

Rebuilding What Was Lost
The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah



Rebuilding What Was Lost

- *A Little Bit of Background*
- *The Return*
- *Laying the Foundation*
- *Letters to Kings*
- *The Return of the Heroes*
- *After “The End” (part 1)*



After “The End”

- Ezra the Scribe has come back to Jerusalem
 - And Chapter 8 came to a wonderful ending
 - Please read the first phrase in Ezra 9:1 (up to the first comma)
 - After *what* things, exactly?

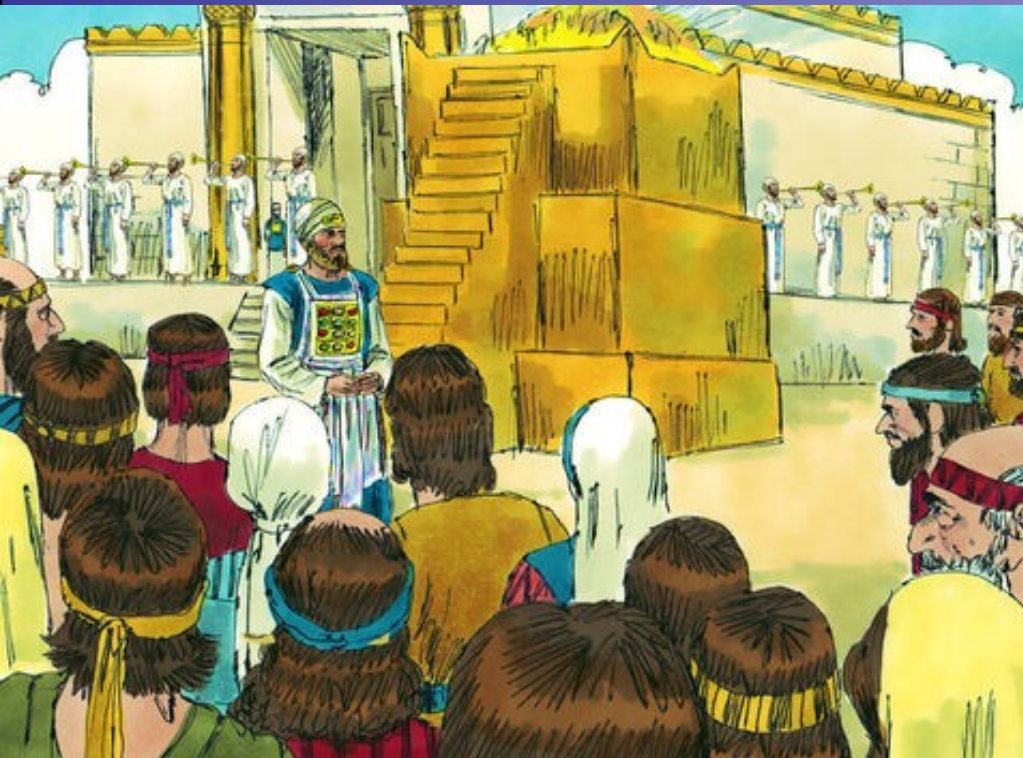


After “The End”



Funky little teaching moment...

- Please summarize what happened in Chapters 7-8
 - So by the end, the Jews were bringing upwards of \$500 million back to Jerusalem, with no military guards protecting them
 - And how did that end up for them, in Ezra 8:31-34?
 - What did they do in Ezra 8:35?
 - Where did they get all of that stuff?
(re-read Artaxerxes' commands to everyone from Ezra 7:19-23)

