Walking with the Captives

Week 8

Ezra and Nehemiah

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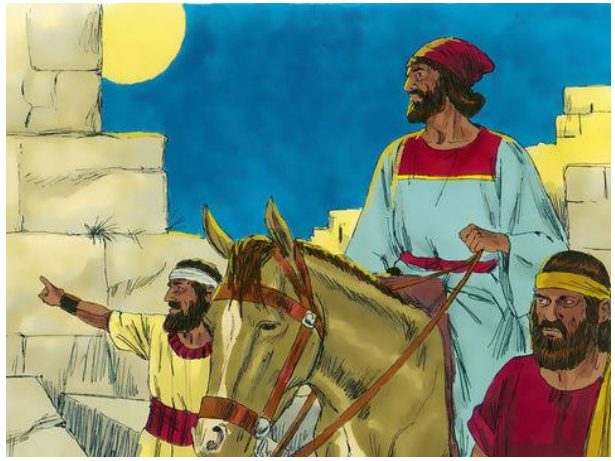
Old English words 18

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Nehemiah the king's cupbearer



Nehemiah views the broken-down walls at night

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Sunday

Sacrifices but Ezra grieved at sin

Bible Reading: Ezra 8v33-36; 9v1-4

1. What happened on their 4th day in Jerusalem? (8v33)
2. Where? (v33)
3. Who weighed it? (v33)
4. What did the people offer to God? (v35)
5. Who did they deliver the king's commissions to? (v36)

The river mentioned here is the river Euphrates.

6. What did the princes tell Ezra about? (9v1)
7. How had they mingled with those nations? (v2) *Find them on a map*

Holy seed means that Israelites were to be a holy people before the Lord. God had chosen them and set them apart to be a holy nation. They were not to marry people from the Canaanite nations around them who worshipped idols. They were descendants of Ham. (Genesis 10v6, 15-20; Exodus 34v11-16; Leviticus 20v26; Deuteronomy 7v1-6)

8. Who were chief in this trespass? (v2)
9. What did Ezra do? (v3)
10. Who did he assemble together? (v4)
11. How long did he sit astonished? (v4)

Ezra taught God's law. People trembled at it. Sin had to be dealt with.



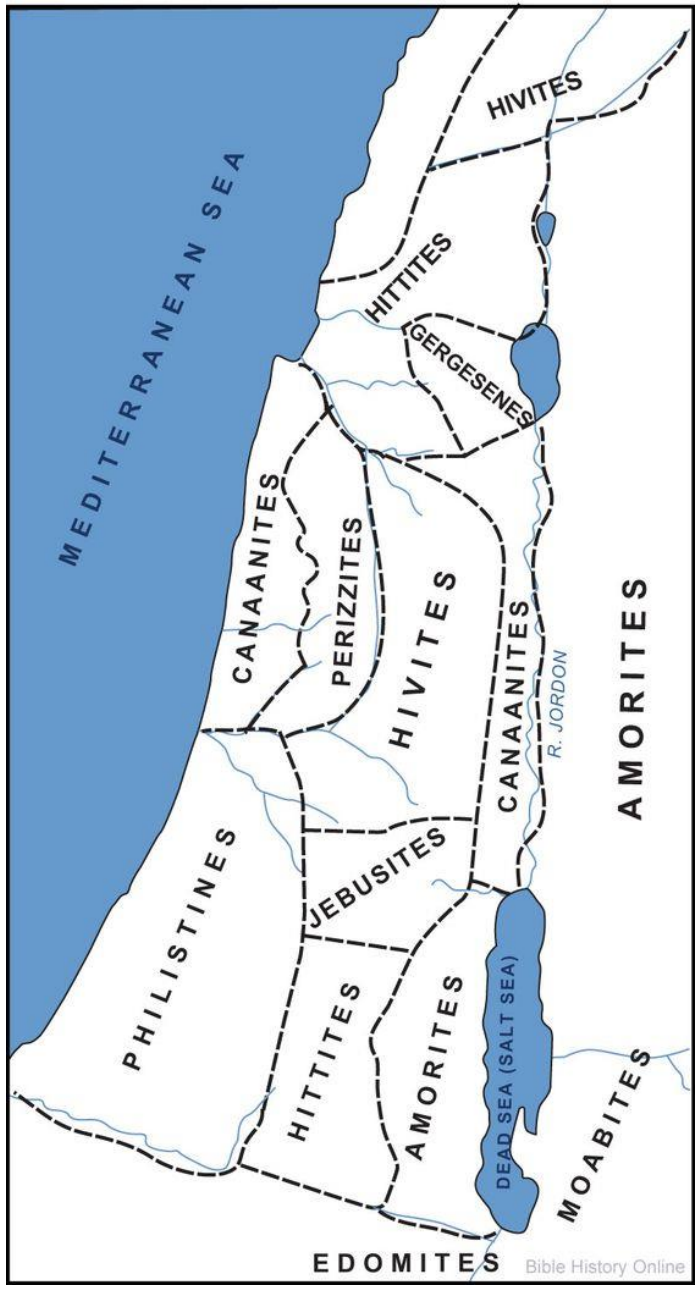
"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you." (Leviticus 20v7+8)

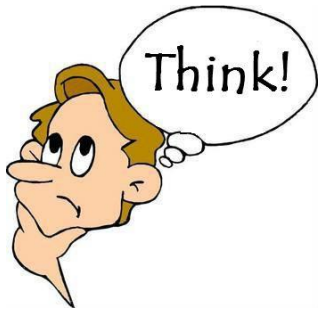
"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." (Leviticus 20v26)

