

# NEHEMIAH ENDS AT ABOUT 400 B.C.

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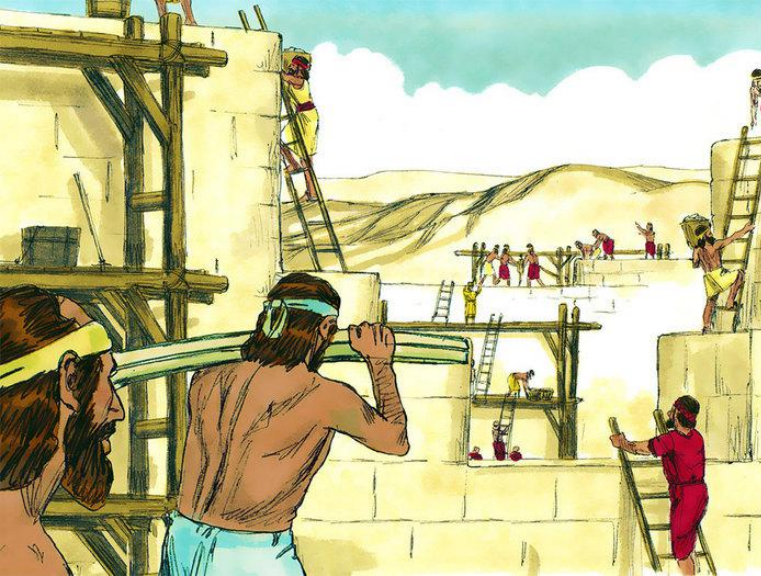
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NEW TESTAMENT

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- Apocrypha seen as a “lesser” level of inspiration than the 66 books of the Protestant Bible
- The 400 year Silent Period is anything but silent
- Deals with the end of the Persian Empire, and rise of the Greek and Roman Empires

