

Ezra 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

Analysis

Ezra's prayer begins with profound shame: 'O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God.' The repetition 'my God... my God' emphasizes personal relationship even amid corporate guilt. The verb 'ashamed' (bosh) carries sense of humiliation and disgrace. Ezra feels personal shame for corporate sin, demonstrating identificational repentance—though not personally guilty of intermarriage, he identifies with his people's guilt. The metaphor 'our iniquities are increased over our head' pictures sin accumulating like rising water. The parallel 'our trespass is grown up unto the heavens' emphasizes the enormity of guilt before God. This language doesn't quantify individual sins but expresses overwhelming sense of covenant violation.

Historical Context

Ezra's personal shame for corporate sin echoes Moses, Daniel, and Nehemiah who similarly identified with their people's guilt. This concept of corporate solidarity is foundational to biblical covenant theology—the community stands or falls together. The prayer's eloquent Hebrew shows Ezra's literary skill and deep biblical knowledge. His language echoes earlier Scripture, particularly Deuteronomy's blessings and curses and the prophets' calls to repentance. The prayer occurs publicly during evening sacrifice, meaning the gathered community hears their sin articulated before God, creating opportunity for corporate repentance.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does Ezra's identificational repentance teach about corporate responsibility for sin within God's covenant community?
2. How does profound shame before God relate to genuine repentance and restoration?
3. In what ways can church leaders appropriately express corporate confession for their community's failures?

Interlinear Text

וַאֲמַר ה	אֱלֹהִים י	בִּשְׁתִּי	וְנִכַּל מִתִּי	לִהְרִים	אֱלֹהִים י	פָּנֵי
And said	O my God	I am ashamed	and blush	to lift up	O my God	my face
H559	H430	H954	H3637	H7311	H430	H6440
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ	עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ	רַבּוּ	לְמִעַל	רֹאשׁ		
H413	H3588	for our iniquities	are increased	over	our head	
	H5771	H7235	H4605	H7218		
וְאַשְׁמֵנוּ	גָּדֹל ה	עַד	לְשָׁמַיִם:			
and our trespass	is grown up	H5704	unto the heavens			
H819	H1431		H8064			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:5 (References God): For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Psalms 38:4 (Parallel theme): For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

2 Chronicles 28:9 (References God): But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven.

Job 42:6 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Luke 15:21 (Parallel theme): And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Ezra 9:15 (References God): O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org