Answers

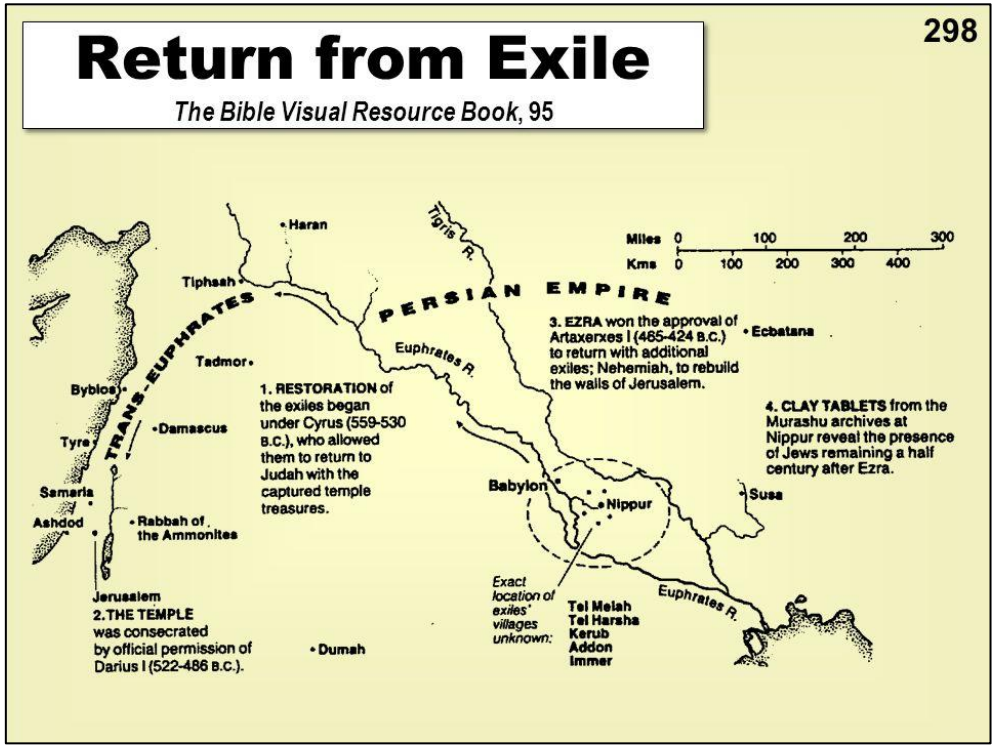
1) Silver and gold and temple vessels were weighed; 2) In the house (temple) of God; 3) Meremoth the priest; 4) Burnt offerings, 12 bullocks, 96 rams, 77 lambs, and 12 male goats for sin offering; 5) Kings lieutenants and governors over Judah; 6) The people, priests and Levites of Israel had not separated themselves from people of other lands and did their abominations; 7) They had married people from other nations; 8) Princes and rulers; 9) Tore his clothes, pulled his hair and sat down astonished; 10) Everyone who feared the words of the God of Israel; 11) Until the evening sacrifice

MAP OF CANAANITE NATIONS





Ezra was astonished and grieved at the people's sin. Are you shocked and saddened by sin? Or do you laugh at it....and even make excuses for it.



Monday

Ezra prays and confesses sins

Bible Reading: Ezra 9v5-15

1. What did Ezra do at the evening sacrifice? (v5)
2. How did he feel about the sin? (v6)
3. What did he say about how much the sin had increased and grown? (v6)
4. What had happened before because of the nation's sins? (v7)
5. How had God showed His grace to them? (v8)
6. Who had NOT forsaken them in their captivity? (v9)
7. What did God give them a reviving to do? (v9)
8. What had they forsaken? (v10)
9. What had the Canaanite nations filled the land with? (v11)

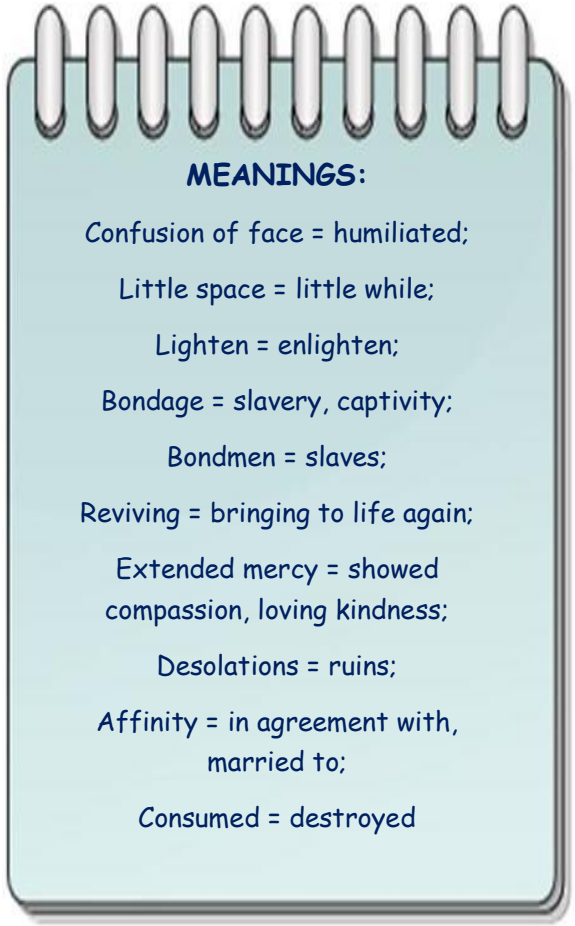
This means all the sinful things they did…. especially in their worship of idols.

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10. What were the Israelites NOT meant to do? (v12)
11. What would they be if they obeyed? (v12)
12. How much has God punished us? (v13)
13. How is the LORD described? (v15)
14. Why could they NOT stand before the LORD? (v15)

Answers

1) Fell on his knees and spread his hands out to God in prayer; 2) Ashamed; 3) Sin had grown up unto the heavens; 4) They had been delivered to kings of other lands, to the sword (killed), to captivity and to spoil (plunder); 5) Gave them a remnant to escape; 6) God; 7) To build the temple, repair the ruins and build wall in Jerusalem; 8) God's commandments; 9) Filthiness, abominations, uncleanness; 10) Marry them or seek their peace or wealth; 11) Strong; 12) Less than our sins deserve; 13) Righteous; 14) Because of their sin



"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28v13)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1v9)

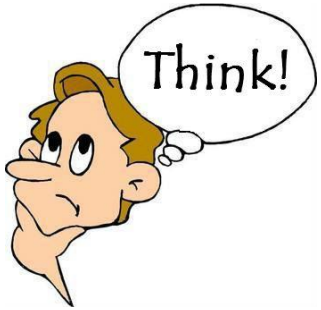


Is it wrong to marry a person of a different nationality?

NO! NO! NO!

God did not want the Israelites marrying people from the Canaanite nations around them. This was because He did not want them turning away from Him to worship idols (Judges 3v5-7).