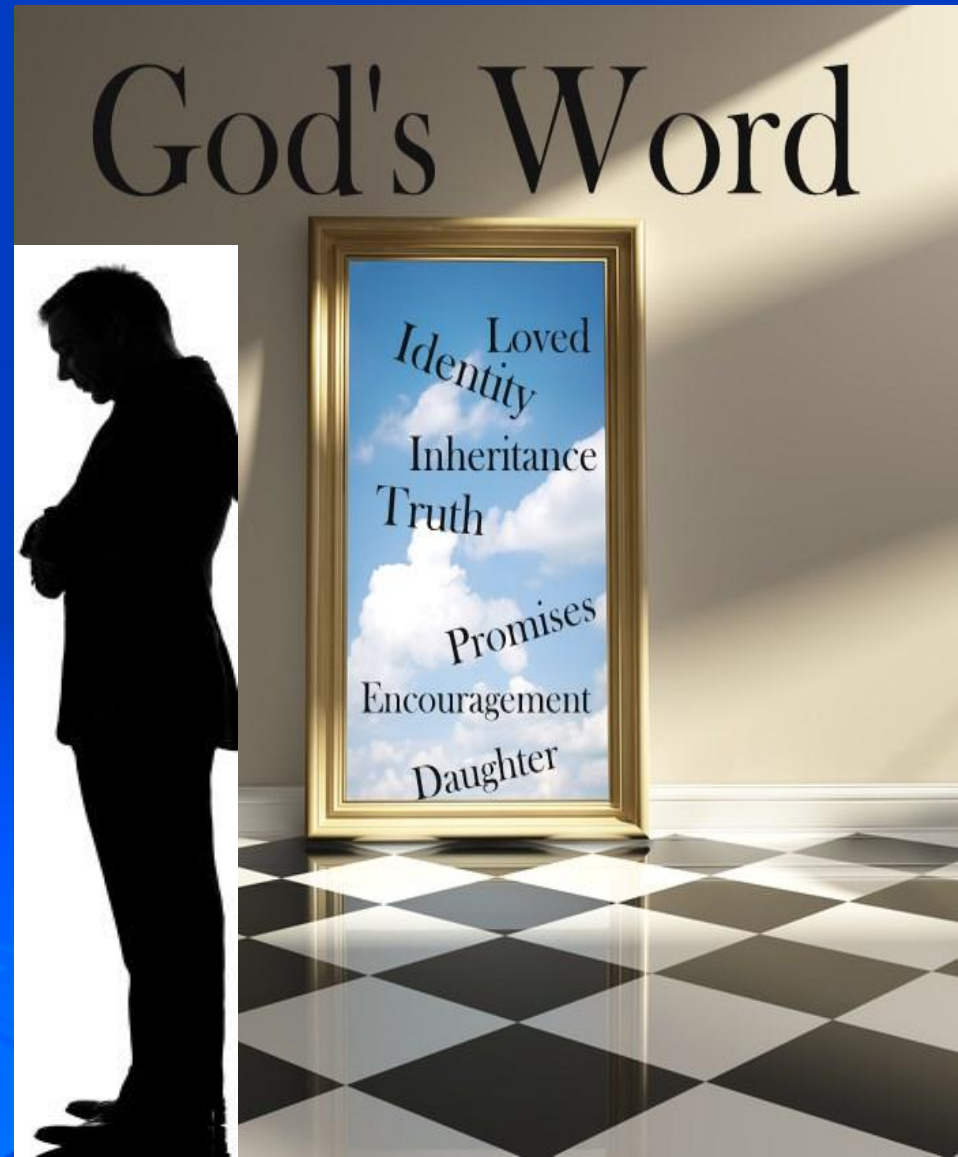
# JUDAH'S SOCIETY REGRESSED



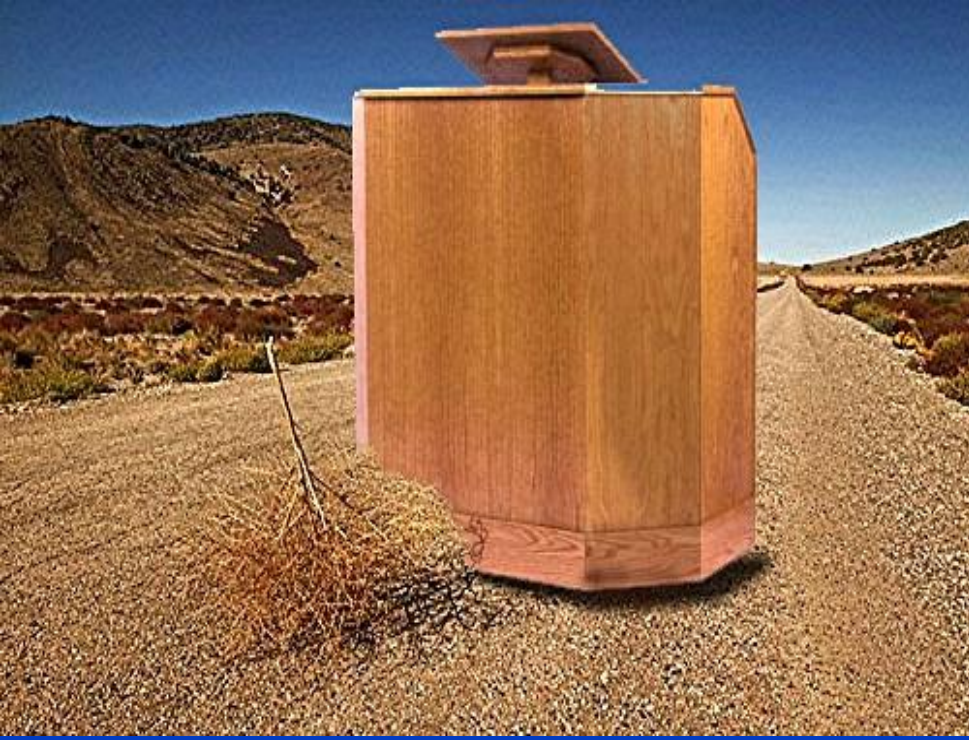
- Nehemiah 13 is about Nehemiah's return from Babylon to Jerusalem
- Many reforms instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah
- Jerusalem's economy UP
- Population of Jerusalem UP
- Jews' swore an oath never to abandon God's Temple
- In Nehemiah's absence *Elyashiv* gave the foreigner Toviya use of Temple storage chambers
- This led to the citizens of Judah ending their tithing to support Priests and Levites

