

¹وَكَانَ صُرَاخُ الشَّعْبِ وَنِسَائِهِمْ عَظِيماً عَلَى إِخْوَتِهِمُ الْيَهُودِ.²وَكَانَ مَنْ يَقُولُ، تَحْنُ وَبَنَاتُنَا كَثِيرُونَ. دَعْنَا تَأْخُذَ قَمْحاً قَتَاكُلَ وَتَحْيَا.³وَكَانَ مَنْ يَقُولُ، حُفُولُنَا وَكُزُومُنَا وَبَنَاتُنَا تَحْنُ رَاهِنُوهَا حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ قَمْحاً فِي الْجُوعِ.⁴وَكَانَ مَنْ يَقُولُ، قَدْ اسْتَقْرَضْنَا فِصَّةً لِيَخْرَاجَ الْمَلِكُ عَلَيْنَا حُفُولَنَا وَكُزُومَنَا.⁵وَالآنَ لَحْمُنَا كُلُّهُمُ إِخْوَتُنَا وَبَنَاتُنَا كَتَنِيهِمْ، وَهَذَا تَحْنُ نُخْضِعُ بَنَاتِنَا وَبَنَاتِنَا عِيداً، وَبُوجَدُ مِنْ بَنَاتِنَا مُسْتَعْبِدَاتٌ، وَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ فِي طَاقَةِ يَدِنَا، وَحُفُولُنَا وَكُزُومُنَا لِلْآخَرِينَ.⁶فَقَعَضْتُ جِداً حِينَ سَمِعْتُ صُرَاخَهُمْ وَهَذَا الْكَلَامَ.⁷فَسَاوَرْتُ قَلْبِي فِيَّ، وَبَكَتُ الْعُطَمَاءَ وَالْأَوْلَاءَ وَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ، إِنَّكُمْ تَأْخُذُونَ الرِّبَا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ أَخِيهِ. وَأَقَمْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ جَمَاعَةً عَظِيمَةً.⁸وَقُلْتُ لَهُمْ، تَحْنُ اسْتَرَيْتُنَا إِخْوَتُنَا الْيَهُودَ الَّذِينَ يَبْعُوا لِلْأَمِّ حَسَبَ طَاقَتِنَا. وَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً تَبِيعُونَ إِخْوَتَكُمْ قَبَائِعُونَ لَنَا. فَسَكَّنُوا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوا جَوَاباً.⁹وَقُلْتُ، لَيْسَ حَسَنًا الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي تَعْمَلُونَهُ. أَمَا تَسِيرُونَ بِخَوْفِ إِلَهِنَا بِسَبَبِ تَغْيِيرِ الْأَمْرِ أَغْدَائِنَا.¹⁰وَأَنَا أَيْضاً وَإِخْوَتِي وَعِلْمَانِي أَقْرَضْنَاهُمْ فِصَّةً وَقَمْحاً. فَلَسْتُ زُكَّ هَذَا الرِّبَا.¹¹رُدُّوا لَهُمْ هَذَا الْيَوْمَ حُفُولَهُمْ وَكُزُومَهُمْ وَبَنَاتَهُمْ وَبَنَاتَهُمْ وَالْجُزءَ مِنْ مِئَةِ الْفِصَّةِ وَالْقَمْحِ وَالْحَمْرِ وَالزَّبْتِ الَّذِي تَأْخُذُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ رِيباً.¹²فَقَالُوا، تَرُدُّ وَلَا تَطْلُبُ مِنْهُمْ. هَكَذَا تَفْعَلُ كَمَا نَقُولُ. فَدَعَوْتُ الْكَهَنَةَ وَاسْتَحْلَفْتُهُمْ أَنْ يَفْعَلُوا حَسَبَ هَذَا الْكَلَامِ.¹³ثُمَّ تَقَضْتُ جِجْرِي وَقُلْتُ، هَكَذَا يَنْقُضُ اللَّهُ كُلَّ إِنْسَانٍ لَا يُقِيمُ هَذَا الْكَلَامَ مِنْ بَيْتِي وَمِنْ تَعِيهِ، وَهَكَذَا يَكُونُ مَنْفُوضاً وَقَارِغاً. فَقَالَ كُلُّ الْجَمَاعَةِ، آمِينَ. وَسَبَّحُوا الرَّبَّ. وَعَمِلَ الشَّعْبُ حَسَبَ هَذَا الْكَلَامِ.¹⁴وَأَيْضاً مِنَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي أُوصِيْتُ فِيهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ وَالْيَهُمْ فِي أَرْضِ يَهُودَا، مِنَ السَّنَةِ الْعِشْرِينَ إِلَى السَّنَةِ الثَّانِيَةِ وَالثَّلَاثِينَ لَأَرْتَحِشَسْنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَنْتَنِي عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً، لَمْ أَكُلْ أَنَا وَلَا إِخْوَتِي خُبْزَ الْوَالِي.¹⁵وَلَكِنْ الْوَلَاءَةُ الْأَوَّلُونَ الَّذِينَ قَبْلِي تَقَلُّوا عَلَى الشَّعْبِ وَأَخَذُوا مِنْهُمْ خُبْزاً وَحُمْراً، قَضِلاً عَنْ أَرْبَعِينَ شَافِلاً مِنَ الْفِصَّةِ حَتَّى إِنَّ عِلْمَانَهُمْ تَسَلَّطُوا عَلَى الشَّعْبِ. وَأَمَّا أَنَا فَلَمْ أَفْعَلْ هَكَذَا مِنْ أَجْلِ خَوْفِ اللَّهِ.¹⁶وَتَمَسَّكْتُ أَيْضاً بِسُغْلِ هَذَا السُّورِ. وَلَمْ أُسْتَرِ حَقْلاً. وَكَانَ جَمِيعُ عِلْمَانِي مُجْتَمِعِينَ هُنَاكَ عَلَى الْعَمَلِ.¹⁷وَكَانَ عَلَيَّ مَايَدَتِي مِنَ الْيَهُودِ وَالْأَوْلَاءِ مِئَةً وَخَمْسُونَ رَجُلًا، قَضِلاً عَنِ الْآيِينَ إِلَيْنَا مِنَ الْأَمِّ الَّذِينَ حَوْلَنَا.¹⁸وَكَانَ مَا يُعْمَلُ لِيَوْمٍ وَاحِدٍ تَوْرًا وَسِنَةً خِزَافٍ

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

مُخْتَارَةٍ. وَكَانَ يُعْمَلُ لِي طُبُورٌ، وَفِي كُلِّ عَشْرَةِ أَيَّامٍ كُلُّ
 تَوَاعٍ مِنَ الْخَمْرِ يَكْتَنَرُ. وَمَعَ هَذَا لَمْ أَطْلُبْ خُبْزَ الْوَالِي
 لِأَنَّ الْعُبُودِيَّةَ كَانَتْ تَقِيلُهُ عَلَى هَذَا الشَّعْبِ. ¹⁹ اذْكُرْ لِي يَا
 إِلَهِي لِلْحَيْرِ كُلِّ مَا عَمِلْتُ لِهَذَا الشَّعْبِ.

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

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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.¹⁹ Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.