

EZRA + NEHEMIAH

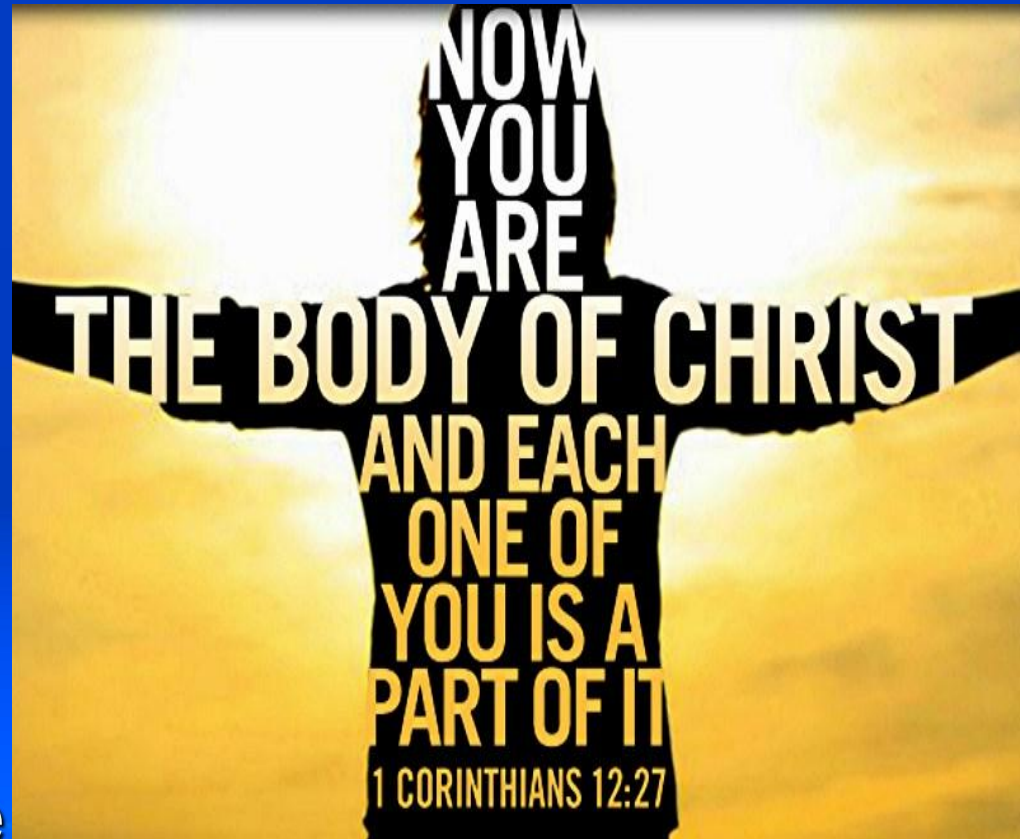
DIFFERENT MEN FOR DIFFERENT MISSIONS



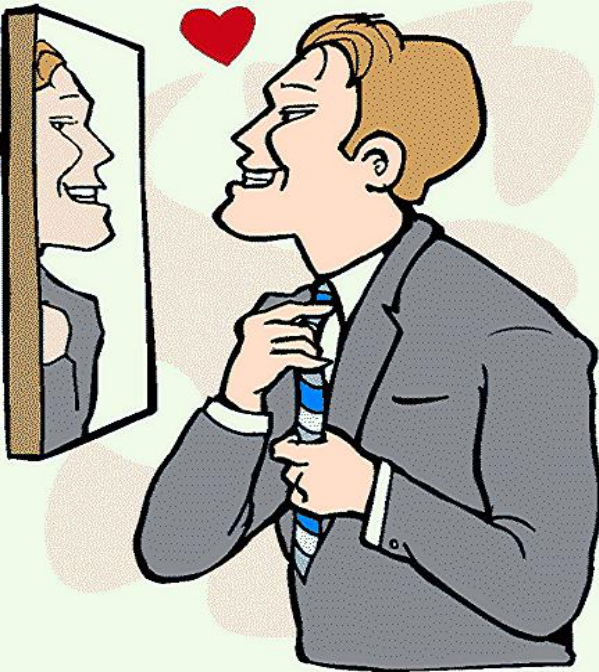
- Ezra was a Priest and Torah Teacher, a religious leader
- Nehemiah was a politician, a secular government leader
- Nehemiah's mission:
 - 1) Raise the economy of Jerusalem
 - 2) Make Jerusalem defensible
 - 3) Increase the population with Judeans
- Nehemiah had a spirit that was sensitive to God's instructions
- The Lord prepared and then called Nehemiah to a position of government leadership