# WHEN THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS FAIL, SOCIETY FAILS

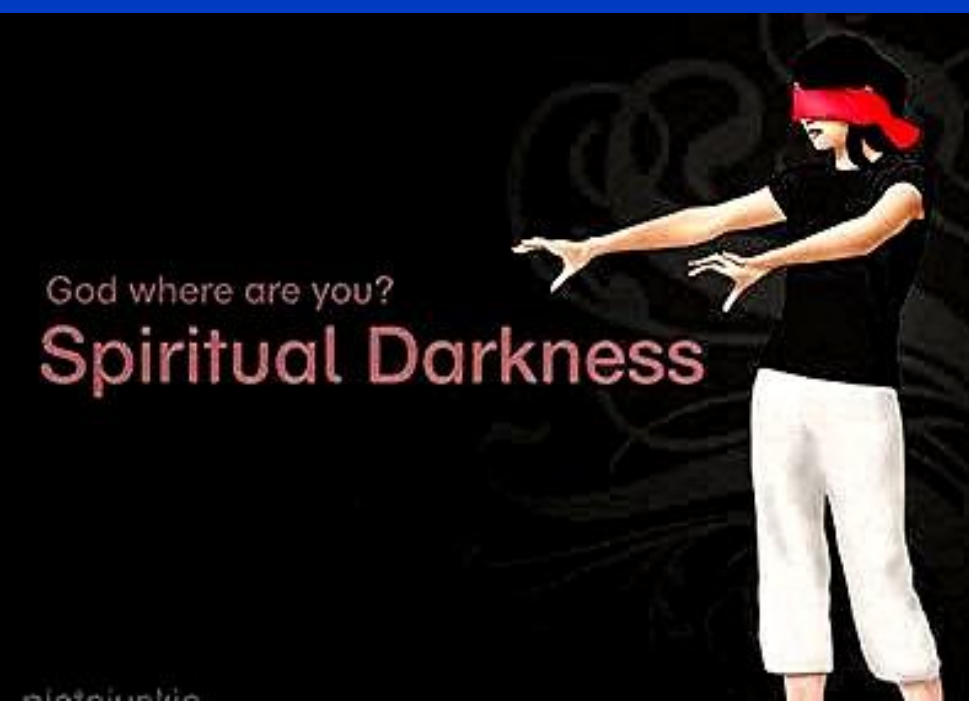
- Nehemiah probably gone 3 or more years
- How did things get so out of control, so fast?
- James 1:23, 24
- When God's Word stops being taught, bad leaders go unchecked
- When society fails the FIRST thing that must be restored is the preeminence of the Lord and His commandments
- Ezra came first to restore God's Torah, then Nehemiah to restore the city and nation



# SAME PATTERN IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



- Each election cycle we descend further into chaos
- How did it happen? A failure at the pulpit
- Manmade Traditions replaced God's Word
- Instead of light and discernment, the goal is prosperity, popularity, peace and love at any cost

