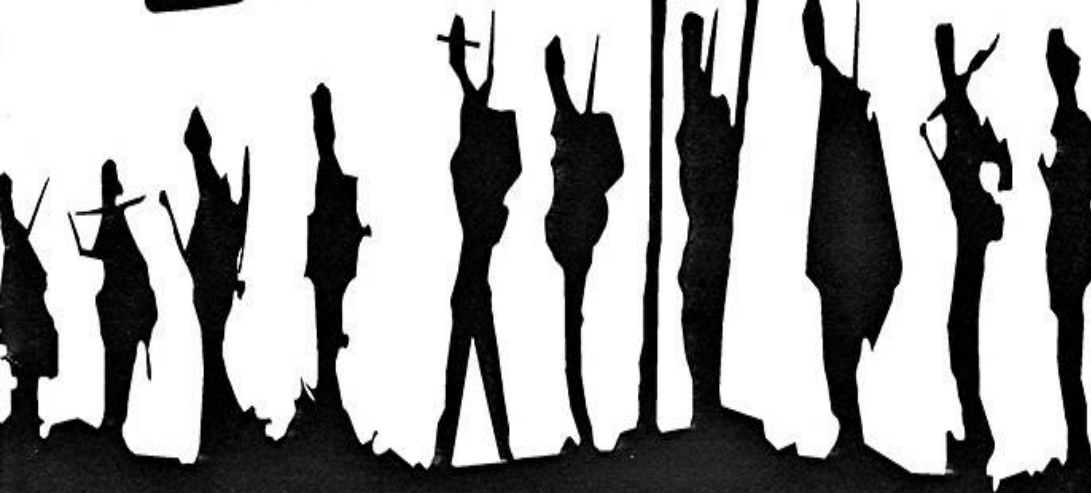


WHY DO THE NATIONS

RAGE?



PSALM 2

- Psalm 2 captures the spiritual and political realities facing Nehemiah
- Local and regional leaders steadily increase the pressure on the Jews
- Why are these rulers against rebuilding Jerusalem?
- The reasons for their opposition aren't stated