God does not forbid us to marry someone from a different people group but He is displeased with marriages between Christians and non-Christians (2 Corinthians 6v14).



They would be strong if they obeyed God (v12). God blesses obedience. He will make you a strong Christian and make you prosper in life.



What does 'nail in His holy place' (v8) mean?

In those days, people would hang things up on nails to keep them safe.

The nail was those who returned from the Babylonian captivity. The holy place was God's temple in Jerusalem.

The people of Israel were back safely in their land and to worship in the temple.



God is righteous (v15). See also Psalm 129v4.

- He always does what is right (Psalm 92v15).
- He is righteous in all His ways (Psalm 145v17).
- He is the Righteous Judge (Psalm 7v9-11; 9v8).
- His righteousness is everlasting (Psalm 119v142).
- He will rule in righteousness (Hebrews 1v8).

Tuesday

Marriage Problems

Bible Reading: Ezra 10v1-17

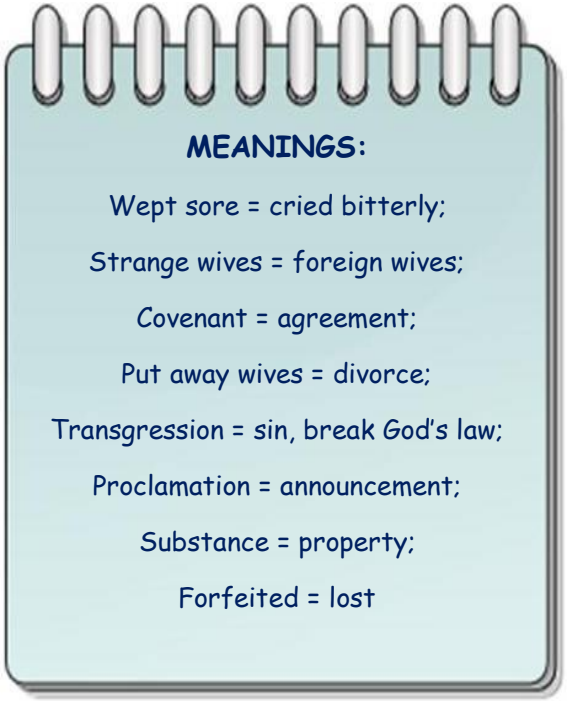
1. What had Ezra done? (v1)
2. What did the people do? (v1)
3. What did Shechaniah say was in Israel? (v2)

Some of Shechaniah's own family had pagan wives (v26). But he saw people weeping because of their sin. He knew there was hope.

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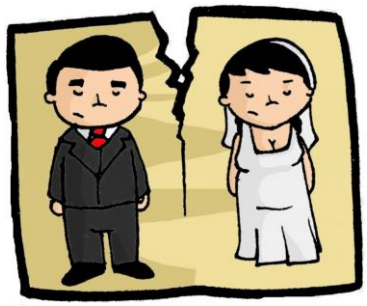
4. What did they make a covenant with God to do? (v3)
5. How was it to be done? (v3)
6. What were they to be? (v4)
7. Who swore they would do this? (v5)
8. What did Ezra do? (v6)
9. What would happen to anyone who would NOT come to Jerusalem within 3 days? (v7+8)
10. Why did the people sit in the street trembling? (v9)
11. What did Ezra tell them to do? (v11)
12. Why could the people NOT do it immediately? (v13)
13. So, how did they sort it? (v14)
14. What did they want turned away? (v14)

"Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it." (Ezra 10v4)



Answers

1) Prayed, confessed, weeping, casting himself down before the temple; 2) Wept very sore; 3) Hope; 4) Put away wives and their children; 5) According to the law; 6) Be of good courage; 7) Chief priests, Levites and all Israel; 8) Went to the chamber of Johanan, fasted and mourned because of their sin; 9) His property would be forfeited and he would be separated from the congregation of captives; 10) Because of this matter and the great rain; 11) Make confession to God and do His will, separate from people of the land and put away foreign wives; 12) The people were many and it was a time of much rain and it could not be done in 1 or 2 days; 13) They would come at appointed times with elders and judges to sort it; 14) The fierce wrath of God



Marriage Problems

This problem sorting out the marriages was a very big one! And there were children involved too! (v44)

It took 3 months to sort out (v16+17).

They had to question all the men who had married pagan women. It would appear that if the wife would not worship the One True God, then her husband had to divorce her.

There were 4 men who were against this…. Jonathan, Jahaziah, Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite (v15). The word 'employed' in v15 means stood against, or opposed. Why? We don't really know. But maybe they thought it too harsh. Or maybe they had relatives married to pagan wives.

The names of the men who divorced their pagan wives are found in verses 18-44. Some were priests, Levites, singers who were to lead temple worship.

Those who divorced wives had to bring a ram for a trespass offering (v18).



Stop and Think!

Many men in Israel had taken wives that God had forbidden. Ezra had not done this sin himself BUT he was very sad about it. He wept, confessed it and prayed to God. It was a sin in the nation that had to be repented of.

Sometimes we may have not done a particular sin ourselves. Maybe it is a sin in the nation. It needs to be confessed to God as sin. And it must be repented of.



There was sin in the nation of Israel. It had to be dealt with. People wept over their sins. Then, there was hope in Israel (v2). When there is repentance, there is hope. Hope in Christ for His blessing.

Wednesday

Nehemiah mourns, fasts and prays over Jerusalem

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 1v1-11

1. Where was Nehemiah? (v1) *Find it on a map*
2. When? (v1)

Chisleu is the 9th month. It was November-December time.

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3. Who came to Him? (v2)
4. What did Nehemiah ask them about? (v2)
5. What did they tell him? (v3)
6. How did Nehemiah react to this news? (v4)
7. How did he describe God? (v5)
8. What did he confess to God? (v6+7)
9. What had God told Moses? (v8)
10. What would God do if His people returned to Him and kept His commandments? (v9)
11. What had God redeemed them by? (v10)
12. What did Nehemiah ask God for? (v11)
13. What job did Nehemiah do? (v11)

To be the king's cupbearer was a very important job. It, also, could be dangerous. Nehemiah had to taste and make sure that all the drinks for the king weren't poisoned. He was trusted very much.

