

OPPRESSION FROM WITHIN
(Nehemiah 5:1-19)

- I. EXTORTION by the Greedy (Neh. 5:1-13)
 - A. There were underlying CAUSES of economic HARDSHIP (5:2-4)
 - 1. Re-assignment of LABOR made it hard to FEED one's FAMILY (5:2)
 - 2. Regional FAMINE made food EXPENSIVE (5:3)
 - 3. Persian TAXES were more than they could AFFORD (5:4)
 - B. Wealthy JEWS were taking advantage of their "brothers'" POVERTY (5:1, 5)
 - 1. People had been forced to MORTGAGE or SELL their property
 - 2. People had been forced to contract their CHILDREN as SLAVES

- II. CORRECTION by the Governor (Neh. 5:6-13)
 - A. He REBUKED them for their GREED (5:6-8)
 - 1. Expressed his ANGER in a PUBLIC GATHERING
 - 2. Accused them of charging INTEREST on loans to fellow JEWS
 - 3. They'd created greater BONDAGE than in PERSIA
 - B. He BEGGED them to demonstrate COMPASSION (5:9-11)
 - 1. They should STOP the INTEREST charges
 - 2. They should RETURN the PROPERTY taken

3. They should REFUND the interest already COLLECTED
- C. They PROMISED to do as he said (5:12-13a)
1. He required a solemn VOW recorded by the PRIESTS
 2. He warned of JUDGMENT if they BROKE their word
- D. EVERYONE affirmed the SOLUTION (5:13b)

III. ILLUSTRATION of Generosity (Neh. 5:14-19)

- A. Nehemiah SUPPORTED HIMSELF (5:14-15)
1. Never took his “FOOD” allowance or DAILY stipend
 2. Never allowed his STAFF to “DOMINEER” the people
- B. Nehemiah PARTICIPATED in the WORK (5:16)
- C. Nehemiah ENTERTAINED at his own EXPENSE (5:17-18)
- D. Nehemiah asked God to THINK WELL of his aid of the people (5:19)

IV. Lessons

- A. Biblical ECONOMICS presents a RESTRAINED capitalism
1. Never GREEDY nor OPPRESSIVE
 2. Always COMPASSIONATE and GENEROUS
- B. Greater WEALTH brings greater RESPONSIBILITY
- C. Our FINANCIAL dealings REVEAL our attitude toward the Lord