THE MAKE-UP OF A BELIEVING COMMUNITY OF GOD

- 1Corinthians 12:4 – 27
- Every element of the community plays its role and is needed
- God does not favor leaders more than followers
- Our political leaders are blamed for our national problems
- God usually gives us the leaders we deserve, not the leaders that we need



THEY ARE A REFLECTION OF US!



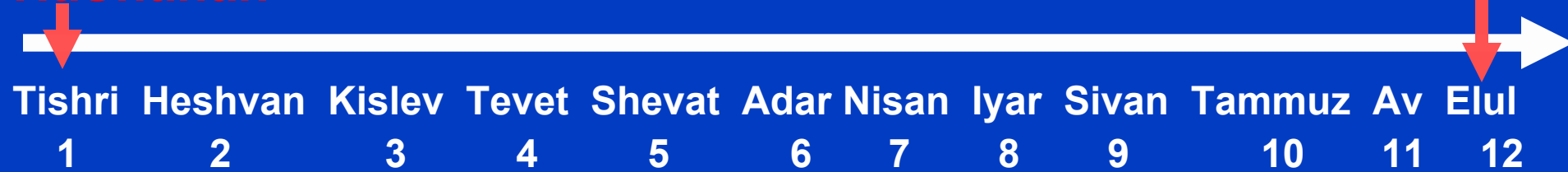
- In Democracies, our leaders accurately reflect the citizenry
- Similar to *Tzara'at*, a spiritually caused sin disease that outwardly reflects the inner self
- Rarely, the Lord will raise up a leader that runs counter to the culture, to bring the community back to a Godly footing
- Nehemiah a government politician, would fight for practical, pragmatic, tangible things of everyday life for his people
- But Nehemiah was a Godly man, raised up by God for this job