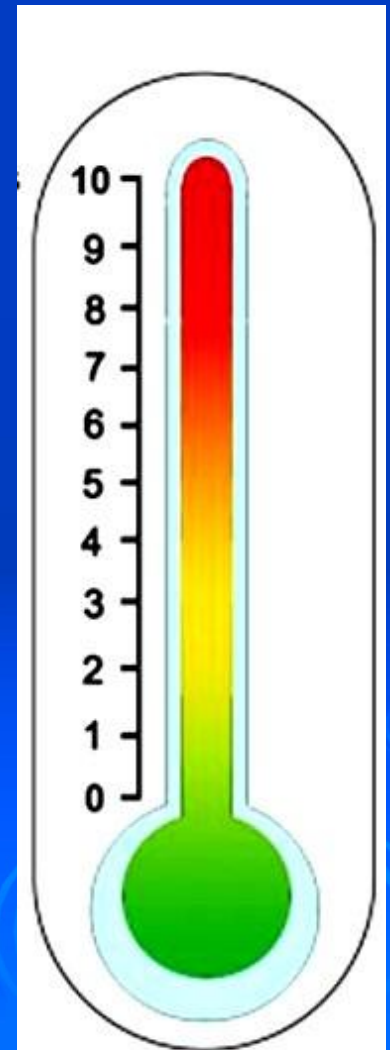


God where are you?

**Spiritual Darkness**

# SHABBAT: GOD'S SPIRITUAL THERMOMETER

- Shabbat is a central issue in Ezra and Nehemiah
- It is used as the measure of Jewish society's faithfulness to Yehoveh
- Ex. 31:13 – 17
- Shabbat is the sign of a people set-apart for God
- Shabbat is THE DAY OF REST
- Ex. 20:8 – 11
- Shabbat is NOT the official Biblical "Day of Worship"
- There is no such thing



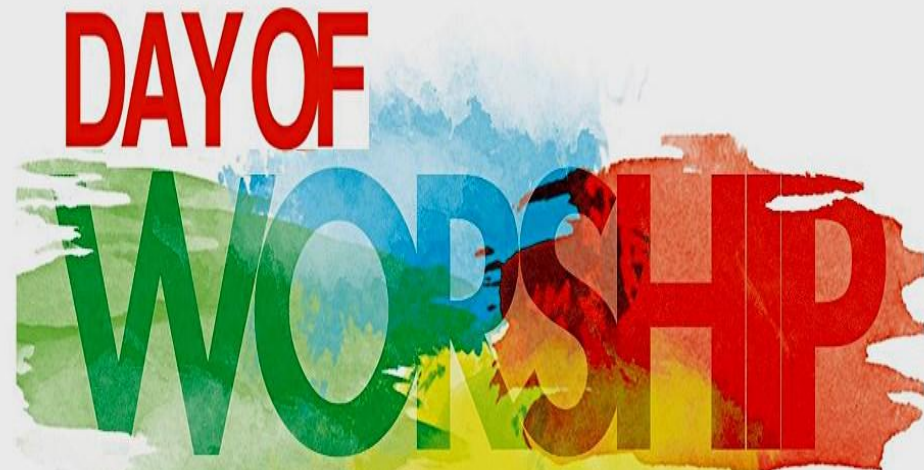
# MUDDIED WATERS

- Every day is a day of worship
- Shabbat is a GREAT day to worship God!
- But so is Sunday, or all other days
- Judaism has NO day of worship, but DOES have God-ordained Sabbath
- Christianity has NO God-ordained Sabbath, but DOES have a manmade day of worship
- The issue of Shabbat is REST.....not worship

# SABBATH REST.

(it's part of the program!)

# OR



# SELLING ON SHABBAT



- Jews intent on bringing produce to Jerusalem to sell on Shabbat
- Made a vow NOT to do that! Neh. 10:32
- Tyrians also wanted to sell on Shabbat
- Prophet Amos spoke about Hebrews not forgoing work on Shabbat
- Amos 8:4 - 7

# SABBATH ESTABLISHED AT CREATION, NOT AT MT. SINAI

AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD ENDED HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD DONE, AND HE RESTED

- Shabbat was established for all mankind
- Shabbat as a somewhat separate issue from the Law
- Ezekiel 20:11 – 13
- Shabbat not given only to Israel

