

HANDOUT – PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Ezra's Prayer (458 BC)	Nehemiah's Prayer (440 BC)
<p><u>Fasting, mourning</u> <i>Ezra 9:3 – Ezra 9:4 (NASB)</i> When I heard about this matter [the intermarrying with idolators], I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled. ⁴Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel on account of the unfaithfulness of the exiles gathered to me, and I sat appalled until the evening offering. <i>Ezra 10:5 - Ezra 10:6 (NASB)</i> ⁶Then Ezra rose from before the house of God and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib. Although he went there, he did not eat bread nor drink water, for he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.</p>	<p><u>Fasting, mourning</u> <i>Neh 1:3 - Neh 1:4 (NASB)</i> ⁴When I heard these words [the broken down state of Jerusalem], I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.</p>
<p><u>General confession</u> <i>Ezra 9:5 – Ezra 9:7 (NASB)</i> ⁵But at the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God; ⁶and I said, “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. ⁷“Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings <i>and</i> our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as <i>it is</i> this day.</p>	<p><u>General confession</u> <i>Neh 1:5 - Neh 1:11 (NASB)</i> ⁵I said, “I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, ⁶let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father’s house have sinned. ⁷“We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. [After he got to Jerusalem, Nehemiah read the Book of Moses to the people] <i>Neh 8:5 - Neh 8:6 (NASB)</i> ⁵Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.</p>
<p><u>God's grace despite our sin</u> <i>Ezra 9:8 - Ezra 9:9 (NASB)</i> “But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹“For we are slaves; yet in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.</p>	<p><u>God's grace despite our sin</u> <i>Neh 8:9 - Neh 8:12 (NASB)</i> ⁹Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest <i>and</i> scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰Then he said to them, “Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” ¹¹So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” ¹²All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, because they understood the words which had been made known to them.</p>
<p><u>Specific confession</u> <i>Ezra 9:10 - Ezra 9:12 (NASB)</i> “Now, our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, ¹¹which You have commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, “The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end <i>and</i> with their impurity. ¹²“So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their peace or</p>	<p><u>Specific confession</u> <i>Neh 9:1 - Neh 9:2 (NASB)</i> Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them. ²The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.</p>

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<p>their prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good <i>things</i> of the land and leave <i>it</i> as an inheritance to your sons forever.’</p>	
<p><u>Call to Repentance</u> <i>Ezra 9:13 - Ezra 9:15 (NASB)</i> “After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and our great guilt, since You our God have requited <i>us</i> less than our iniquities <i>deserve</i>, and have given us an escaped remnant as this, ¹⁴shall we again break Your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would You not be angry with us to the point of destruction, until there is no remnant nor any who escape? ¹⁵“O LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we have been left an escaped remnant, as <i>it is</i> this day; behold, we are before You in our guilt, for no one can stand before You because of this.”</p>	<p><u>Call to Repentance</u> <i>Neh 9:32 - Neh 9:33 (NASB)</i> [Preceded by a review of Israel’s history and God’s constant mercy and justice] ³³ “However, You are just in all that has come upon us; For You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly.</p>
<p><u>Corporate repentance</u> <i>Ezra 10:1 - Ezra 10:1 (NASB)</i> ¹Now while Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God, a very large assembly, men, women and children, gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept bitterly.</p>	<p><u>Corporate repentance</u> <i>Neh 8:9 (NASB)</i> For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.</p>
<p><u>Corporate remedial action</u> <i>Ezra 10:2 - Ezra 10:5 (NASB)</i> Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, said to Ezra, “We have been unfaithful to our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. ³“So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. ⁴“Arise! For <i>this</i> matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act.” ⁵Then Ezra rose and made the leading priests, the Levites and all Israel, take oath that they would do according to this proposal; so they took the oath. <i>Ezra 10:11 - Ezra 10:12 (NASB)</i> ¹²Then all the assembly replied with a loud voice, “That’s right! As you have said, so it is our duty to do.</p>	<p><u>Corporate remedial action</u> <i>Neh 9:38 - Neh 9:38 (NASB)</i> ³⁸ “Now because of all this We are making an agreement in writing; And on the sealed document <i>are the names of</i> our leaders, our Levites and our priests.” <i>Neh 10:28 - Neh 10:31 (NASB)</i> ²⁸Now the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding, ²⁹are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God’s law, which was given through Moses, God’s servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of GOD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes; ³⁰and that we will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons. ³¹As for the peoples of the land who bring wares or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or a holy day; and we will forego <i>the crops</i> the seventh year and the exaction of every debt. [cont’d with the rest of the key points of the Mosaic Law]</p>