

¹And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.²For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.³Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.⁴There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.⁵Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.⁶And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words.⁷Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.⁸And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.⁹Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?¹⁰I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.¹¹Restore, I pray you, to them, even

¹وَكَانَ صَرَاحُ الشَّعْبِ وَنِسَائِهِمْ عَظِيمًا عَلَى إِخْوَتِهِمُ الْيَهُودِ.²وَكَانَ مِنْهُمْ يَقُولُ، تَحْنُ وَبَنَاتُنَا وَبَنَاتُنَا كَثِيرُونَ. دَعْنَا تَأْخُذْ قَمْحًا قَتَاكُلْ وَتَحْيَا.³وَكَانَ مِنْهُمْ يَقُولُ، خُفُولُنَا وَكُزُومُنَا وَبَنَاتُنَا تَحْنُ رَاهِنُوهَا حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ قَمْحًا فِي الْجُوعِ.⁴وَكَانَ مِنْهُمْ يَقُولُ، قَدْ اسْتَفْرَضْنَا فَصَّةَ الْخَرَجِ الْمَلِكِ عَلَى خُفُولِنَا وَكُزُومِنَا.⁵وَالآنَ لَحُمْنَا كُلَّحُمِ إِخْوَتِنَا وَبَنَاتِنَا كَنِسَائِهِمْ، وَهَذَا تَحْنُ نُخْضِعُ بَنَاتِنَا وَبَنَاتِنَا عَبِيدًا، وَيُوجَدُ مِنْ بَنَاتِنَا مُسْتَعْبِدَاتٌ، وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ فِي طَاقَةِ يَدِنَا، وَخُفُولُنَا وَكُزُومُنَا لِلْآخَرِينَ.⁶فَقَعَصْتُ جَدًّا حِينَ سَمِعْتُ صَرَاحَهُمْ وَهَذَا الْكَلَامَ. فَسَاوَرْتُ قَلْبِي فِيَّ، وَبَكَتُ الْعُظَمَاءَ وَالْوُلَاةَ وَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ، إِنَّكُمْ تَأْخُذُونَ الرِّبَا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ أَخِيهِ. وَأَقَمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ جَمَاعَةً عَظِيمَةً.⁸وَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ، تَحْنُ اسْتَرْتَبْتُمَا إِخْوَتَنَا الْيَهُودَ الَّذِينَ يَبْعُوا لِلْأَمَمِ حَسَبَ طَاقَتِنَا. وَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا تَبِيعُونَ إِخْوَتَكُمْ قَبِيلًا عَوْنًا لَنَا. فَسَكَّنُوا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا جَوَابًا.⁹وَقُلْتُ، لَيْسَ حَسَنًا الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي تَعْمَلُونَهُ. أَمَا تَسِيرُونَ بِخَوْفِ إِلَهِنَا بِسَبَبِ تَغْيِيرِ الْأَمَمِ أَغْدَانَنَا.¹⁰وَأَنَا أَيْضًا وَإِخْوَتِي وَعِلْمَانِي أَفْرَضْنَاهُمْ فَصَّةَ وَقَمْحًا. فَلْتَشْرِكْ هَذَا الرِّبَا.¹¹رُدُّوا لَهُمْ هَذَا الْيَوْمَ خُفُولَهُمْ وَكُزُومَهُمْ وَبَنَاتُهُمْ وَبَنَاتُهُمْ وَالْجُزْءَ مِنْ مَتْنِ الْفِصَّةِ وَالْقَمْحِ وَالْخَمْرِ وَالزَّيْتِ الَّذِي تَأْخُذُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ رِبَاً.¹²فَقَالُوا، تَرُدُّ وَلَا تَطْلُبُ مِنْهُمْ. هَكَذَا تَفْعَلُ كَمَا تَقُولُ. فَدَعَوْتُ الْكَهَنَةَ وَاسْتَخْلَفْتُهُمْ أَنْ يَعْمَلُوا حَسَبَ هَذَا الْكَلَامِ.¹³ثُمَّ تَقَصْتُ جِجْرِي وَقُلْتُ، هَكَذَا يَنْفُضُ اللَّهُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ لَا يُعِيمُ هَذَا الْكَلَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِهِ وَمَنْ تَعْبِيهِ، وَهَكَذَا يَكُونُ مَنْفُوضًا وَفَارِغًا. فَقَالَ كُلُّ الْجَمَاعَةِ، آمِينَ. وَسَبَّحُوا الرَّبَّ. وَعَمِلَ الشَّعْبُ حَسَبَ هَذَا الْكَلَامِ.¹⁴وَأَيْضًا مِنَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي أُوصِيْتُ فِيهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ وَإِلَيْهِمْ فِي أَرْضِ يَهُوذَا، مِنَ السَّنَةِ الْعِشْرِينَ إِلَى السَّنَةِ الثَّانِيَةِ وَالثَّلَاثِينَ لَأَرْخَسَسْنَا الْمَلِكَ، انْتَنِي عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً، لَمْ أَكُلْ أَتَا وَلَا إِخْوَتِي خُبْرَ الْوَالِي.¹⁵وَلَكِنْ الْوُلَاةُ الْأَوَّلُونَ الَّذِينَ قَبْلِي تَقَلُّوا عَلَى الشَّعْبِ وَأَخَذُوا مِنْهُمْ خُبْرًا وَجَمَرًا، فَضَلَّا عَنْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَاقِلًا مِنَ الْفِصَّةِ حَتَّى إِنَّ عِلْمَانَهُمْ تَسَلَطُوا عَلَى الشَّعْبِ. وَأَمَّا أَنَا فَلَمْ أَفْعَلْ هَكَذَا مِنْ أَجْلِ خَوْفِ اللَّهِ.¹⁶وَتَمَسَّكْتُ أَيْضًا بِشَعْلِ هَذَا السُّورِ. وَلَمْ أُشْرِ حَقْلًا. وَكَانَ جَمِيعُ عِلْمَانِي مُجْتَمِعِينَ هُنَاكَ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ.¹⁷وَكَانَ عَلَى مَايْدَتِي مِنَ الْيَهُودِ وَالْوُلَاةِ مِئَةٌ وَخَمْسُونَ رَجُلًا، فَضَلَّا عَنِ الْآيِينَ إِلَيْنَا مِنَ الْأَمَمِ الَّذِينَ خَوْلُنَا.¹⁸وَكَانَ مَا يُعْمَلُ لِيَوْمٍ وَاحِدٍ تَوْرًا وَسِتَّةَ خِزَافٍ

this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.¹² Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.¹³ Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.¹⁴ Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.¹⁵ But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.¹⁶ Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.¹⁷ Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.¹⁸ Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in

مُخْتَارَةٍ. وَكَانَ يُعْمَلُ لِي طَبُورٌ، وَفِي كُلِّ عَشْرَةِ أَيَّامٍ كُلُّ
تَوْعٍ مِنَ الْخَمْرِ يَكْتَرُ. وَمَعَ هَذَا لَمْ أَطْلُبْ خُبْزَ الْوَالِي
لَأَنَّ الْعُبُودِيَّةَ كَانَتْ ثَقِيلَةً عَلَى هَذَا الشَّعْبِ.¹⁹ اذْكُرْ لِي يَا
إِلَهِي لِلْخَيْرِ كُلِّ مَا عَمِلْتُ لِهَذَا الشَّعْبِ.

ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people. ¹⁹Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.