# WHY THE HATRED FOR THE JEWS?

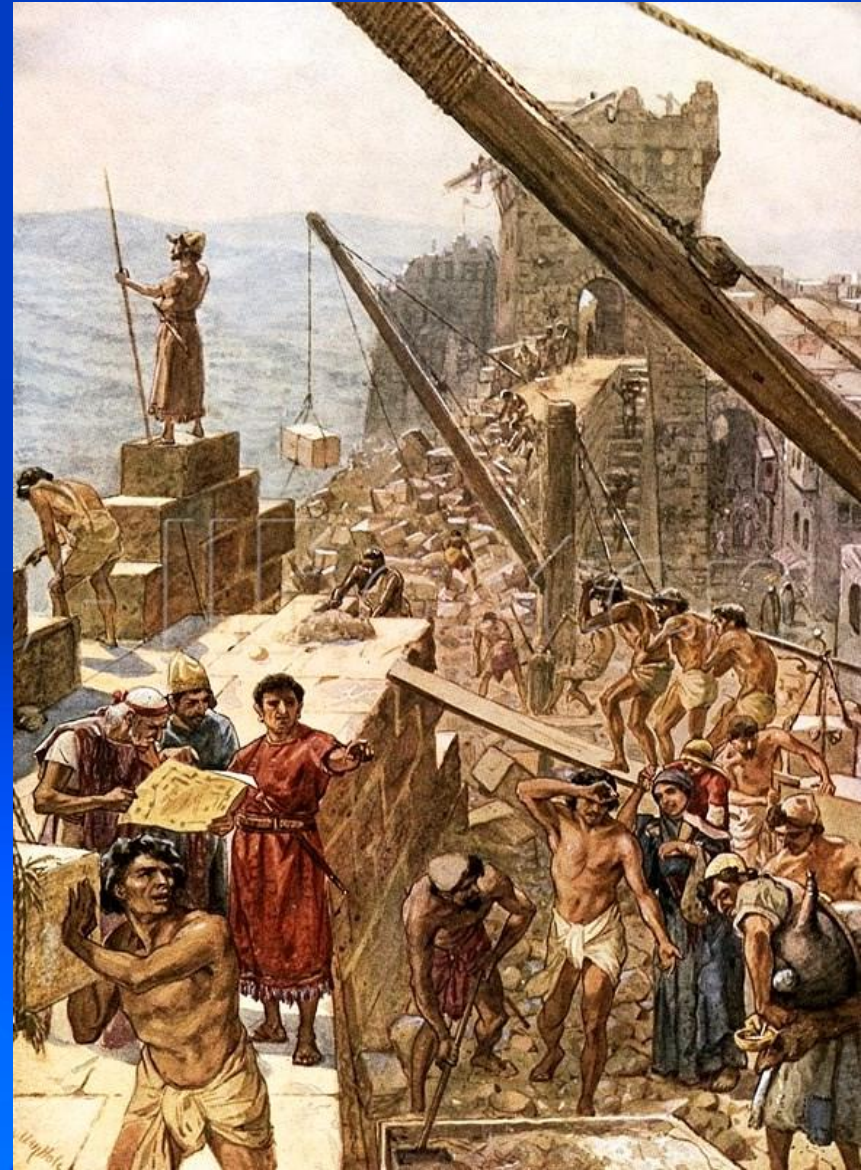


- Sanvalat, Toviyah & Geshem felt they had some inherent right to Jerusalem
- The farther from the capital of Persia a province was, the harder it was for the King to control
- Kings and governors love prestige, power and control
- Reading Nehemiah is like reading today's Jerusalem Post



# NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 4: THE OPPOSITION ESCALATES

- Nehemiah had organized the Jews into teams
- The opening verse sets the context for the entire chapter
- A 4<sup>th</sup> gentile leader joins the other 3 to oppose the Jews
- ***Ashdodim*** = people of Ashdod
- Was formerly Philistia
- Still populated by Philistines



# THE GANG OF 4 YESTERDAY AND TODAY

- Sanvalat  
West Bank, Samaria  
*Palestinians*
- Toviyah  
Ammonites, Jordan
- Geshem Negev to  
Arabian Peninsula,  
Saudi Arabia
- Ruler of Ashdodim  
Philistia, *Palestinians*





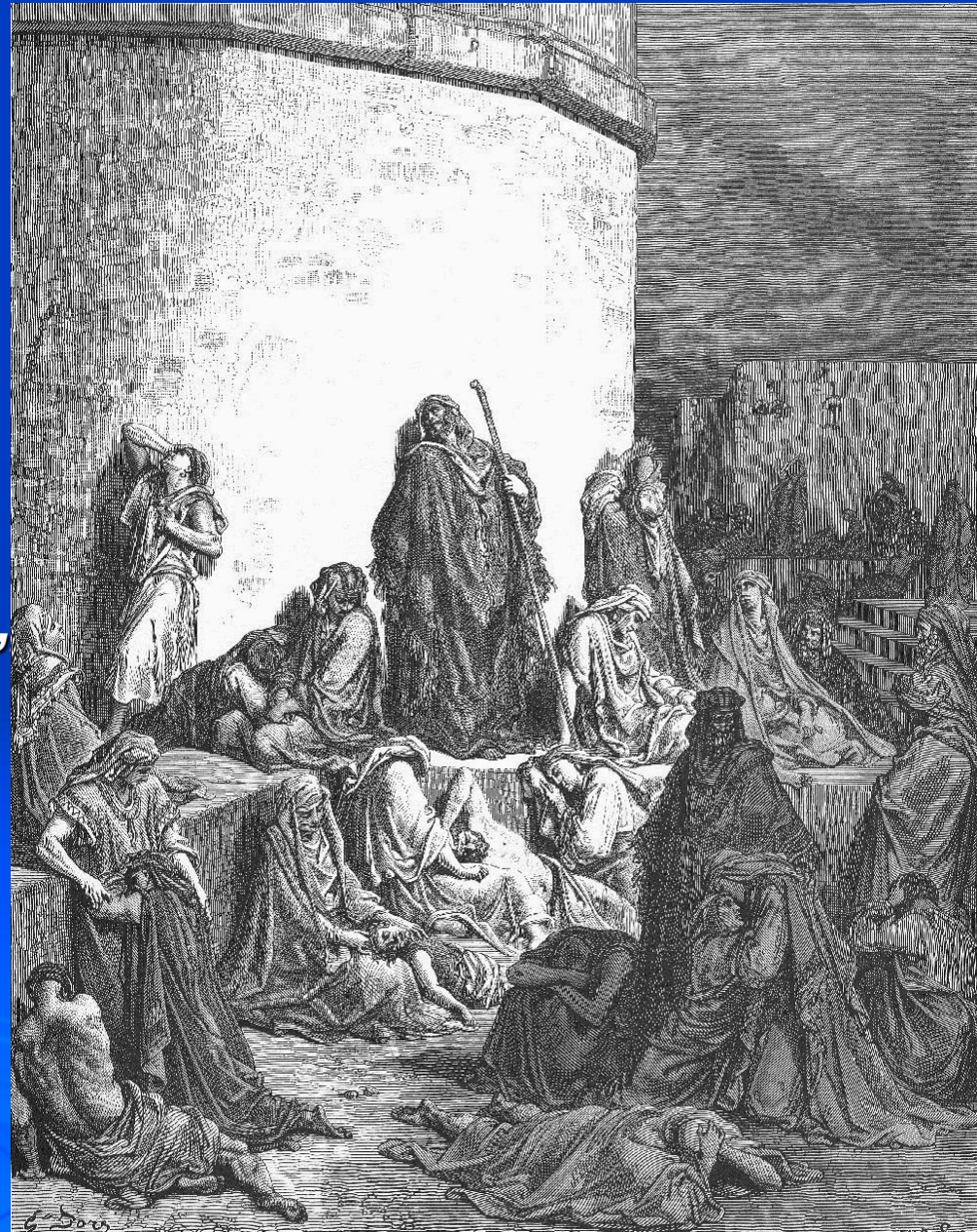
# ATTACK OR BLUFF?