GENESIS 2:2



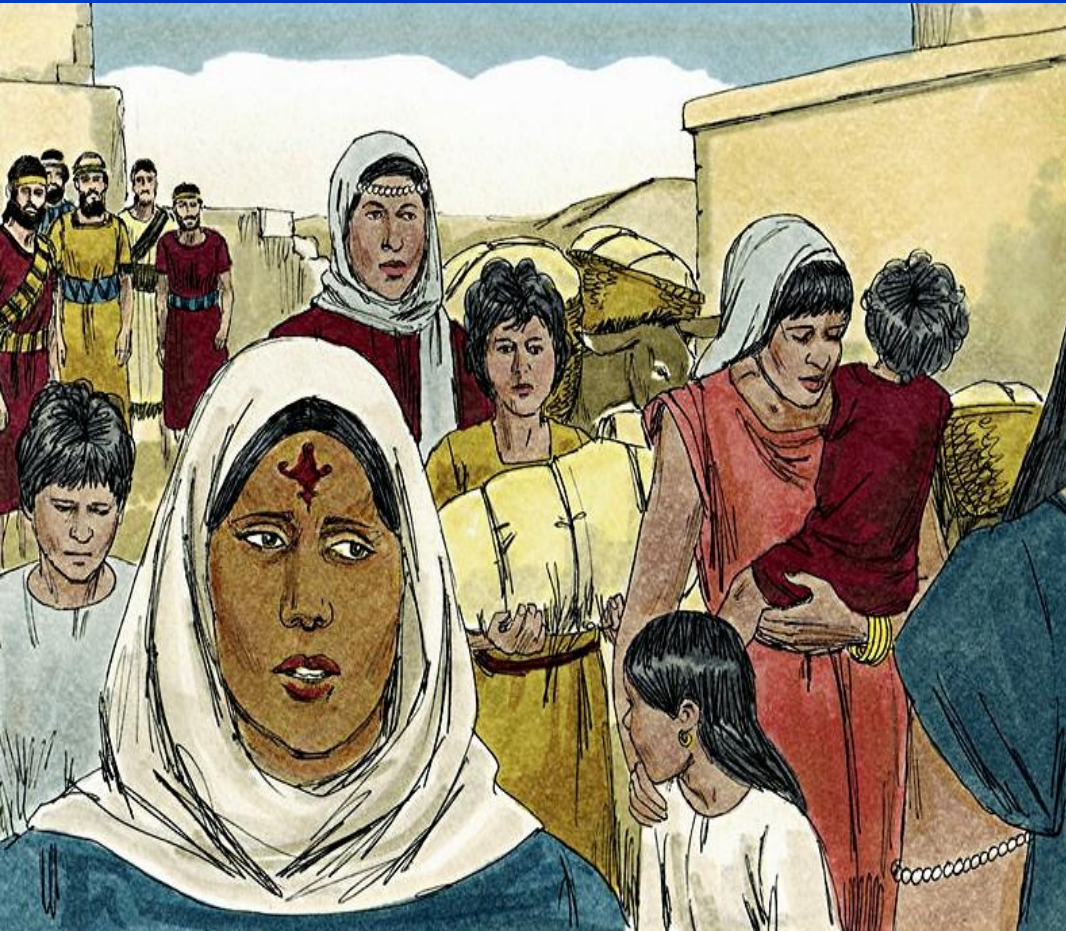
# SHABBAT SELLING PUTS ALL OF JUDAH IN DANGER!

- Nehemiah argues with the aristocrats
- Tells them that they risk God's wrath again for defiling the Shabbat
- Levites take control of gates at beginning of each Shabbat
- Sellers still hung around outside until Nehemiah chased them away