"The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." (Psalm 34v15)

MEANINGS:

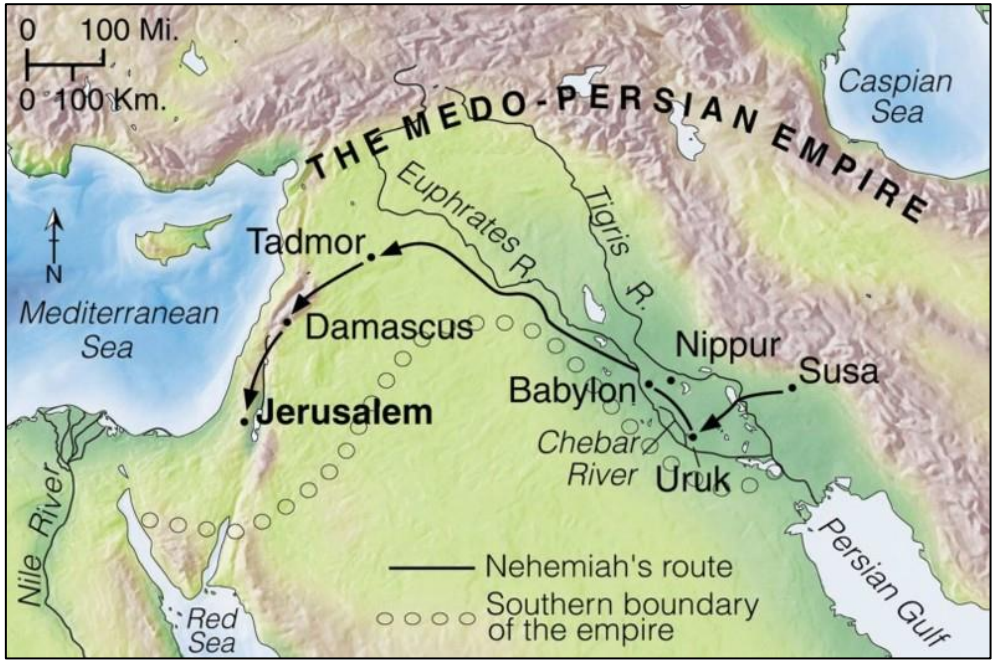
Affliction = suffering, trouble;

Reproach = scorn, shame;

Observe = keep, obey;

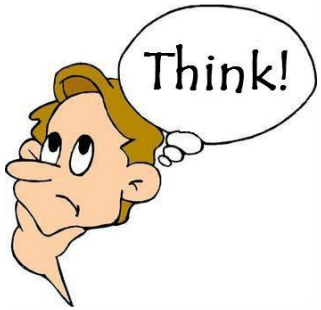
Dealt corruptly = done very wrongly

Shushan is Susa on this map



Answers

1) Shushan the palace; 2) In the month Chisleu in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign; 3) Hanani and some men of Judah; 4) About the Jews that had escaped from captivity and about Jerusalem; 5) The people were in much affliction and reproach and the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates burned; 6) He sat down and wept, mourned, fasted and prayed to God; 7) Great and terrible God who keeps covenant and mercy for them who love Him and keep His commandments; 8) The sins of the children of Israel; 9) If they sinned God would scatter them among the nations; 10) He would gather them and bring them to the place He chosen to set His name; 11) By His great power and strong arm; 12) Mercy; 13) He was the kings cupbearer



Nehemiah wept, mourned, fasted and prayed before God. This was no little quick prayer in passing. He was praying with all his heart. He was not giving up. He needed God to move.

Things may seem impossible. But cry to God from the depths of your heart. Don't give up.



Nehemiah's Prayer

1. *He prayed to the LORD God of heaven (v5).*
   We ought to pray to the One True Living God…. NOT to any other person or thing.

2. *He worshipped God for who He is…. Great and terrible God who keeps His covenant and gives mercy (v5).*
   Start prayer by worshipping God for who He is.

3. *Nehemiah was humble. He called himself God's servant (v6). He depended on God to hear and see… to listen to his prayer.*
   Pray humbly, depending on God to answer.

4. *He confessed his own sins and the sins of Israel (v6+7).*
   Sin needs to be confessed as sin to God. Do not try to excuse it to God. Be honest and sorry for it.

5. *He reminded God of what He had said in His Word (v8+9).*
   Remind God of His promises in the Bible… and ask Him to do as He said.

6. *He prayed God would give him mercy from the king. Nehemiah had a work to do and he couldn't do without God.*

Thursday

Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 2v1-11

1. What did Nehemiah give king Artaxerxes? (v1)
2. What did the king notice about Nehemiah? (v1+2)
3. How did this make Nehemiah feel? (v2)
4. Why was Nehemiah sad? (v3)
5. What did the king ask? (v4)
6. What did Nehemiah do before he answered? (v4)
7. What did Nehemiah ask for? (v5)
8. Who was sitting beside the king? (v6)
9. What was the king pleased to do? (v6)
10. What did the king give Nehemiah letters for? (v7+8)

The governors beyond the river are the governors who ruled over the provinces beyond the river Euphrates.

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11. What was upon Nehemiah? (v8)
12. Who did the king send with Nehemiah? (v9)
13. Who were grieved? (v10)
14. Why? (v10)

Answers

1) Wine; 2) He was sad; 3) Very afraid; 4) The city where his fathers' tombs were, was in ruins and the gates were burned with fire; 5) For what did Nehemiah ask? 6) Prayed; 7) To be sent to Jerusalem to build it; 8) The queen; 9) To send Nehemiah; 10) So that the governors would let him pass over to Jerusalem, and that Asaph the keeper of the king's forest would give him wood for the gates; 11) The good hand of God; 12) Army captains and horsemen; 13) Sanballat and Tobiah; 14) Because there was a man come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel

MEANINGS:

Countenance = face;

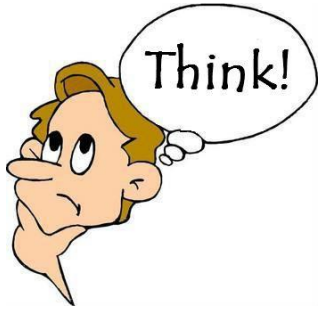
Consumed = burned up by fire;

Sepulchres = tombs;

Convey = allow to pass through;

Appertained = belonged;

Welfare = health, happiness, good



Nehemiah shot a little silent prayer to God (v4). He knew God would guide him what to ask for.