- Probably intended to commit terrorist-like acts and intensify the pressure on the Jews
- Artaxerxes had given Nehemiah his approval so gang of 4 had to be a little cautious in their retribution
- Ezra 4:21 – 23
- 4 rulers may have hoped that with bloodshed the King would rethink his plans to rebuild Jerusalem
- Nehemiah's response was first to pray, then to ACT !



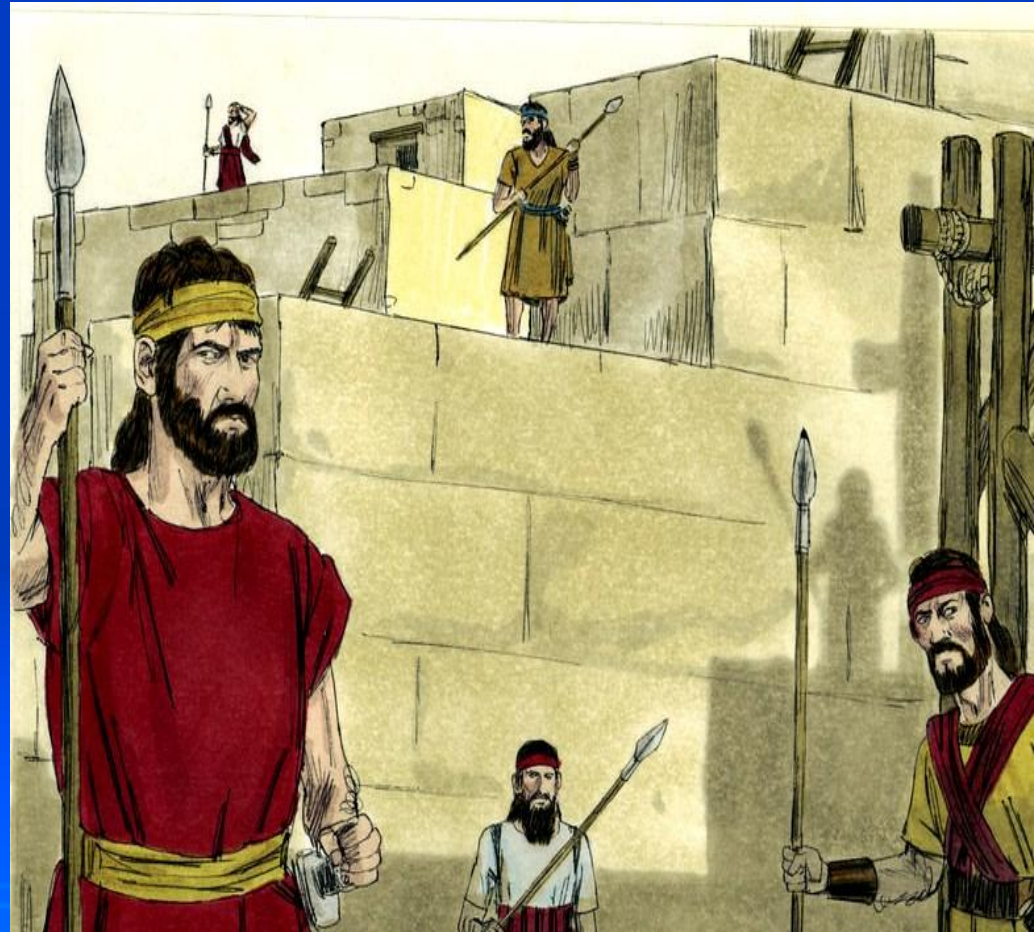
# DISCOURAGED AND EXHAUSTED

- Constant intimidation, being away from home, unable to farm caused Jews to lose their zeal
- *“The strength of the people who carry loads away is starting to fail and there is so much rubble that we can’t build the wall”*
- ***Qinah*** = a lament
- Nehemiah knows he must act or the people will lose their will to continue