TISHRI (CIVIL) CALENDAR YEAR

NEW YEAR
BEGINS

**Rosh
HaShanah**

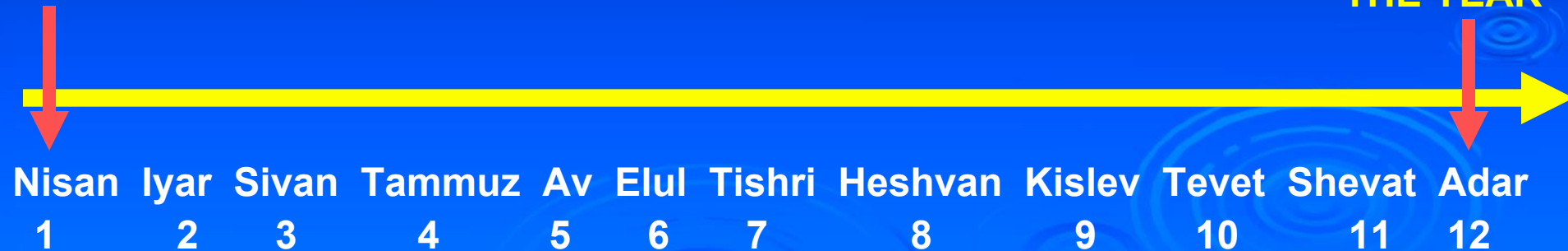
END OF
THE YEAR



BIBLICAL (RELIGIOUS) CALENDAR YEAR

NEW YEAR
BEGINS

END OF
THE YEAR



NEHEMIAH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEW
YEAR
BEGINS

END OF
THE YEAR

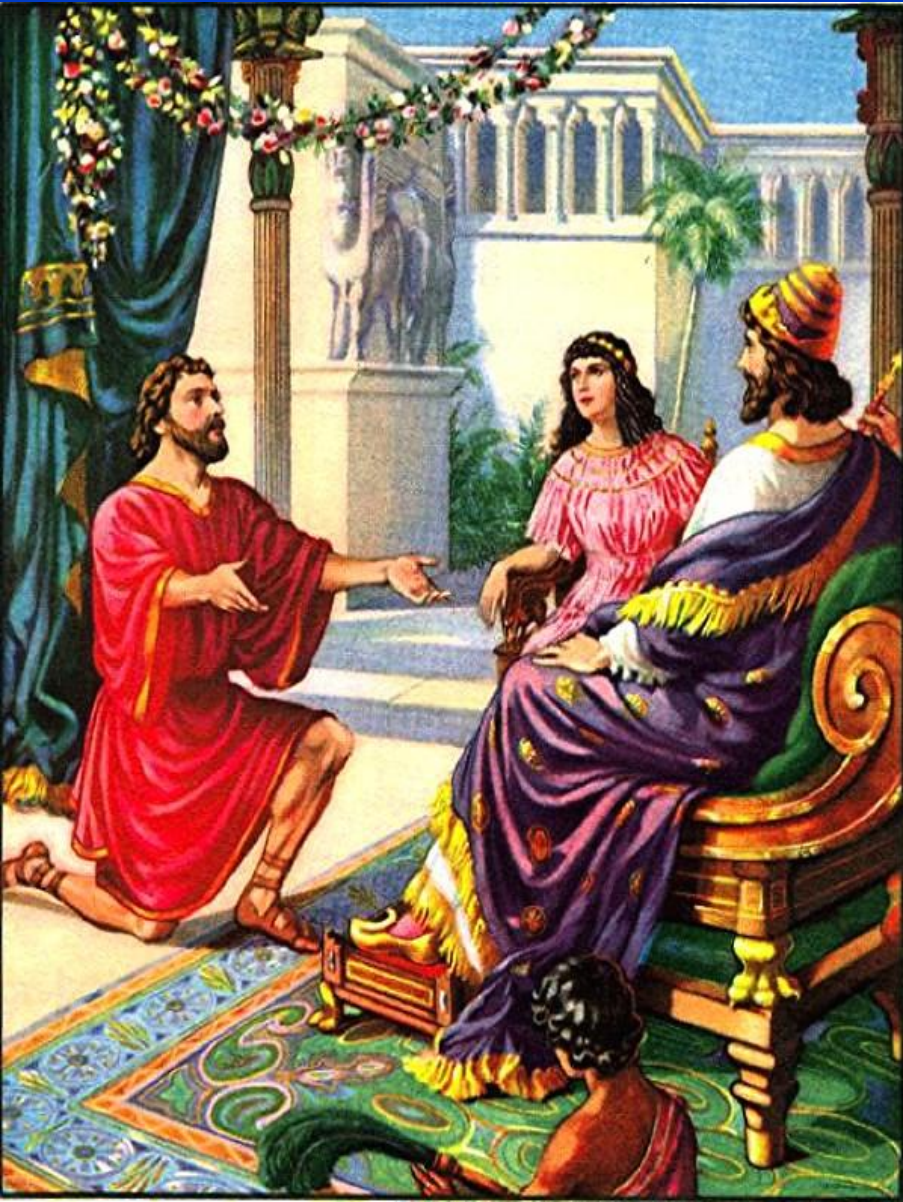
ARTAXERXES' 20TH YEAR

Tishri Heshvan Kislev Tevet Shevat Adar Nisan Iyar Sivan Tammuz Av Elul
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Nehemiah is told
Jerusalem's walls
still in ruin

