

Watchman
Part 6
(Watch and Protect the Holy Race)

Nehemiah 13:23-30 and the book of *Ezra chapters 9 and 10* deal with marriages not glorifying God.

“23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. 26 Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. 27 Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?" 28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me. 29 Remember them, O my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites. 30 So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task.” (Nehemiah 13:23-30)

“1 After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. 2 They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.” (Ezra 9:1-2)

The people of God after returning from exiles they rebuild the temple for worship and rebuild the wall around Jerusalem to protect the city from invasion. They put the gates to keep system and discipline and to control who will enter in and who will go out. Now after that they found out that among the people who returned from exiles, and even among priests and Levites, they did not separate themselves from the nations around them by intermarrying with them. That would work to defile the holy race because their children will raise up corrupted by the same life principles of the non believer people around them.

King Solomon introduced idol worship into Israel by marrying wives from foreign nations, and that brought God's anger and wrath and caused the kingdom to be divided. As well as the seed of idol worship that Solomon introduced worked after his death into the people lives that they continued to worship these idols. Although good kings came and worked with God to purge these idols from the land but it return and come back after their death. And finally that brought God's anger who sent them to exiles. Therefore after they came back from exiles and rebuild the temple and the wall they found out that they have the same problem that brought destruction on the temple and on Jerusalem. Therefore Ezra and Nehemiah they needed to deal with it properly and radically.

Ezra grieved so much when he heard about it, *“3 When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. 4 Then everyone who trembled at*

the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.” (Ezra 9:3-4)

Ezra prayed and lifted up the situation to God, petitioning Him and asking Him forgiveness: *“5 Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God 6 and prayed: "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. 7 From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today. 8 "But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. 9 Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem. 10 "But now, O our God, what can we say after this? For we have disregarded the commands 11 you gave through your servants the prophets when you said: 'The land you are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other. 12 Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.' 13 "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this. 14 Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor? 15 O LORD, God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.” (Ezra 9:5-15)*

“1 While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites--men, women and children--gathered around him. They too wept bitterly. 2 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel.” (Ezra 10:1-2) While Ezra was praying, God touched the hearts of the people to agree with him, “3 Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law.” (Ezra 10:3) They trusted Ezra and gave him the lead to do what is needed to be done to solve this issue. “4 Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it.” 5 So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and Levites and all Israel under oath to do what had been suggested. And they took the oath.” (Ezra 10:4-5)

Ezra continued to grief because of all that, *“6 Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.” (Ezra 10:6)*

While he was praying and fasting God was working on the behalf of this matter: *“7 A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem. 8 Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property, in accordance with the decision of the officials and elders, and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles. 9 Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem.*

And on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people were sitting in the square before the house of God, greatly distressed by the occasion and because of the rain.” (Ezra 10:7-9)

Ezra faced the people with their sin, **“10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt.” (Ezra 10:10)**

Ezra pronounced to them God’s will and gave them the decision and what they need to do, **“11 Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.” (Ezra 10:11)**

The people responded to the decision that had been made, **“12 The whole assembly responded with a loud voice: "You are right! We must do as you say. 13 But there are many people here and it is the rainy season; so we cannot stand outside. Besides, this matter cannot be taken care of in a day or two, because we have sinned greatly in this thing. 14 Let our officials act for the whole assembly. Then let everyone in our towns who has married a foreign woman come at a set time, along with the elders and judges of each town, until the fierce anger of our God in this matter is turned away from us.” (Ezra 10:12-14)** Only few objected that decision, **“15 Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah, supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite, opposed this.” (Ezra 10:15)**

But the rest obeyed and did what the Lord required of them and they dealt with every situation: **“16 So the exiles did as was proposed. Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads, one from each family division, and all of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to investigate the cases, 17 and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women.” (Ezra 10:15-17)** The rest of **Ezra 10:18-44** (Read on your own bible) give the list of those people whom they dealt with over the period of three months.

The Lord spoke to the church in Thyatira and warned them to avoid sexual immorality and be cleansed from teaching and teachers who promote immoralities: **“18 To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. 19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. 20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.” (Revelation 2:18-23)** The message inspires us as well to repent and be obedient to God in dealing and viewing certain marital issues and situations that will bring defilement to our children and descendants and bring them away from God.

- 1- We will not approve marrying non believer.
- 2- We will not approve marriages that man is not mature and well prepared physically and spiritually to care for the family. Read Genesis chapter 2 and see how God prepared Adam to marry Eve.
- 3- We will not approve dating, courting, or having boyfriend or girlfriend as a way of finding partner for marriage. In the beginning the man would meet his wife in the day of marriage.
- 4- We approve and officiate marriages of our co-workers as long as we are sure that they are in God’s will.

5- We discontinue our ministry and fellowship with our co-workers who did not listen to our instruction and went ahead and marry not in accord to God’s will. We do that so the rest of our co-workers will not entice to do the same.

6- Those who are single parent (single mother or single father) They are to care for their children and they cannot go and marry another person as long as the father or the mother of their children are still alive. They can marry the father or the mother of their children if that applicable. Now if we will approve them to marry other than the father and the mother of their children, then we are giving way to sexual immorality to happen in their children; their children will do the same as the parents did when they will grow and reach adult stage.

7- Married person whose partner is involved in adultery with other person we advice him/her to separate from his/her partner till she/he repent.

8- Married person whose partner is bringing to him constant trouble (Drunkard, a thief, or a violent person who beat and endanger life) and who harm the children, then we advice her/him to temporarily separate till her/his partner repent.

9- Divorced person cannot remarry as long as his/her partner is alive.

10- Those who are divorced and married another person, while their ex-partner is still alive, we consider their relationship is adultery and not husband and wife **“9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” 10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.” (Mark 10:9-12)**

My dear and Beloved: The above points pertain to marriage and family lives are headline for very serious issues in the life of the church because we are called to protect the sanctity of the holy race, our children. God will bless and prosper our children and will protect them as long as we are abiding in His word and will, **“24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets (I will not impose any other burden on you): 25 Only hold on to what you have until I come. 26 To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations-- 27 'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery -- just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give him the morning star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 2:24-29)**

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to abide with your word in doing your will in regard to the issue of marriage and family. Lord gives me the strength and the good health and the perseverance to achieve that. This all I ask and pray in Jesus name Amen.

Jesus christ
The Bread Of Life

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