

# Ezra 10:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

## Analysis

**Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.** Ezra withdraws to fast and mourn despite securing the oath. His grief continues unabated—"he did eat no bread, nor drink water" describes complete fasting, the physical discipline accompanying spiritual anguish. The phrase "**for he mourned**" (mitabbél, intensive form suggesting deep, ongoing grief) shows that achieving political solution didn't satisfy his pastoral heart.

The specific mention of "**the transgression**" (ma'al) uses the technical term for covenant violation, especially unfaithfulness to God (Leviticus 5:15, Joshua 7:1). This wasn't merely sociological concern about intermarriage but theological grief over breach of sacred covenant. Ezra's mourning reveals that right action must flow from right affection—he didn't implement divorce proceedings from bureaucratic obligation but heartbroken necessity.

Withdrawing to Johanan's chamber provided solitude for intercessory mourning. True spiritual leadership doesn't end with issuing directives but continues in

private prayer and fasting. Ezra models the pattern: public action flowing from private intercession. His ongoing grief demonstrates that confronting sin should never become routine or casual, even when repeatedly necessary.

## Historical Context

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Johanan (Jehohanan) son of Eliashib was the high priest's son, later becoming high priest himself. His chamber would have been in the temple complex, providing private space for Ezra's mourning. This detail shows Ezra's access to the highest levels of religious leadership and the temple precincts.

Fasting accompanied serious prayer in Israelite practice (2 Samuel 12:16, Nehemiah 1:4, Esther 4:16). Complete abstention from food and water could last only a few days without serious health risk, suggesting this fast was relatively brief but intense. Such fasting wasn't manipulating God but physically expressing spiritual desperation and focusing prayer through self-denial.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does Ezra's continued mourning after securing the oath teach about the relationship between right action and right affection?
2. How does his private fasting demonstrate that public leadership requires private spiritual discipline?
3. When have you experienced grief over sin that extended beyond merely correcting the outward behavior?

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בְּעַל  
of them that had been carried away
because of the transgression  
H1473
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**Deuteronomy 9:18** (Sin): And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

**Nehemiah 3:1** (Parallel theme): Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

**Nehemiah 12:22** (Parallel theme): The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.