

# PASSIVITY: THE SILENT ENEMY OF FAITH



- Nehemiah faced with threats of 4 rulers who didn't want Jerusalem rebuilt
- Action is NOT the enemy of faith
- Spiritual Warfare in Ephesians 6
- Gentile Church leaders decided that passivity is to be the path of the Believer
- Instead of:  
Pray, Prepare, **STAND!**  
The new motto became:  
Pray, Sit, Wait



- Jewish workers were losing their enthusiasm
- Exhausted, their families missed them, unable to help with farming
- Nehemiah's solution to the threats: 1) help the people recognize power in unity 2) let them see that there was a plan of defense in place
- Desertion was a possibility so Nehemiah ordered all workers to remain in Jerusalem at night





- Lack of fundamental fairness is tearing the community of Judah apart
- Huge gap in personal wealth between aristocrats and the common Jews
- 21<sup>st</sup> century is experiencing this, with America as Ground Zero
- The issue is one of Jew against Jew
- Even the women are stepping forward, as their children's lives and futures are in doubt
- 2 main factors: 1) Nehemiah insisted that the top priority is rebuilding the walls 2) The 4 enemies had set up a trade embargo that was strangling Judah economically

# SAME THINGS, SAME PLACES, SAME PEOPLE, SAME PURPOSE

- Israel's enemies using embargo to try to force Israel to cede land to Palestinians, and to share Jerusalem
- BDS: Boycott, Divest, Sanction
- Adopted by Universities, unions, trade guilds, pension funds, EU as policy
- Nothing more nor less than Anti-Semitism

**FREE PALESTINE**



**BOYCOTT ISRAEL**



# WHERE ARE THE OUTCRIES?



- Just as in the lead-up to the Holocaust, nobody seems to notice or care
- The Lord is giving us an opportunity to stand up and be counted, and to comfort His people
- Purchase Israeli made products !
- Leadership can be distracted by other matters and miss the dire situation of the common people



# 3 DIFFERENT GROUPS

## 3 DIFFERENT REASONS

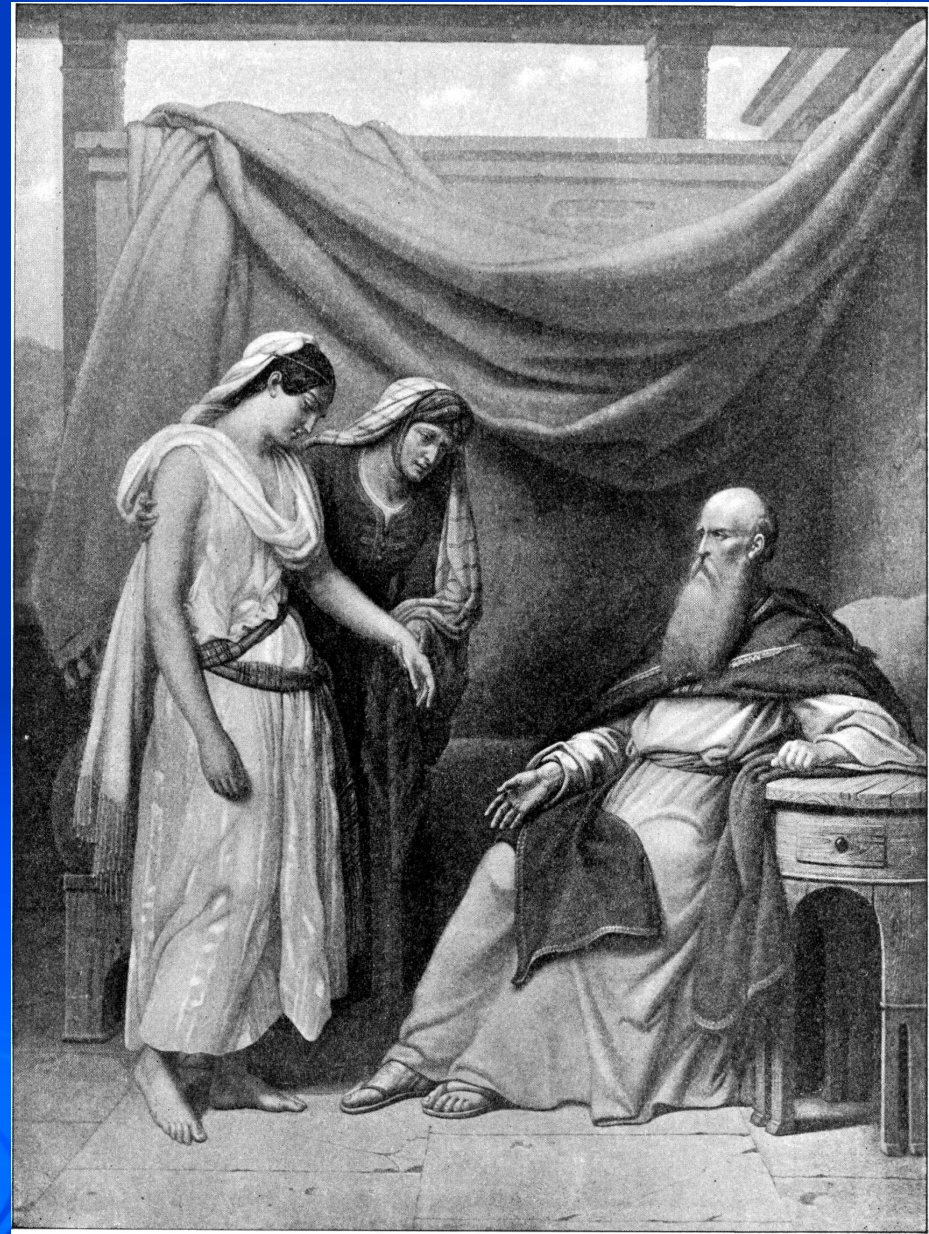


- Group 1: vs. 2  
Those who had no land, so didn't grow food
- Group 2: vs. 3  
Folks who DID own land, DID grow food, but had to mortgage their land to survive
- Group 3: vs. 4  
Like the 2<sup>nd</sup> group who had land, but this group was being taxed to death



# DAUGHTERS GIVEN AWAY

- It was rich Jews who were the cause of the complaint
- Vs. 5 “.....daughters submitted..”
- Esther 7:8
- ***Kabash*** = to submit sexually to a man
- Daughters given as 2<sup>nd</sup> wife (concubine ?)
- Worse than bond servitude since “marriage” was for life!