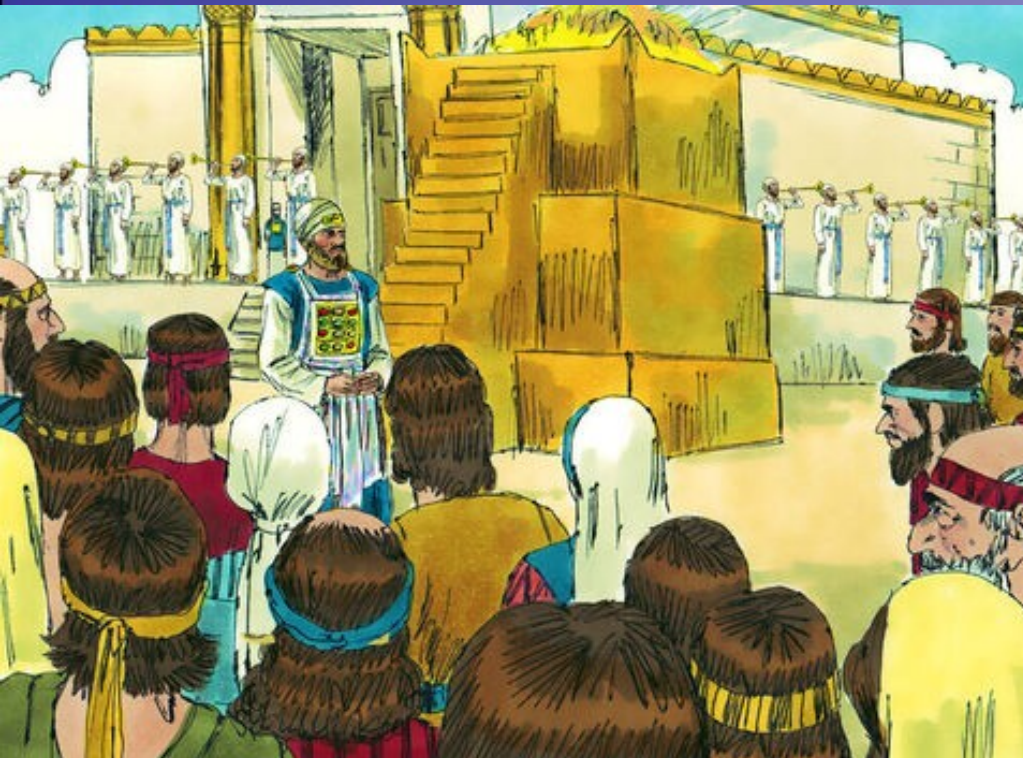


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 - What did they do in Ezra 8:35?
 - And what did the neighbors do in Ezra 8:36?
 - What had the King said to everyone at the end of his letter in Ezra 7:26?



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 - What did they do in Ezra 8:35?
 - And what did the neighbors do in Ezra 8:36?
 - In general, when confronted with the Word of God, we humans have three choices—
 - 1) Ignore God and keep trying to feel comfortable in our lives *without* any actual holiness (why do you think that we as a species choose this option sometimes?)



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 - In general, when confronted with the Word of God, we humans have three choices—
 - 1) Ignore God and keep trying to feel comfortable in our lives *without* any actual holiness
 - 2) Slink off into a corner and feel really guilty, but never actually do anything to change—*not* just to change our *situation*, but to change *ourselves*
(why do you think that we as a species choose *this* option sometimes?)



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 - In general, when confronted with the Word of God, we humans have three choices—
 - 1) Ignore God and keep trying to feel comfortable in our lives *without* any actual holiness
 - 2) Slink off into a corner and feel really guilty, but never actually do anything to change
 - 3) Repent—take responsibility for our actions, turn 180° from the direction we had been going and let God help us to do the right thing
(why do you think that we as a species choose *this* option sometimes?)