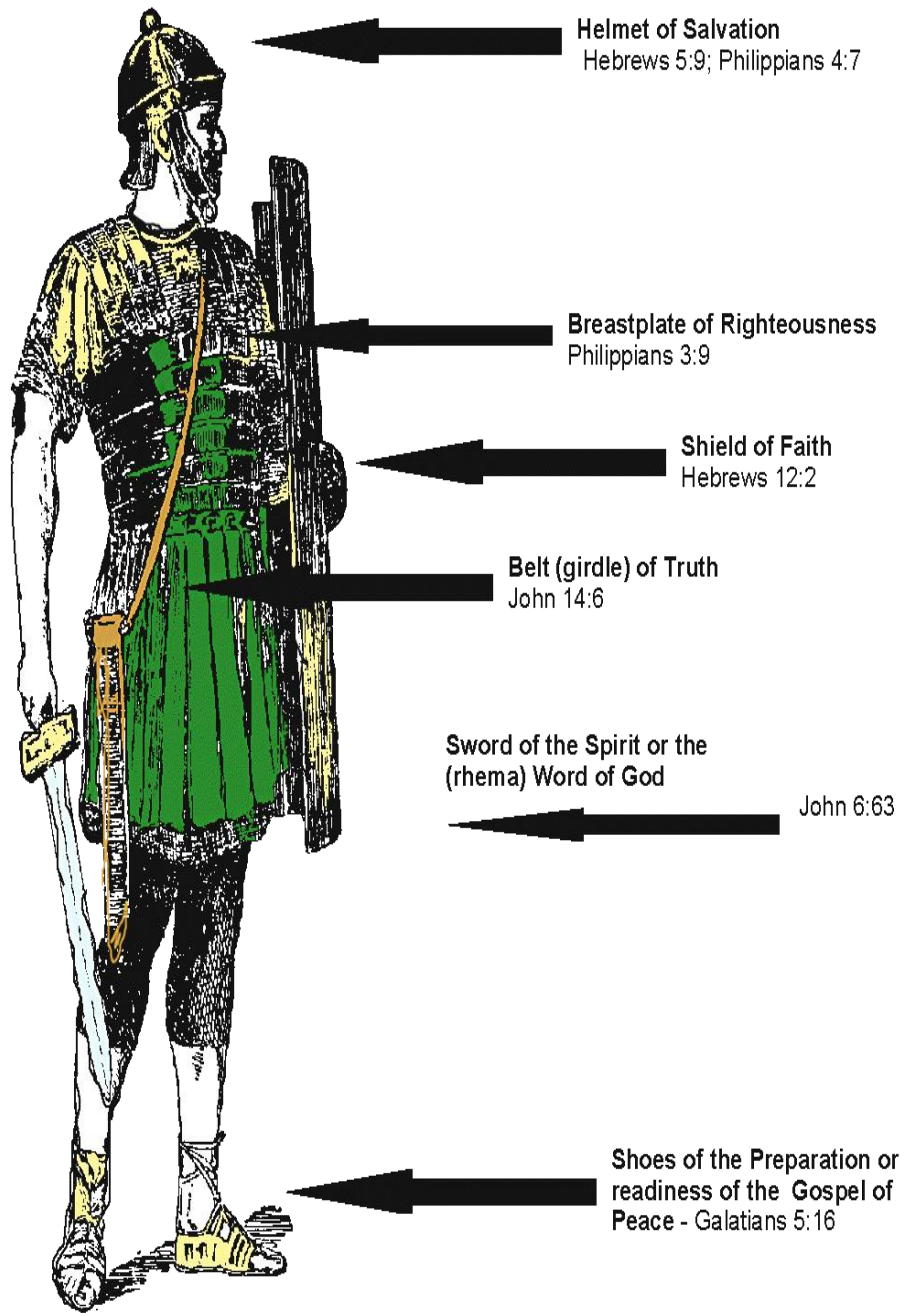


# PRECAUTIONS AGAINST ATTACK

- Vs. 7 unintelligible, with copyist errors
- Men strategically stationed around the wall perimeter
- Full time standing army supplement by militia
- People of Judah gathered courage when they came together and were prepared and organized to fight if needed