Nehemiah goes to the
King and asks to go
to Jerusalem

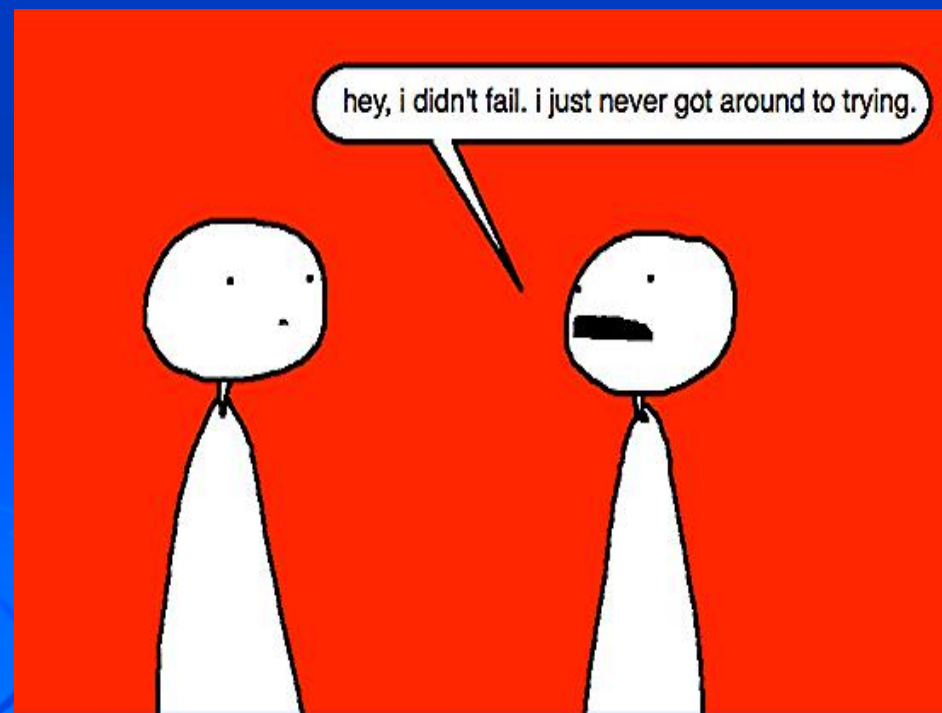
AN UNEXPECTED CONFRONTATION



- Persian kings were fond of wine and women !
- Nehemiah presents King and Queen with their wine at a banquet
- **“Why is your face so evil..?”**
- ***Panim*** = face = presence, countenance
- ***Rah*** = evil, bad, unpleasant
- The staff is not permitted to be “down” at a festive occasion
- It has been 4 months since Nehemiah learned about Jerusalem so why now is he depressed and hasn’t spoken to the king about it?
- King may have been gone, or perhaps Nehemiah was getting cold feet !

GOD ANSWERS NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

- If we procrastinate the Lord is liable to force the issue!
- Get up early and RUN to the righteous battle
- King was not annoyed; he was sensitive to Nehemiah's distress
- Desecration of the burial sites brought shame
- Loss of honor is intolerable
- The king couldn't have a man in his royal court who was in a social status of shame



