

¹وَلَمَّا كَمَلْتُ هَذِهِ بَقَدَّمُ إِلَيَّ الرُّؤَسَاءُ قَائِلِينَ، لَمْ يَنْفَصِلْ شَعْبُ إِسْرَائِيلَ وَالْكَهَنَةُ وَاللَّوِيُّونَ مِنْ شُعُوبِ الْأَرْضِ حَسَبَ رَجَاسَاتِهِمْ مِنَ الْكَنْعَانِيِّينَ وَالْجِثِّيِّينَ وَالْفِرِزِّيِّينَ وَالْيَبُوسِيِّينَ وَالْعَمُوثِيِّينَ وَالْمَوَابِيِّينَ وَالْمِصْرِيِّينَ وَالْأَمُورِيِّينَ.²لَا تَهْمُ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ بَنَاتِهِمْ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلِبَنِيهِمْ، وَاخْتَلَطَ الزَّرْعُ الْمُقَدَّسُ بِشُعُوبِ الْأَرْضِ. وَكَانَتْ يَدُ الرُّؤَسَاءِ وَالْوَلَاةِ فِي هَذِهِ الْخِيَانَةِ أَوَّلًا.³فَلَمَّا سَمِعْتُ بِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَرَقْتُ ثِيَابِي وَرَدَائِي وَتَفَعْتُ شَعْرَ رَأْسِي وَدَفَنِي وَجَلَسْتُ مُتَحَبِّرًا.⁴فَاجْتَمَعَ إِلَيَّ كُلُّ مَنْ ارْتَعَدَ مِنْ كَلَامِ إِلَهِ إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ أَجْلِ خِيَانَةِ الْمَسِيئِينَ، وَأَنَا جَلَسْتُ مُتَحَبِّرًا إِلَى تَقْدِمَةِ الْمَسَاءِ.⁵وَعِنْدَ تَقْدِمَةِ الْمَسَاءِ قُمْتُ مِنْ تَذَلُّي، وَفِي ثِيَابِي وَرَدَائِي الْمُمَرَّقَةِ جَنُوتُ عَلَى رُكْبَتَيَّ وَتَسَطَّ يَدَيَّ إِلَى الرَّبِّ إِلَهِي⁶ وَقُلْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَحْجَلٌ وَأَخْرَى مِنْ أَنْ أَرْقَعَ يَا إِلَهِي وَجْهِي تَحَوُّكَ، لِأَنَّ دُنُوبَنَا قَدْ كَثُرَتْ فَوْقَ رُؤُوسِنَا، وَأَنَامَتَا تَعَاظَمَتَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ.⁷مُنْذُ آبَائِنَا تَخُنُ فِي إِيْمٍ عَظِيمٍ إِلَى هَذَا الْيَوْمِ. وَلَاجِلِ دُنُوبِنَا قَدْ دَفَعْنَا تَخُنَ وَمُلُوكُنَا وَكَهَنَتُنَا لِيَدِ مُلُوكِ الْأَرْضِ لِلسَّيْفِ وَالسَّنِيِّ وَالْهَبِّ وَخِزْيِ الْوُجُوهِ كَهَذَا الْيَوْمِ.⁸وَالآنَ كُلْخِطِيهِ كَانَتْ رَافَةُ مِنْ لَدُنِ الرَّبِّ إِلَهِنَا لِيُنْقِذَ لَنَا تَجَاةً وَنُعْطِيَنَا وَتَدَا فِي مَكَانٍ قُدْسِهِ، لِيُنِيرَ إِلَهِنَا أَغْنِيَتَنَا وَنُعْطِيَنَا حَيَاةً قَلِيلَةً فِي عُيُودِنَا.⁹لَأَنَّا عَبِيدُ تَخُنَ، وَفِي عُيُودِنَا لَمْ يَتْرَكْنَا إِلَهَنَا بَلْ بَسَطَ عَلَيْنَا رَحْمَةً أَمَامَ مُلُوكِ فَارِسَ لِيُعْطِيَنَا حَيَاةً لِنَرْفَعَ بِبَيْتِ إِلَهِنَا وَنُعِيمَ خَرَائِبَهُ وَلِنُعْطِيَنَا خَائِطًا فِي يَهُودَا وَفِي أُورُشَلِيمَ.¹⁰وَالآنَ فَمَادَا نَقُولُ يَا إِلَهَنَا بَعْدَ هَذَا، لَأَنَّا قَدْ تَرَكْنَا وَصَايَاكَ¹¹ الَّتِي أَوْصَيْتَ بِهَا عَنِّي يَدَ عَبِيدِكَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ قَائِلًا، إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ الَّتِي تَدْخُلُونَ لَتَمْلِكُوهَا هِيَ أَرْضُ مُتَجَبِّسَةٍ يَتَجَاسَهُ شُعُوبُ الْأَرْضِ بِرَجَاسَاتِهِمُ الَّتِي مَلَاوَهَا بِهَا مِنْ جَهَةِ إِلَى جَهَةٍ يَتَجَاسَتُهُمْ.¹²وَالآنَ فَلَا تُعْطُوا بَنَاتِكُمْ لِبَنِيهِمْ وَلَا تَأْخُذُوا بَنَاتِهِمْ لِبَنِيكُمُ، وَلَا تَطْلُبُوا سَلَامَتَهُمْ وَخَيْرَهُمْ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ لَتَسْتَدْذُوا وَتَأْكُلُوا خَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَتُورَثُوا بَنِيكُمْ إِيَّاهَا إِلَى الْأَبَدِ.¹³وَبَعْدَ كُلِّ مَا جَاءَ عَلَيْنَا لِأَجْلِ أَعْمَالِنَا الرَّدِيئَةِ وَأَنَامَتَا الْعَظِيمَةِ لَأَنَّكَ قَدْ خَارَيْتَنَا يَا إِلَهَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْ أَنَامَتَا وَأَعْطَيْتَنَا تَجَاةً كَهَذِهِ،¹⁴أَفْتَعُودُ وَتَتَعَدَّى وَصَايَاكَ وَتُصَاهِرُ شُعُوبَ هَذِهِ الرِّجَاسَاتِ. أَمَا تَسْحَطُ عَلَيْنَا حَتَّى تُفْقِيَتَنَا فَلَا تَكُونُ بَقِيَّةً وَلَا تَجَاةً.¹⁵أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ إِلَهَ إِسْرَائِيلَ، أَنْتَ بَارٌّ لَأَنَّا بَقِيَّتَا تَاجِينَ كَهَذَا الْيَوْمِ. هَا تَخُنُ أَمَامَكَ فِي أَنَامَتَا، لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَنَا أَنْ تَقِفَ أَمَامَكَ مِنْ أَجْلِ هَذَا.

¹Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.²For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.³And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.⁴Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.⁵And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,⁶And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.⁷Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.⁸And now for a little space grace hath

been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.⁹ For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.¹⁰ And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,¹¹ Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.¹² Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.¹³ And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this,¹⁴ Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?¹⁵ O LORD God of Israel, thou art

righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.