Never be afraid to shoot a quick silent prayer to God for guidance. It could be just as simple as, 'Lord, show me what to say.'



Stop and Think!

Fasting is going without food for a time. In the Bible, people fasted in times of great need when they really wanted God to move and answer prayer. Sometimes they also wore sackcloth, too.

- *Moses fasted (Deuteronomy 9v9-18).*
- *David fasted (2 Samuel 12v15-23).*
- *Ezra fasted (Ezra 10v6).*
- *Nehemiah fasted (Nehemiah 1v4).*
- *Esther fasted (Esther 4v15-17).*
- *Daniel fasted (Daniel10v1-3).*
- *Jesus fasted (Matthew 4v1-2).*
- *Paul (Saul) fasted (Acts 9v8+9).*
- *Early church fasted (Acts 13v1-3).*

Jesus did NOT say that we MUST fast. But He did say that we were not to fast to get praise from other people (Matthew 6v16-18). However, He did say that sometimes fasting and prayer is necessary for casting out demons (Matthew 17v14-21).

Some people may not be able to fast because of medical conditions they have.

"Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." (Psalm 123v1)

Friday

Nehemiah views the broken walls

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 2v11-20

1. Where had Nehemiah come? (v11) *Find it on a map*
2. How long had he been there? (v11)
3. What had he NOT told anyone? (v12)
4. What did he go out one night to see? (v12+13)
5. Who did he take with him? (v12)
6. Name some of the places Nehemiah looked at? (v13-15)
   Find them on a map
7. Why did he have to walk the last bit? (v14)
8. Who did NOT know where he went or what he did? (v16)
9. Who had he NOT told yet about the work? (v16)
10. What did he get them to do? (v17+18)
11. What was upon Nehemiah for good? (v18)
12. What sort of work was this? (v18)
13. What did Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem do? (v19)
14. Who would prosper the Jews in building? (v20)

Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem had no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem. This meant they had no heritage in Jerusalem. They were not Jews. They had no legal share in the Jewish nation.

Answers

1) Jerusalem; 2) For 3 days; 3) What God had put on his heart to do at Jerusalem; 4) The walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and the gates that were burned with fire; 5) A few men; 6) Valley gate, dragon well, dung gate, fountain gate, king's pool; 7) There was no place for the beast to go; 8) The rulers; 9) Jews, priests, nobles, rulers and others; 10) Rise up and build the walls of Jerusalem; 11) The hand of God; 12) Good work; 13) Laughed them to scorn and despised them; 14) The God of heaven

MEANINGS:

Beast = animal;

Distress = trouble;

Lieth waste = in ruins



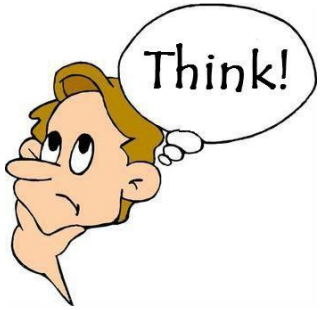
Who were Nehemiah's Enemies?

Sanballat *was a Horonite. So, he probably came from the area of Upper and Lower Beth-horon. He was a Samaritan leader.*

Find them on a map

Tobiah *was an Ammonite. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot (Genesis 19v36-38). He is called servant. So, he was probably some official in Persian empire. He later took over a room in the temple for his own use (Nehemiah 13v6+7).*

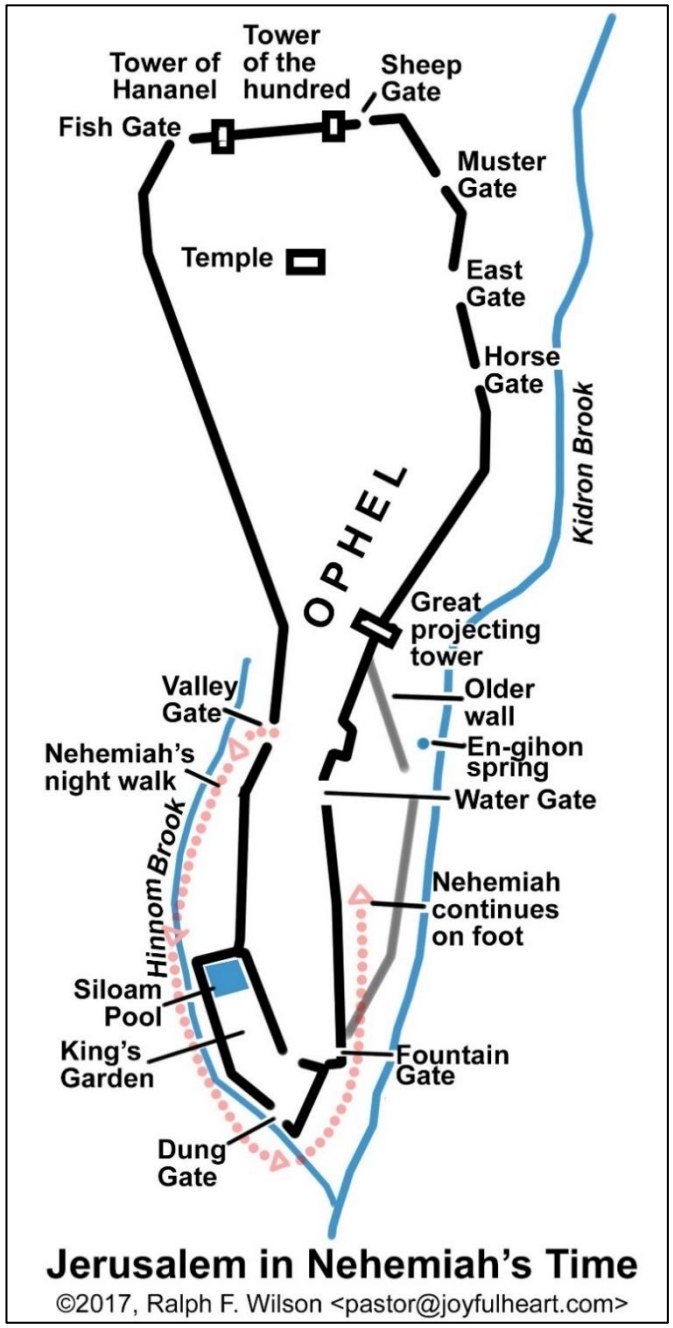
Geshem *was an Arabian. He is also called Gashmu (Nehemiah 6v6). He seems to have been a leader in the Arabian tribes which lived south of Judah.*



