

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

פָנִים אֱלֹהִים לְפָרִים יִתְכַלּוּ מִתְהִיבָּה אֱלֹהִים וְאַמְכָה הַ
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

רְאֵשׁ לְמַעַלָּה עַזְנִיתִינוּ כִּי אֶל יְבָרֵךְ
H413 H3588 for our iniquities are increased over our head
H5771 H7235 H4605 H7218

לְשָׁמְמִים: עַד גִּדְלָה וְאַשְׁמָתָנוּ
and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens
H819 H1431 H5704 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.

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