

# Ezra 9:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.

## Analysis

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Ezra's emotional devastation intensified: 'I sat down astonished until the evening sacrifice.' The word 'astonied' (Hebrew shamem) means desolated, appalled, devastated. He remained in this state for hours—from when he heard the news until 3 PM (evening sacrifice time). This prolonged grief demonstrates the seriousness of sin in godly perspective. Ezra didn't quickly move past shock to pragmatic problem-solving but deeply felt the offense against God. This models appropriate pastoral grief over congregational sin.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern mourning customs included sitting in silence, torn garments, disheveled appearance, and public display of grief. Ezra's extended shocked silence communicated both his personal devastation and the gravity of corporate sin. The public nature (at the temple or prominent location) meant the community witnessed his grief. This prophetic act called people to recognize sin's seriousness. His waiting until evening sacrifice shows he remained in this state approximately six hours.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

### Study Questions

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1. What does prolonged grief over sin (sitting 'astounded' for hours) teach about taking seriously what God takes seriously?
2. How does public display of mourning serve prophetic function in calling community to recognize sin's gravity?

### Interlinear Text

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וְכִשְׁמָעִי	אֶת	הַדָּבָר	הַזֶּה	קָרַב עָתִידִי	אֶת	בְּגָדִי
And when I heard	H853	this thing	H2088	I rent	H853	my garment
H8085		H1697		H7167		H899
וּמַעֲטִילִי	וְאֶמְרָתִי	מִשַּׁעַר	רֹאשִׁי	וְזָקְנִי		
and my mantle	and plucked off	the hair	of my head	and of my beard		
H4598	H4803	H8181	H7218	H2206		
וָאֶשָׁבָה	מְשׁוֹמָם:					
and sat down	astounded					
H3427	H8074					

### Additional Cross-References

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**Nehemiah 1:4** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

**Joshua 7:6** (Parallel theme): And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.