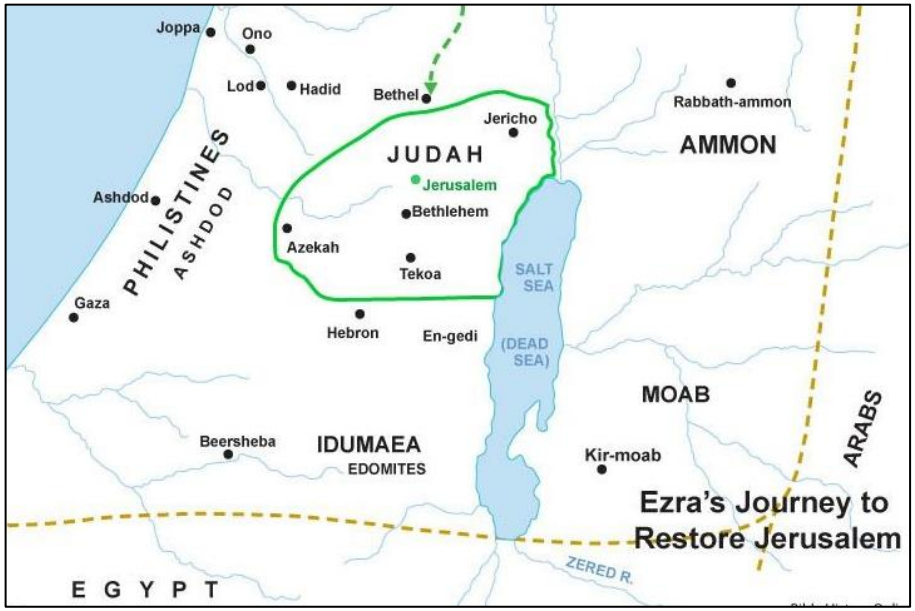
Sometimes people will laugh at you because you are a Christian. They might even make little of the work you do for God.

Don't let them stop you from following God. Remember when God is on your side you have no need to fear. Obey God and He will prosper you.

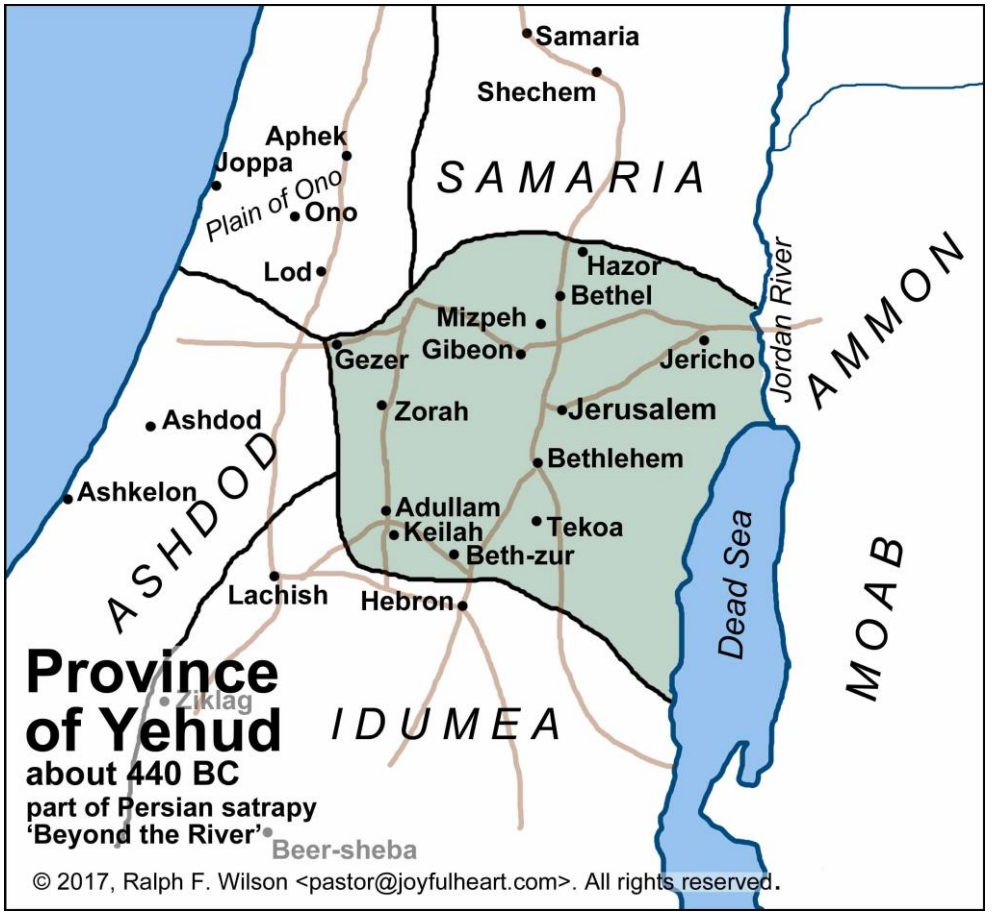
"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."
(Hebrews 10v23+24)







Map of Province of Judah



Saturday

People who built the wall

Bible Reading: Nehemiah 3

1. Who was the high priests? (v1)
2. What part of the wall did Eliashib and the priests build? (v1)
3. What different sorts of people worked on the walls? (v1, 8, 12, 18, 19, 22, 28, 31+32)
4. List some of the gates mentioned. (v1 ,3, 6, 13, 14, 15, 26, 28, 29, 31+32) *See if you can find some of them on a map*
5. What is said about the nobles of the Tekoites? (v5)
6. But note what the Tekoites also repaired. (v27)
7. How did Baruch repair his part of the wall? (v20)

MEANINGS:

Sanctified = set apart as holy

Apothecaries = perfumers;