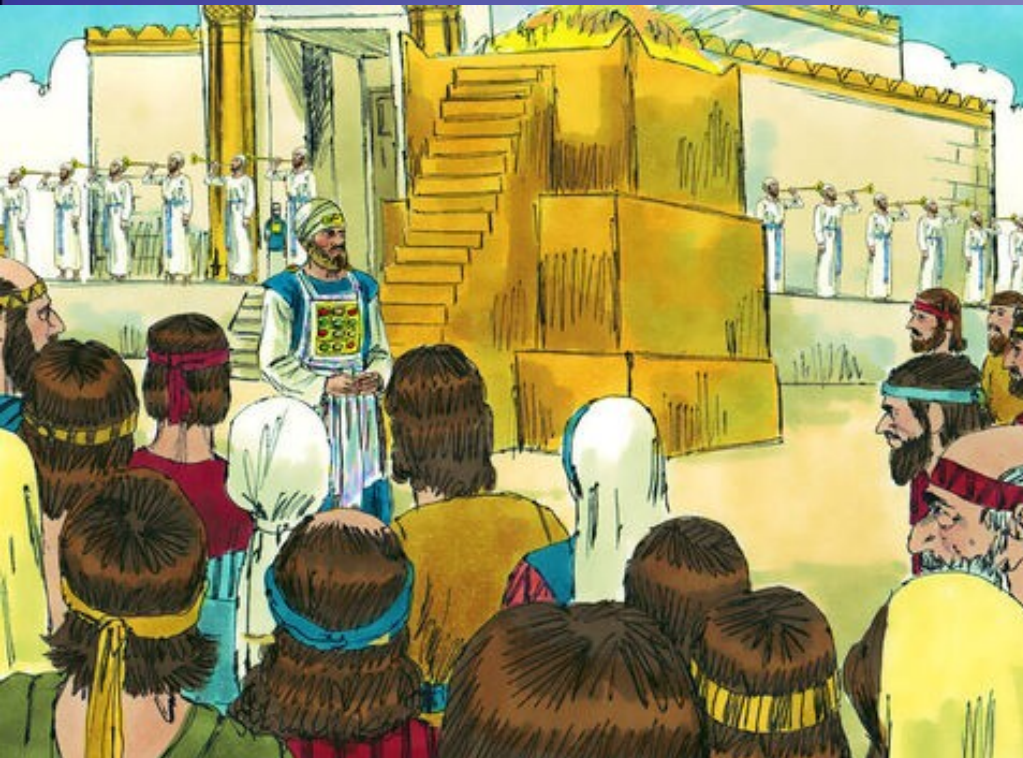


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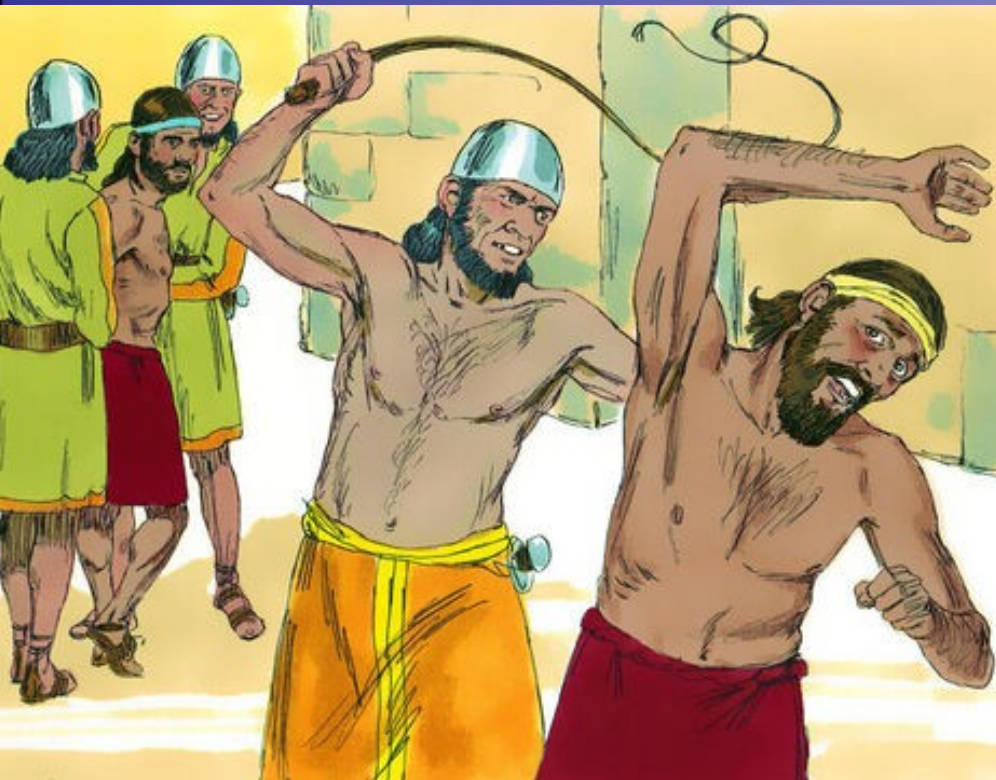
Funky little teaching moment...

