



# Sabbath Brothers



The tribes of Judah and Levi are given special prominence and have their genealogies continued beyond the Exile.

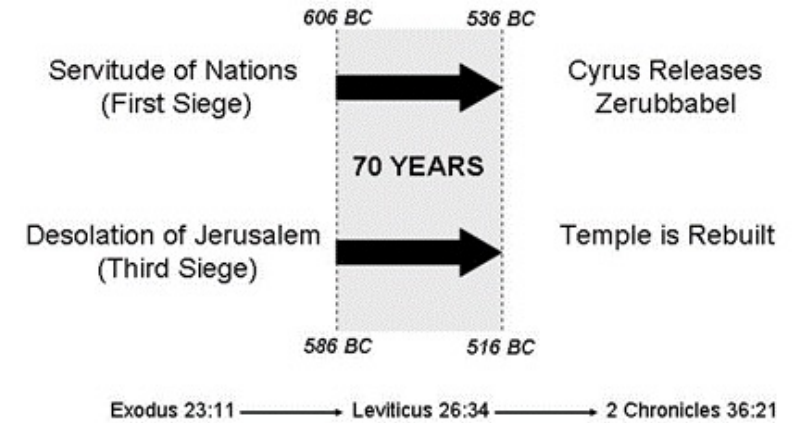
# Nehemiah

(The Exiles & Return)



## 70 Year Prophecy

Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10



### Israel Exiled by Assyria

- ① King Tiglath Pileser (Pul) 740 BC
  - Took the 2 ½ Tribes East of the Jordan
  - 1 Chronicles 5:26
- ② King Shalmaneser 722BC
  - Took the Capital of Samaria
  - 2 Kings 17:5-6
- ③ King Sargon 701 BC
  - Final March through Samaria into Judah
  - 2 Chronicles 32:22

### Judah Exiled by Babylon

- King Nebuchadnezzar
- ① King Jehoahaz 606BC
  - Royal court & Daniel
  - Daniel 1:1-7
- ② King Jehoiakim 597BC
  - Craftsmen & Ezekiel
  - 2 Kings 24:1-5
  - 2 Chronicles 36:5-8
- ③ King Zedekiah 586BC
  - Commoners
  - Jeremiah stayed in Jerusalem
  - 2 Kings 25:1-21

### Israel's Return from Babylon ("Exodus 2")

- ① Zerubbabel – 536BC
  - Only 50,000 returned
    - Few b/c they were in business instead of enslaved
  - Primarily Judah/Benjamin
  - Restore Social Life
- ② Ezra – 458BC
  - 1,800 Priests/Levites
  - Restore Religious Life
- ③ Nehemiah – 444BC
  - Brought a Few Craftsmen
  - Restore Physical Life

# Persian Kings

## Line of Achaemenid (Persian) Kings

**Cyrus II ("The Great")** – Mede who defeated Babylon and returned Israel to Jerusalem

Isaiah 45; Daniel 10; Ezra 1-3

*Son*

**Ahasuerus (Cambyses II)** – Attacked and conquered Egypt

(Not mentioned in Scripture)

*Usurper*

**Artaxerxes (Smerdis)** – Look-alike (Gaumata) of Cambyses' brother was a Mede "Magi" usurping kingship

Ezra 4:7-23

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## Separate Line of Achaemenid (Persian) Kings