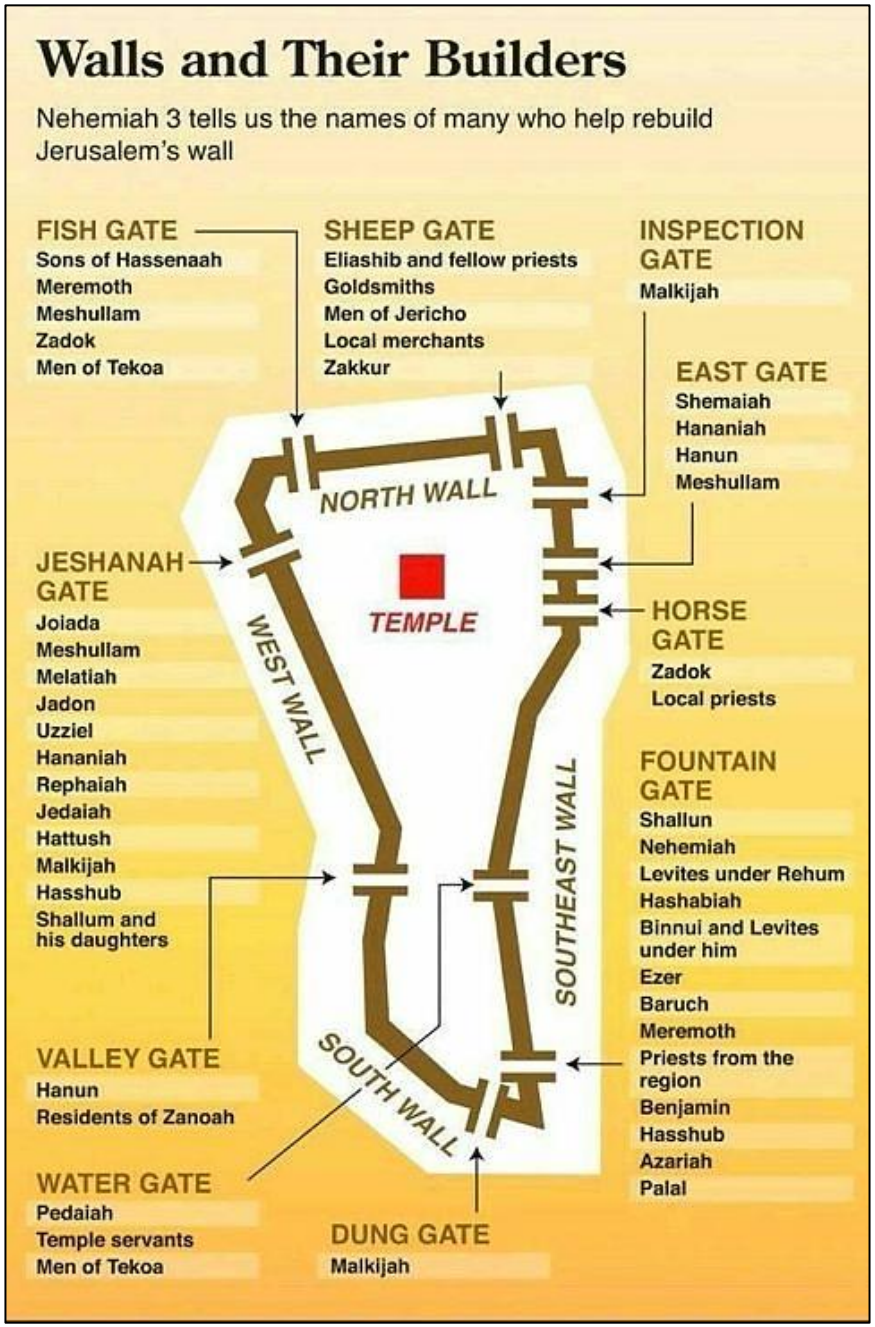
Fortified = made strong, protected;

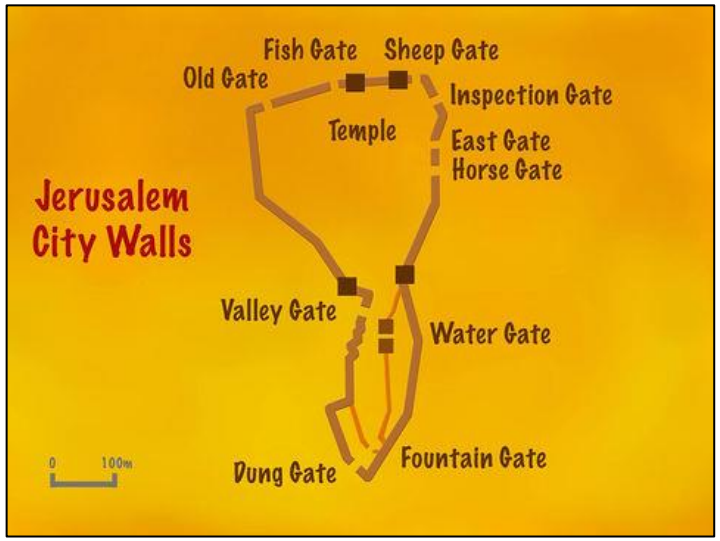
Furnaces = ovens, kilns;

Cubit = 18 inches

Answers

1) Eliashib; 2) The sheep gate; 3) Priests, apothecaries, goldsmiths, rulers, daughters, gate keeper, and merchants; 4) Sheep gate, Fish gate, Old gate, Valley gate, Dung gate, Fountain gate, Water gate, Horse gate, East gate and Miphkad (inspection) gate; 5) They put not their necks to the work of their Lord; 6) Another piece; 7) Earnestly







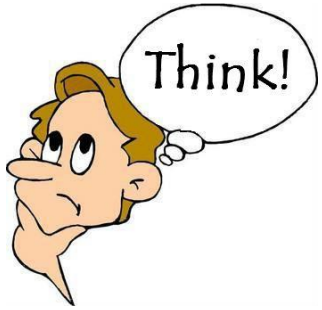
Did you know?

The Tekoites were from Tekoa. *Find it on a map*

This was where the prophet **Amos** came from (Amos 1v1).

Their nobles did not put their necks to the work of the LORD (v5). This meant they would not join in the work. They would not bend their necks to do God's work.

However, the ordinary people didn't just repair one bit of the wall. They repaired another bit as well (v27).