"We would not buy it of them on the sabbath."—*Neh. x. 34.*

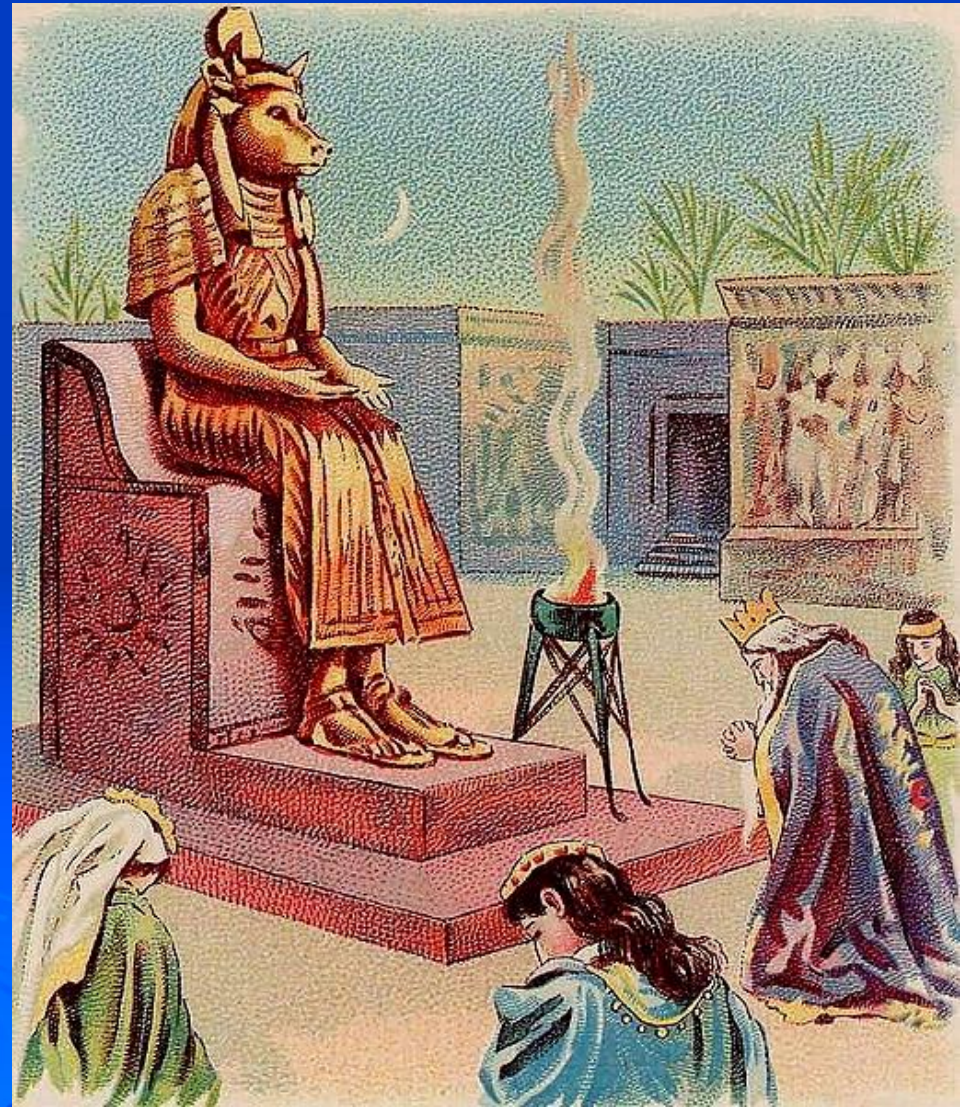
# ISSUE OF MARRIAGE TO PAGAN WOMEN APPEARS AGAIN



- Although Nehemiah chastised the people he did NOT demand divorce
- 3 people groups: Ashdod, Ammon, Moab
- Language seemed to be at the heart of the problem for Nehemiah
- The presence of foreign languages was a painful reminder of how Judah had backslidden so thoroughly

# NEHEMIAH REMINDS THEM ABOUT KING SOLOMON

- Even though God loved King Solomon, Solomon sinned and God was compelled to mete out justice to him
- 1Kings 11:1 – 11
- Yoyada, son of High Priest Elyashiv, marries daughter of Sanvalat
- Sin is a top-down affair
- The leadership did detestable things, and the common folks followed suit



# Be Ye Separate

- The issue of the High Priest was critical
- His offspring could become the next High Priest!
- Vss. 30 and 31 list Nehemiah's many reforms
- Israel was to be separate....NOT better or superior to others
- If Believers ever become indistinguishable from the world, we cannot function as God's servants
- Leviticus 20:26 *".....I have set you apart from the other peoples....so that you can belong to Me..."*