**Darius I ("The Great")** – Authorized Jerusalem Temple; Lost Battle to Greece at Marathon

Ezra 5, 6; Daniel 9, 11

*Son*

**Xerxes I** – Husband of Esther; Lost great wealth in Second Persian Invasion of Greece (Athens/Sparta)

Esther 1-10

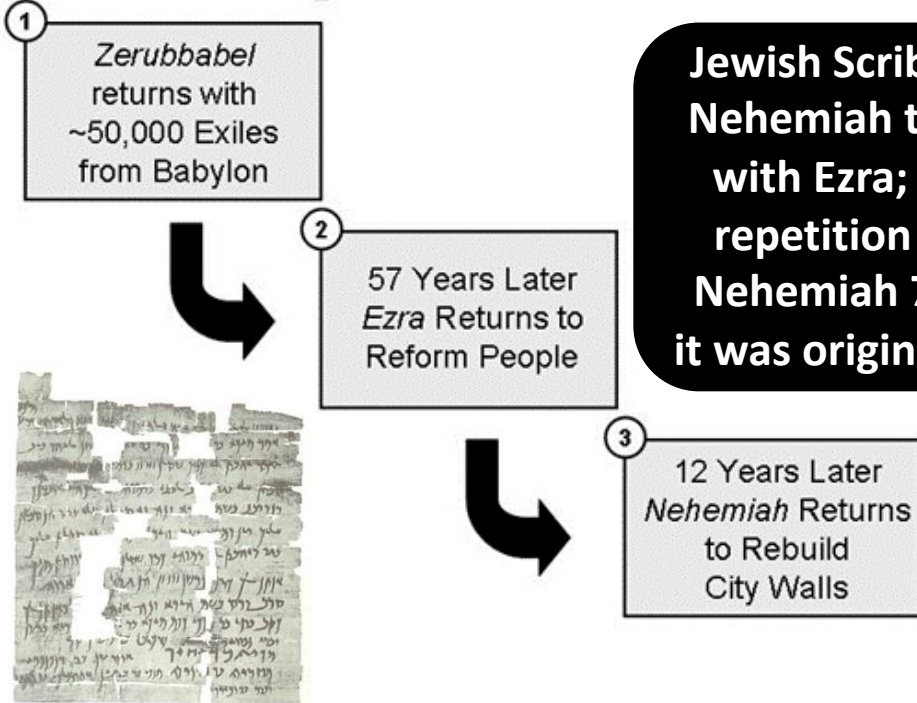
*Son*

**Artaxerxes I (Longimanus)** – Possibly Esther's Son; Sent Nehemiah to construct wall of Jerusalem

Nehemiah 1-13; Ezra 7-10

# Nehemiah: The Sixteenth Book of Scripture

## Three Stage Return from Exile



Jewish Scribes considered Nehemiah to be one book with Ezra; however, the repetition of Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 may indicate it was originally two works.

Some believe that Ezra wrote Ezra (“Help”) and Nehemiah (“Comfort”) as well as the books of Chronicles; however, the book of Nehemiah is written in first person.

Both books are written in two languages: Hebrew and Aramaic. Aramaic was the worldwide language of commerce and politics; Israel learned Aramaic while in the exile; the only other book of the Old Testament that is written in two languages – the book of Daniel.

The accuracy of the history told in the book has been well established by the discovery of the Elephantine papyri which mentions many of the same names and events with dates. It can be also learned from these papyri that Nehemiah ceased to be governor of Judea in 408 B.C.

The book of Esther chronologically occurred at the time of Nehemiah. Esther’s husband, was either King Ahasuerus or King Xerxes of Persia; he is identified as Artaxerxes in the opening chapters of Nehemiah. This heathen king gave the command for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to build up the walls of the city. Esther was possibly with the King at the time of the request to return to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:6).

Similar Outlines	Ezra Chapters	Nehemiah Chapters
Return	1-2	1-2
Rebuild	3-6	3-7
Renew	7-8	8-10
Reform	9-10	11-13
Chapter 9 in Both Ezra and Nehemiah are prayers of confession over national sin.		

# Prayerful Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1-11)

<sup>1</sup> The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capital, <sup>2</sup> that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> And they said to me, “**The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and disgrace, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.**”

<sup>4</sup> Now when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

<sup>5</sup> I said, “Please, LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments:

<sup>6</sup> let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have committed against You; I and my father’s house have sinned.

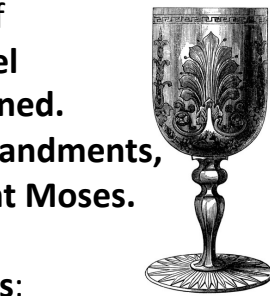
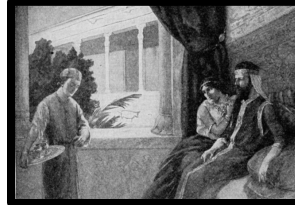
<sup>7</sup> We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

<sup>8</sup> Remember, please, the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples;

<sup>9</sup> but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I have chosen to have My name dwell.’

<sup>10</sup> They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

<sup>11</sup> Please, Lord, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and please make Your servant successful today and grant him mercy before this man.” Now I was the cupbearer to the king.



Susa (Shushan) was the capital city at the base of the Zagros Mountains near the Karkheh Kūr (Choaspes) River in Iran.

The month of Chislev is in the November/December time frame.

Nehemiah’s guest, Hanani (“Grace”) reports on the progress of God’s work & Nehemiah is saddened by the state of affairs in Jerusalem with the destroyed wall and gate

The initial response that Nehemiah took upon receipt of the bad report was fasting and prayer.