# PASSIVITY NOT ACCEPTABLE !

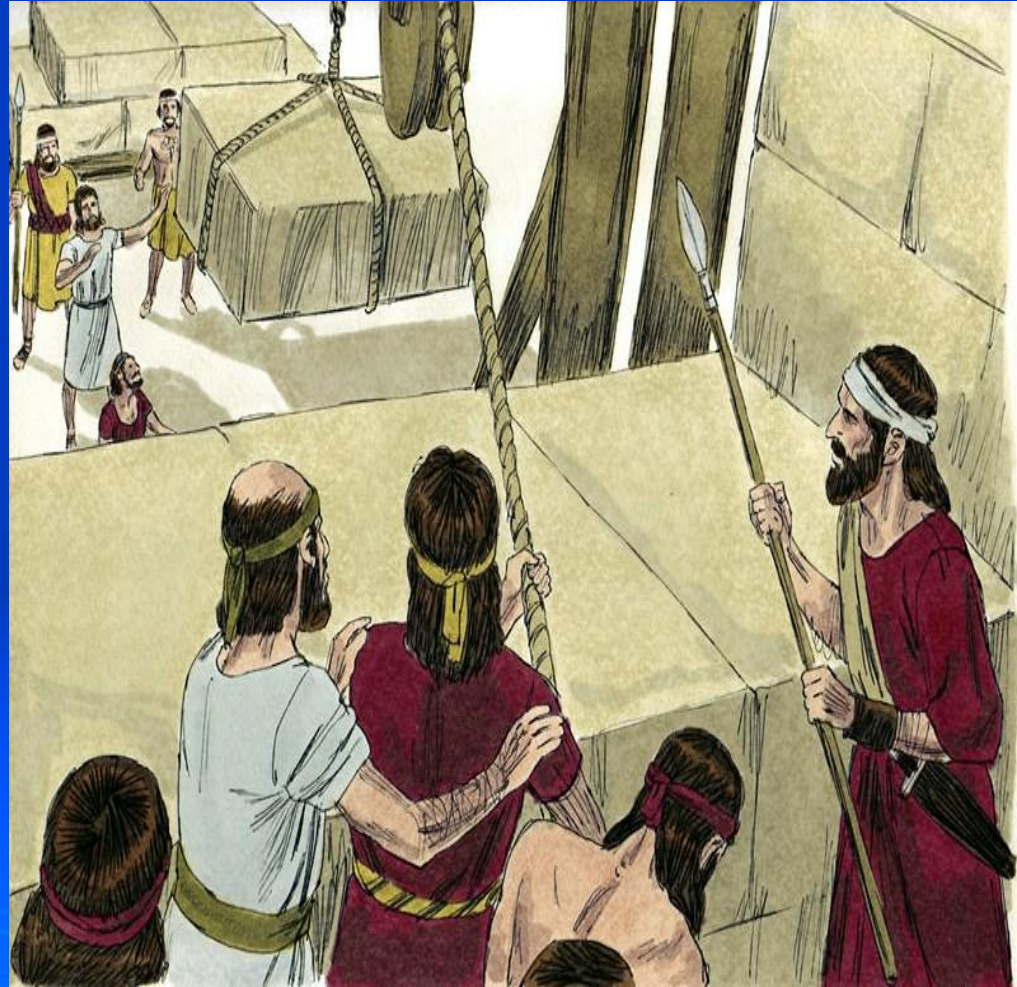


- Paul used war metaphors to teach against fear and passivity
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Ephesians 6:14 Does NOT say to run away, it says to **STAND!**
- Prayer is the preparation for battle
- **ONLY** when fighting spirits is prayer also the battle plan
- When fighting evil spirit-led humans, we must stand and do battle !



# MOST POWERFUL MOTIVATION IS FIGHTING FOR THOSE YOU LOVE

- Time for prayer and contemplation had passed, time to take action had arrived !
- From now on, the Jews would have to remain ready and alert
- **Ne-aray** = my men
- Indicates the troops who came with Nehemiah
- Workers not exempt from battle, so had to carry swords on their thighs
- Everyone required to stay in Jerusalem, even at night



# GOD CALLS US TO BE BUILDERS AND WARRIORS



- Nehemiah: a well trained leader, planner & organizer, acted with confidence and authority
- Led in a Godly way, as a shepherd to his people and a servant of God
- Trained in the Torah
- In that day the Bible had given way to early Judaism: Scripture mixed with traditions and customs
- We must rid ourselves of passivity, indifference, fear, and willful ignorance of God's Word