

Journal: [Bibliotheca Sacra](#)

Volume: [BSAC 162:648 \(Oct 2005\)](#)

Article: The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9–10

Author: [A. Philip Brown II](#)

The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9–10

This is the fourth article in a four-part series "Studies in the Book of Ezra." This article has been excerpted from "Holiness in Ezra: Separated from Uncleaness and Seeking the Lord," chapter six of the author's dissertation "A Literary and Theological Analysis of the Book of Ezra" (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 2002), 163–200. The complete dissertation is available online at www.bible.org.

A. Philip Brown II

A. Philip Brown II is Assistant Professor of Bible and Theology, God's Bible School and College, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The most significant development of the theme of holiness in the Book of Ezra is in chapters 9 and 10. Four months after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem some princes reported to him that the returnees had been intermarrying with the peoples of the lands. "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands; according to their abominations to the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perezites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken from their daughters for themselves and for their sons and they have mingled the holy seed with the peoples of the lands; and the hand of the princes and the officials was first in this unfaithful act" (Ezra 9:1–2).¹

Ezra responded in horror, tearing his clothing and hair, and then sat in stunned silence. At the time of the evening sacrifice he rose and prayed. Shecaniah suggested that they make a covenant with God and send the foreign women away. Ezra made the elders of Israel swear to do as they had said, and he sent messengers to inform all the returnees that they must appear in Jerusalem within three days or face confiscation of all property and excommunication from the congregation.² Three days later the whole

Bsac 162:648 (October 2005) p. 438

congregation arrived and sat trembling in the rain, waiting for Ezra to address them. Rebuking them for their unfaithfulness, he commanded them to separate from "the peoples of the land and from the foreign women." When the meeting concluded, a commission was established, and three months later 113 men sent away their wives.

Clearly separation and holiness are motifs in these events. Yet in order to understand what Ezra intended to communicate about holiness in chapters 9–10, it is necessary first to understand what took place. The text presents what seems to be a fairly simple case. ...

You must have a subscription and be logged in to read the entire article.

[Click here to subscribe](#)

visitor : : uid: ()