God keeps His covenant with those who keep His commands

The prayer is for an attentive response as Nehemiah approaches God in repentance of sin

The Jewish people had not kept God’s commands (firm directives), statutes (precepts/principles), ordinances (judgments/verdicts)

God made a conditional covenant that Israel would be scattered for disobedience but restored for repentance.

God’s Servants Desire to Fear/Revere His Name & Three Actions are Requested:

1. That the Lord Be Attentive
2. That the Lord Give Success
3. That the Lord Would Have Compassion

Being the King’s Cupbearer resulted in a close contact with the king as they both drank from the same cup (Mt 20:22; Mk 10:38)

# Jewish Calendar

Hebrew Months	Gregorian Months	Days per Month	Holidays
1. Nisan	March-April	30	Pesakh
2. Iyar	April-May	29	Lag B'Omer
3. Sivan	May-June	30	Shavuot
4. Tammuz	June-July	29	
5. Av	July-August	30	Tisha B'Av
6. Elul	August-September	29	
7. Tishrel	September-October	30	Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah
8. Cheshvan	October-November	29	
9. Kislev	November-December	30	Chanukah
10. Tevet	December-January	29	End of Chanukah
11. Shevat	January-February	30	Tu B'shvat
12. Adar	February-March	29	Purim



**"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." (Psalm 100:2)**

# The King Grants Nehemiah's Request (Nehemiah 2:1-10)

<sup>1</sup> And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine *was* before him, and I picked up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.



<sup>2</sup> So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, though you are not ill? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid.

<sup>3</sup> And I said to the king, "May the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the site of my fathers' tombs, is desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"

**"Encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11)**

<sup>4</sup> Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" **So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

<sup>5</sup> Then I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, I request that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

<sup>6</sup> Then the king said to me, with the queen sitting beside him, "How long will your journey be, and when will you return?"

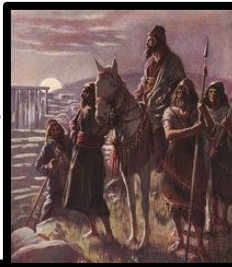


So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time.

<sup>7</sup> And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, so that they will allow me to pass through until I come to Judah,

<sup>8</sup> and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, so that he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted *them* to me because the good hand of my God *was* on me.

<sup>9</sup> Then I came to the governors of the provinces beyond the Euphrates River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.



<sup>10</sup> And when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel.

Artaxerxes became King around 465 B.C. which would date this event 20 years later in 445BC.

The month of Nisan would have been 4 months after hearing the news of Jerusalem in the month of Kislev (Nehemiah 1:1)

Prior to this event, Nehemiah had always had joy serving the King.

The King's servant feared the displeasure of the King that someone who served Him would show an attitude of grief.

Before presenting request to an earthly King, Nehemiah prays to the "God of heaven"

Esther was possibly this queen or the "queen mother" with Artaxerxes as her step-son (Nehemiah 2:6).

Nehemiah was living in the comfortable palace, but he knelt before the King and said "send me" to a hurting, disheartened people.

The King allowed Nehemiah to go and rebuild Jerusalem upon the condition that he return to the King at a specified time.

Nehemiah requested a letter from the King for safe passage to the provinces beyond the Euphrates

Nehemiah also requested a letter from the King to the keeper of the forests (Asaph) to allow Nehemiah to use those resources to construct the wall and house in Jerusalem.

Tobiah sent letters of intimidation to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6:17-19). Nehemiah seems to have considered Tobiah to be his chief enemy; for he put him before Sanballat in his prayers to God to remember his opponents according to their works (Nehemiah 6:14)

Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, (13:28 - the Babylonian Sin-uballit, "may Sin give him life") and Tobiah, his probable Ammonite slave (King James Version, "servant") were wealthy, powerful "users" of the Israel people.

# Nehemiah Arrives in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:11-20)

<sup>11</sup> So I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days.  
<sup>12</sup> And I got up in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding.

<sup>13</sup> So I went out at night by the **Valley Gate** in the direction of the **Dragon's Spring** and *on* to the **Dung Gate**, and I was inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which had been **consumed by fire**.

<sup>14</sup> Then I passed on to the **Fountain Gate** and the **King's Pool**, but **there was no place for my mount to pass**.

<sup>15</sup> So I was going up at night by the ravine and inspecting the wall. Then I entered the **Valley Gate** again and returned.