- Please summarize what happened in Chapters 7-8
 - So by the end, the Jews were bringing upwards of \$500 million back to Jerusalem, with no military guards protecting them
 - So Ezra was doing the right thing
 - Artaxerxes was doing the right thing
 - The returning exiles were doing the right thing
 - Even the pagan *neighbors* were doing the right thing



After “The End”

- Ezra the Scribe has come back to Jerusalem
 - And Chapter 8 came to a wonderful ending
 - Please read Ezra 9:1-2
 - What had God specifically said to His people when they entered Canaan way back in Deuteronomy 7:1-4?
 - So... what happened? And why?
(NOTE: Read Judges 1:28)



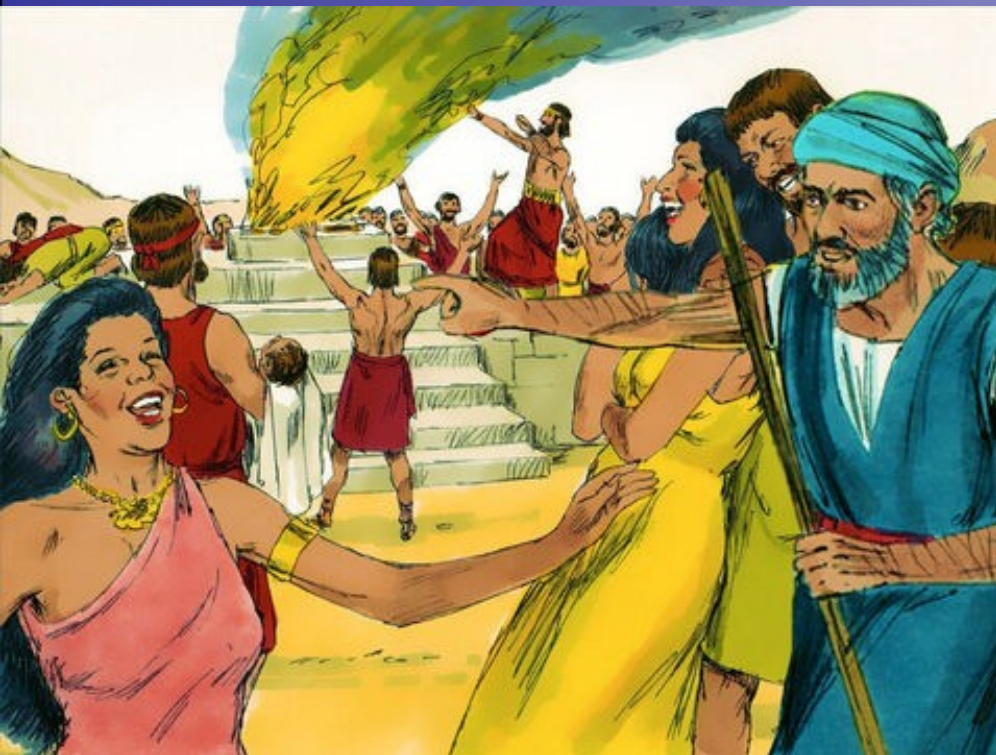
It's been said, “If history has any constants, then it is certainly true that most slaves will usually leap for the chance to become slavers themselves when handed a whip” —do you agree?

- How can we see that played out in our own contexts today?



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 - And Chapter 8 came to a wonderful ending
 - Please read Ezra 9:1-2
 - What had God specifically said to His people when they entered Canaan way back in Deuteronomy 7:1-4?
 - So... what happened? And why?
 - How closely does Ezra 9:1-2 parallel Deuteronomy 7:1-4, from centuries earlier?
 - So is Deuteronomy 7:1-4—as some European and American Christians have claimed over the centuries—a prohibition against all interracial marriage?
 - What exactly was God trying to prohibit in those verses, and why?
 - How can we apply *that* within our own contexts today?



