his understanding of leadership?**  
Ezra's prayer demonstrated his understanding of leadership, specifically, by identifying with his people and their sins instead of separating himself from them. He confessed "our iniquities" even though he was not personally guilty. This act of humility and identification with his people was seen as a model for Christian leadership, showing that leaders should mourn for the sins of those they lead, rather than being condemning.

5. **What action did Ezra and the people take in response to the sin of intermarriage, as described in Ezra 10?** In Ezra 10, Shecaniah, a lay leader, proposed that all the men who had married foreign wives should put them and their children away. This was not a divorce, as they were not legal marriages in the eyes of God. The people made a covenant to do so. Ezra led the effort to call the people to repentance and holiness, and the people responded with confession and a commitment to separate themselves from their foreign wives and children. While some opposed this action, the majority agreed to the separation.
6. **Why is it important to consider Ezra 10 as a descriptive and not a prescriptive passage for modern Christian living?** Ezra 10 is considered descriptive because it details the specific historical context and actions taken in a unique situation. It's not prescriptive for modern Christians because God does not require the same action of separation from spouses in all situations. For instance, the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 7 teaches that if an unbelieving spouse is willing to stay, the believer should not seek a divorce. The actions in Ezra 10 must be understood in their unique legal context and religious setting.
7. **What role did leadership play in the events of Ezra 9-10, and what are some key qualities that were demonstrated by Ezra and others?** Leadership played a crucial role in addressing the sin of intermarriage. Ezra exhibited qualities such as piety, humility, identification with his people, and a commitment to prayer. He led by example, and his actions prompted both repentance and action. Shecaniah also showed leadership by acknowledging the collective sin. Furthermore, even in the face of opposition, the leaders of the time continued the work of correcting the sin. This highlights that good leadership must include both devotion and action, and not be separated.
8. **What practical lessons can be learned from the book of Ezra for today's Christians and Christian leaders?** The book of Ezra provides several practical lessons: 1) the need for genuine piety, prayer, and fasting; 2) the importance of identifying with the people one leads; 3) the necessity to confess both personal and corporate sin; 4) the need not only to confess, but to repent from and turn away from sin; 5) that there is a time for prayer, and a time for action, and both are necessary. It warns against a "us versus them" mentality and encourages leaders to emulate Christ's humility. Finally, it emphasizes the need for a balance between piety and practical action in addressing sin.