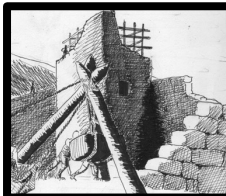
<sup>16</sup> **However, the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the rest who were doing the work.**

<sup>17</sup> Then I said to them, "You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates have been burned by fire. **Come, let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a disgrace.**"

<sup>18</sup> And I told them how **the hand of my God had been favorable to me** and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let's arise and build." So they put their hands to the good *work*.

<sup>19</sup> **But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"**

<sup>20</sup> So I answered them and said to them, "**The God of heaven will make us successful; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no part, right, or memorial in Jerusalem.**"



God was the motivation

3 Symbolizes "Revelation"



## Nehemiah's Night Tour

(Nehemiah 2:13-14)

Progression of Nehemiah	Story Line
1. Valley Gate	Difficult Times
2. Dragon's Well	Satan's Offer of Nourishment
3. Refuse Gate	Polluted & Wasted Life
4. Broken & Consumed by Fire	Judgment
5. Fountain Gate	Repenting & Cleansing
6. King's Pool	Exalted Life-Giving Reward

Nehemiah stayed in Jerusalem for 3 days before acting. This is a solid spiritual principle for those going into any ministry to take time to understand the social/political/physical landscape before rushing in.

~50 years earlier, Zechariah characterized Jerusalem as a city without walls (Zechariah 2:4-5)

Five categories of people did not realize what Nehemiah had seen: 1.Officials 2.Jews 3.Priests 4.Nobles 5.Officials 6.Workers

Nehemiah asked his peers to see and recognize their fallen state while encouraging them to rebuild the wall to protect them from the outside world

Nehemiah testified to the favor of His God and the King as he encouraged them to arise and perform the good work of rebuilding.

## Three Men Mock the Work of Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem

(Nehemiah 2:19)

Mocker	Meaning of Name	Native	Native Context
1. Sanballat	"Secret Enemy/Bramble bush"	The Horonite	Native of Beth-horon (Joshua 16:3, 5)
2. Tobiah	"God is Good"	The Ammonite	Youngest Daughter of Lot
3. Geshem	"Rain"	The Arab	South where Israel Wandered

Nehemiah is not mentioned by name in chapter 3.

# Work on Jerusalem's Wall (Nehemiah 3)

<sup>1</sup> Then Eliashib the high priest arose with his brothers the priests and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and installed its doors. They consecrated the wall to the Tower of the Hundred *and* the Tower of Hananel.

<sup>2</sup> And next to him the men of Jericho built, and next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

<sup>3</sup> Now the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and installed its doors with its bolts and bars.

<sup>4</sup> Next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah the son of Hakkoz made repairs. And next to him Meshullam the son of Berechiah the son of Meshezabel made repairs. And next to him Zadok the son of Baana *also* made repairs.

<sup>5</sup> Moreover, next to him the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not support the work of their masters.

<sup>6</sup> Now Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Ancient Gate; they laid its beams and installed its doors with its bolts and its bars.

<sup>7</sup> Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, also made repairs for the official seat of the governor *of the province beyond the Euphrates River*.

<sup>8</sup> Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the goldsmiths made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

<sup>9</sup> And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, the official of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs.



"Ichthys"



Using the GATES of Chapter 3, Nehemiah teaches what needs to be done to strengthen the walls in every believer's life.

## Sequence of Gates Corresponds with Walk of Believers (Nehemiah 3)

Gates	Reference	Symbolism
1. Sheep Gate	3:1	The Lamb of God
2. Fish Gate	3:3	New Believer
3. Old Gate	3:6	Old Nature
4. Valley Gate	3:13	Trials
5. Dung Gate	3:13	Sin's Consequences
6. Fountain Gate	3:15	The Work of the Spirit
7. Water Gate	3:26	Cleansing in the Word
8. Horse Gate	3:28	Spiritual Battle
9. East Gate	3:29	Physical Death
10. Muster Gate	3:31	Examination/Judgment Seat
11. Sheep Gate	3:32	The Lamb/Alpha-Omega

The walls of Jerusalem are demarcated by the Gates

Sheep Gate was the first gate built without locks (John 5:2); this is the gate through which the sheep were brought into the city to be sacrificed at the altar.

The Sheep Gate, of course, signifies the Lamb of God, whose blood was shed on the cross, and, therefore, it reveals the principle of the cross which is always the starting place for strength in one's life.

# Persecution of God's Workers (Nehemiah 4:1-14)

<sup>1</sup> Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry, and he mocked the Jews.