# LEGAL TO BE A BOND SERVANT

- Legal to use land as collateral on a loan
- Purpose was to help the poor survive AND recover
- NOT for the rich to take advantage and acquire more land
- Lev 25:14, 17, 23-24, 33-37, 44-46
- Outline principles for transactions between Hebrews
- These principles were not being observed, but rather used for exploitation of the poor





# ARISTOCRATS PUT ON TRIAL

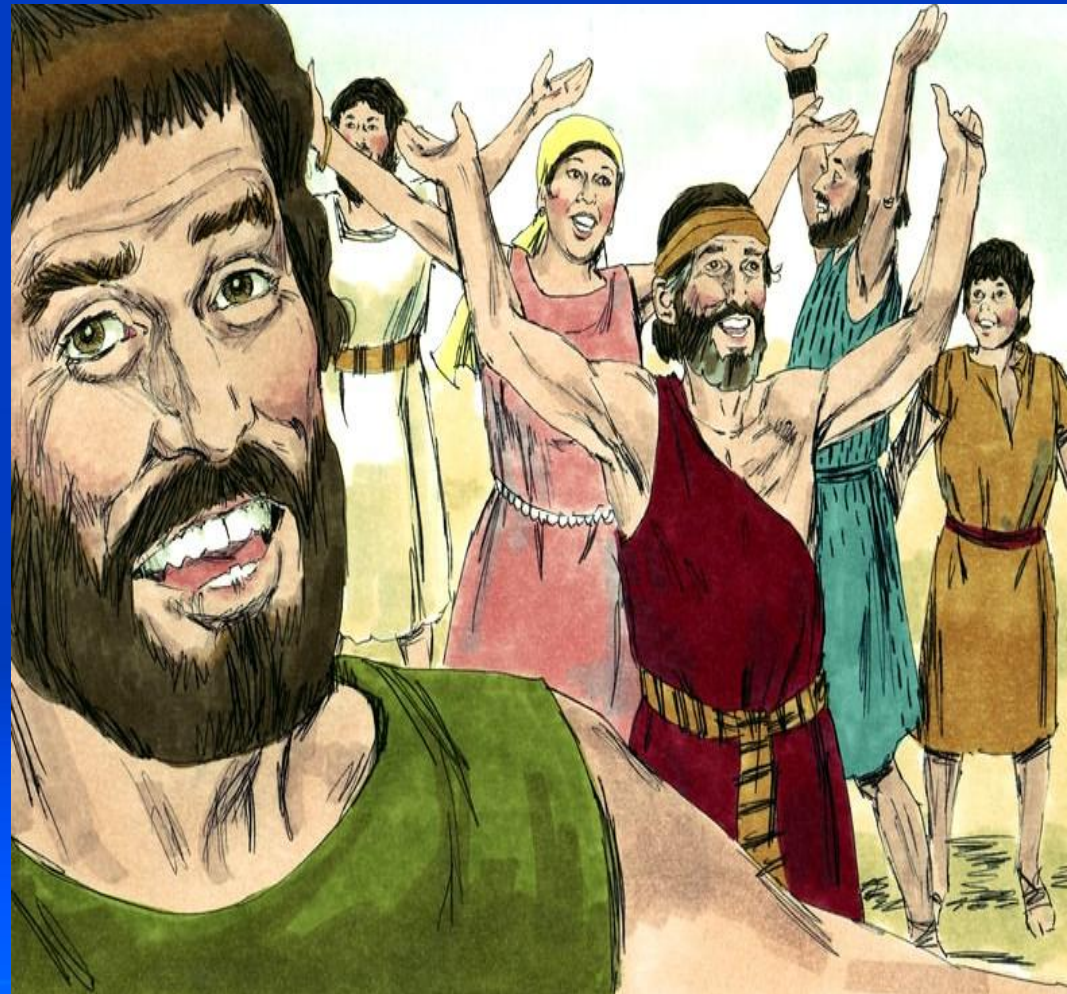


- Community in danger of rupturing
- An assembly called, the nobles and rulers confronted
- Issue: fundamental fairness
- On one hand the rich Jews redeemed the poor from servitude to pagans
- On the other hand, they put them right back in servitude, but to other Jews!
- A moral absurdity
- Technically it was legal, but it violated the SPIRIT of the Law
- Lev. 25:17



# PEOPLE FREED FROM DEBT

- Normally, a good legal defense that selling a Jew to pagans is different than selling a Jew to another Jew
- However in this case the well-being of the community was at stake
- Guilty as charged!
- Those who lost their land had it returned
- Interest collected was reimbursed
- *Me'ah* = hundred, or in context 1/100<sup>th</sup>





# PRIESTS ADMINISTER A VOW



- Nehemiah shakes out fold in his garment as symbolic
- A curse that if the rich failed in their vow, that God would rid Himself of the rich or take every valuable thing from them
- The spirit of the vow represented well in 1John 3:17-18