Ring of Truth daily devotion

Ring of Truth provides 366 daily 'proofs' that the Bible is consistent throughout from Genesis to Revelation and relevant for our lives today!

5 April

Ezra 10:6

Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

In all the excitement of returning to Jerusalem, with all the joy of re-establishing and rebuilding the Temple, God was looking for healing and wholeness.

Yes, it was good to be going 'home'. Yes, He was pleased to see the rebuilding of the Temple. But why had the people gone into exile in the first place? Because they had forsaken their God and worshipped idols instead, and they had intermarried with pagan women who had introduced them to foreign gods.

So, the people of Israel had gone into exile but they still hadn't learnt their lesson. They had continued to intermarry and some of the men had even forsaken their Hebrew wives in favour of these outsiders.

But you say, *"God is a God of love. Surely He doesn't exclude people from His presence. Surely He loves the foreign women too. Why couldn't Israel have just increased in number by having all these foreign women included?"* God is a holy God. That is probably one of the major characteristics of God, which is overlooked, misunderstood or just plain ignored today.

Our God, the God of the Bible is a Holy God. He is Holy, Holy, Holy. He is awesome in splendour and majesty. We can only prostrate ourselves before Him and say *"Amen"* to all His words and decrees. Never forget that it is He who created the world, the galaxies and the cosmos. We are nothing more than tiny dots on a tiny dot at one extreme end of an immeasurable cosmos. Who do we think we are, to dictate terms to God?

But the reason God gives us His rules is that He is indeed a God of love and a good God. He always wants His best for us. He knows that if we love Him, serve Him and follow His ways - we will have joy, peace and fulfilment. If we turn from Him, we suffer isolation, fear, disappointment, and despair. We may think that 'kicking over the traces' is fun, but it is fun only temporarily and eventually ends in tragedy.

The people of Israel had continued with their bad habits, even while God had sent them away as part of His discipline to cause them to turn back to Him. Ezra, however, had nothing to do with their sin, but realised how abhorrent it was to God. In praying and fasting he identified with those who had done wrong and two things followed:

1)God listened

2)The people listened

It is one thing to condemn, it is quite another to become a part of the 'problem'.

Through what Ezra did, God was able to turn the hearts of the people to repentance and the community 'came right'. He became a 'part of the solution', too.

If we want to change society, we shouldn't blame the leaders before God, but rather, acknowledge our responsibility for it, identify with it and petition God on its behalf.

That's part of being involved in the 'priesthood' ***for*** all believers.

(See also 1 Peter 2:1-12.)