<sup>2</sup> And he spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy people of Samaria and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore *the temple* for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish *it* in a day? Can they revive the stones from the heaps of rubble, even the burned ones?"

<sup>3</sup> Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* near him, and he said, "Even what they are building—if a fox were to jump *on it*, it would break their stone wall down!"

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O our God, how we are *an object of contempt*! Return their taunting on their own heads, and turn them into plunder in a land of captivity.

<sup>5</sup> Do not forgive their guilt and do not let their sin be wiped out before You, for they have demoralized the builders.

<sup>6</sup> So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

<sup>7</sup> Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, *and* that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry.

<sup>8</sup> So all of them conspired together to come to fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

<sup>9</sup> But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

<sup>10</sup> And so in Judah it was said: "The strength of the burden bearers is failing, yet there is much rubble; and we ourselves are unable to rebuild the wall."

<sup>11</sup> And our enemies said, "They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them, and put a stop to the work."

<sup>12</sup> When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, "They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,"

<sup>13</sup> then I stationed *men* in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears, and bows.

<sup>14</sup> When I saw *their fear*, I stood and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people: "Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."



In Acts 2:13 some pursue God while others which evolves into complaining against God's workers (Acts 4:7) and then threats (Acts 4:17) then imprisonment (Acts 5:18) then beatings (Acts 5:40) and finally to murder of God's people (Acts 7:58).

Mocking (Proverbs 9:7-8) is a frequent worldly response to God's activity (Galatians 6:7)

A useful reaction to scoffers is prayer (Proverbs 9:7-8)

Ridicule comes from pride (Proverbs 21:24)

Nehemiah prays that those mocking would be judged accordingly (Jeremiah 18:23)

Believers should understand their vulnerabilities & guard to defend those areas.

God's people are called to obediently serve the Lord with "all of their heart". This unity of purpose and Spirit can accomplish great objectives.

Believers should not downplay the hatred that the world has for Jesus and His followers (John 15:18-25). Defense is combination of prayer and action

Israel struggled with pessimism as well as persecution. The Israelites quote the enemies by calling the broken wall a pile of "rubbish". (Nehemiah 4:2)

Internal Strife

Overcharging interest is called "usury"

# Exploitation of Brothers (Nehemiah 5:1-13)

**1 Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers.**

**2** For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let's get grain so that we may eat and live."

**3** And there were *others* who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses so that we might get grain because of **the famine.**"

**4** There also were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our fields and our vineyards.

**5** And now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage *already*, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others."

**6** Then I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words.

**7** So I thought it over and contended with the nobles and the leading people, and said to them, "You are **lending at interest, each to his brother!**" Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.

**8** And I said to them, "We, according to our ability, have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us?" Then they were silent and could not find a word *to say.*

**9** So I said, "The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the taunting of the nations, our enemies?"

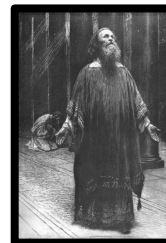
**10** And likewise I, my brothers, and my servants are lending them money and grain. **Please, let's do without this interest.**

**11** Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, as well as the hundredth *part* of the money and of the grain, the new wine, and the oil that you are charging as interest from them."

**12** Then they said, "We will give *it* back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say." So I called the priests and made them take an oath to act in accordance with this promise.

**13** I also shook out the front of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every person from his house and from his possessions who does not keep this promise; just so may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said, "Amen!" And they praised the LORD. Then the people acted in accordance with this promise.

The mention of the wives shows the negative affect on the family life



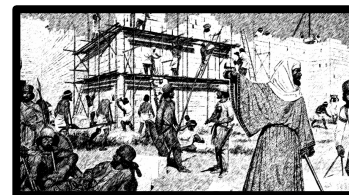
If left to their own devices, the men may not have protested as adamantly if not for their wives.

Some families were repopulating Israel, but they didn't have food or resources to feed their sons and daughters.

Some were only able to provide for their large Jewish families by mortgaging their homes and fields.

Although these Jews considered themselves as equals, some had to sell their daughters into slavery because of their economic obligations.

Hebrews had a tradition of selling themselves into bondage to pay off debt (Exodus 21:1-11; Lev 25:39; Deuteronomy 15:12-18)



Nehemiah's initial response to the exploitation of his fellow Jews was anger followed by a public admonition

Although the "noblemen" had not broken the letter of the law, they had broken the spirit or intent of the Mosaic law to love each other.