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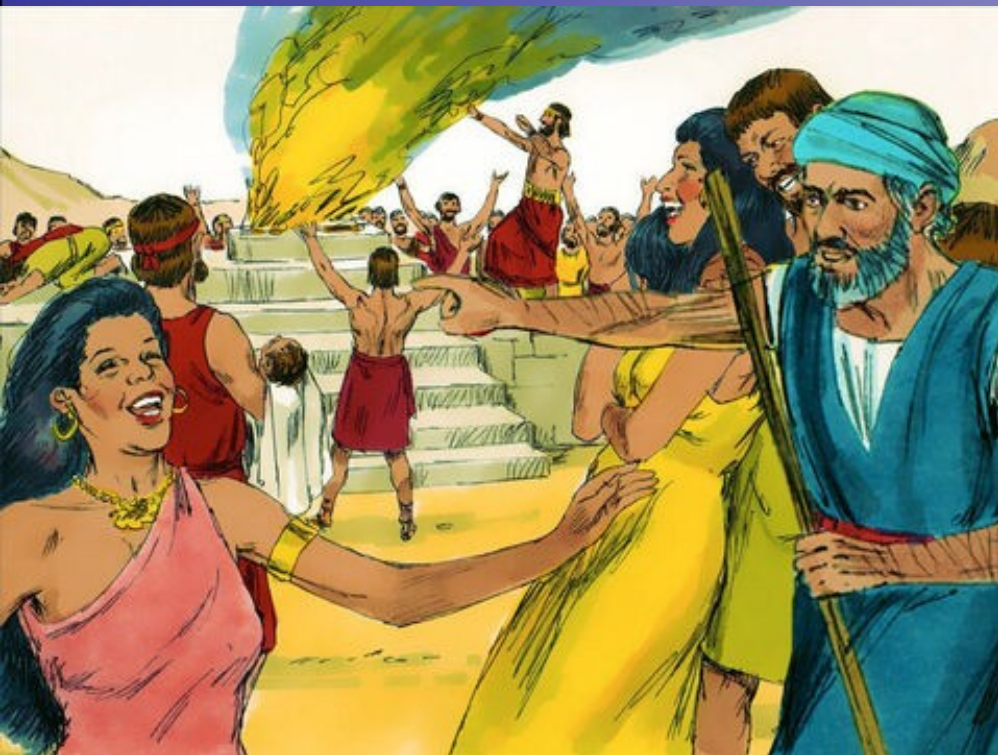
So is Deuteronomy 7:1-4—as some European and American Christians have claimed over the centuries—a prohibition against all interracial marriage?

- What exactly was God trying to prohibit in those verses, and why?
- Why is it significant that even the priests and Levites had been doing this—even to the point of *leading the way*?



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So is Deuteronomy 7:1-4—as some European and American Christians have claimed over the centuries—a prohibition against all interracial marriage?

- What exactly was God trying to prohibit in those verses, and why?
- Why is it significant that even the priests and Levites had been doing this?
- Why would *any* of them do *any* of this sort of thing?



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 - Please read Ezra 9:1-2
 - What was Ezra's reaction in Ezra 9:3?
 - Why did he respond this way?
(in particular, why was he so *personally* shocked and devastated by their actions?)



After “The End”



Funky little teaching moment...

- Quick farming quiz...
 - Can you grow corn by planting rutabagas?
 - Why not?
 - If you want to grow corn, you should plant corn
 - Can you grow holiness by planting unholiness?
 - Why not?
 - If you want to grow holiness, you should plant...?
 - Have you ever tried to do it some *other* way?
 - How or why might someone try to do it that way...?



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 - What was Ezra's reaction in Ezra 9:3-4?
 - Why did he respond this way?
 - How did *others* respond to his response in 9:4?
(and what does that suggest about the importance of dealing with visible sin in such a visible way sometimes?)