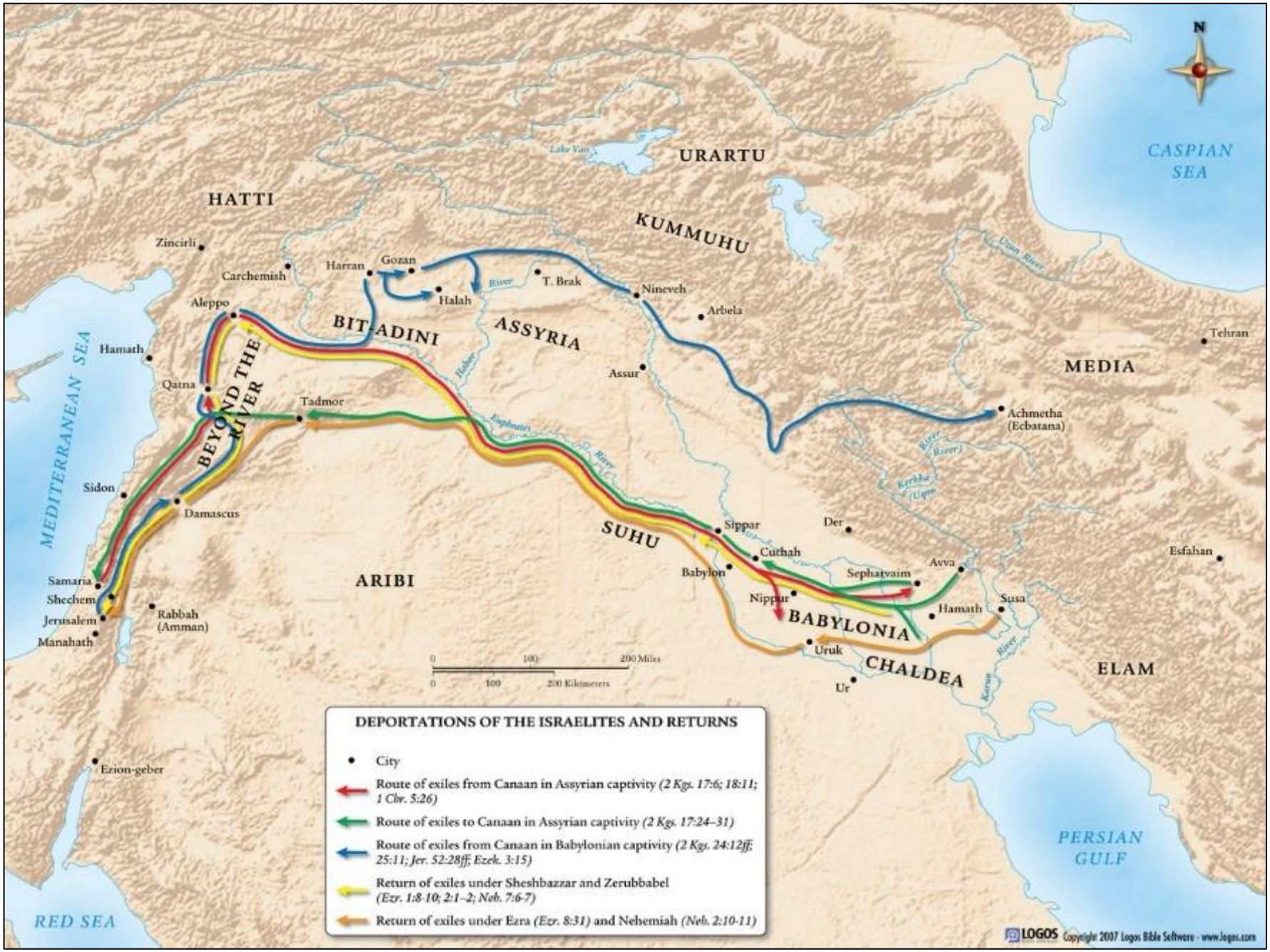


There were people from all types of backgrounds. They had various abilities. There were women and men. They were all given a piece of the wall to build. They were all working together.

God wants us to work together for Him.

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." (1 Corinthians 3v9)

"Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14v40)


N
CASPIAN SEA
URARTU
HATTI
KUMMUHU
Zincirli
Carchemish
Harran
Gozan
Halah
T. Brak
Nineveh
Arbela
Aleppo
BIT-ADINI
ASSYRIA
Assur
Tehran
MEDIA
Hamath
Qatna
BEYOND THE RIVER
Tadmor
Achmetha (Ecbatana)
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Sidon
Damascus
SUHU
Sippar
Der
Cuthah
Babylon
Avva
Sephatvaim
Esfahan
Samaria
Shechem
Jerusalem
Manahath
Rabbah (Amman)
ARIBI
Nippur
Hamath
Susa
BABYLONIA
Uruk
CHALDEA
Ur
ELAM
0 100 200 Miles
0 100 200 Kilometers
Ezion-geber
RED SEA
PERSIAN GULF
DEPORTATIONS OF THE ISRAELITES AND RETURNS
City
Route of exiles from Canaan in Assyrian captivity (2 Kgs. 17:6; 18:11; 1 Chr. 5:26)
Route of exiles to Canaan in Assyrian captivity (2 Kgs. 17:24–31)
Route of exiles from Canaan in Babylonian captivity (2 Kgs. 24:12ff; 25:11; Jer. 52:28ff; Ezek. 3:15)
Return of exiles under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (Ezr. 1:8-10; 2:1–2; Neh. 7:6-7)
Return of exiles under Ezra (Ezr. 8:31) and Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10-11)
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Old English words

Afar	Far away
Ass	Donkey
Aught	Anything at all
Befallen	Happened to
Dealt	Done
Dost, Doest	Do
Draw nigh	Come near
Fetch	Go and get
Gat	Get, got
Hence	From this place
Hereby	By this
Heretofore	Before now
Hindmost	Last
Hither	Here
Hitherto	Up until now
Howbeit	However, nevertheless
Inasmuch	Since
Midst	Middle
Mixt	Mixed
Nigh	Near
Notwithstanding	Nevertheless, in spite of this
Peradventure	Perhaps
Plow	Plough
Straightway	Immediately
Selfsame	That same
Shew	Show
Thereon	On that
Therewith	With that
Thither	To there
Thou	You *(singular)*
Thou art	You are
Thrust out	Cast out
Uttermost	Farthest
Whence	From where
Wherefore	Why
Wherewith	With which
Whilst	While
Whither	To where
Whomsoever	Whoever
Wilt	Will
Wit, wot, wist	Know
Withholden	Held back
Wont to do	In the habit of doing
Wrought	Done, made

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