ZERUBBABEL

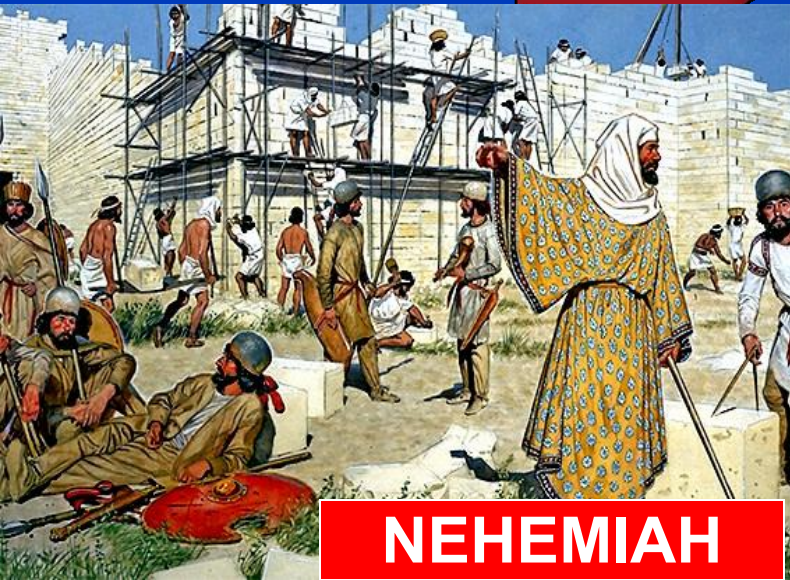


COULD NEHEMIAH SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS FAILED?

EZRA

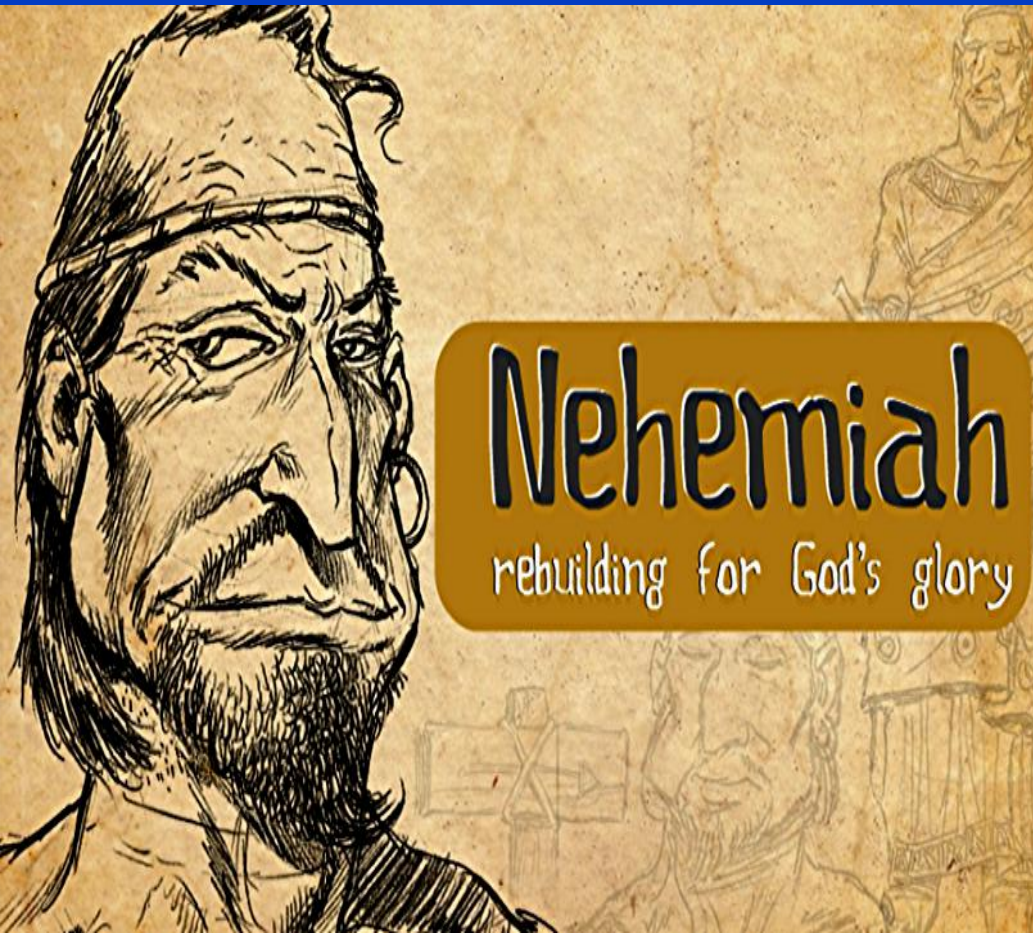


- Jerusalem is not mentioned, but it was a given that this city is the object of the discussion
- Jerusalem was a sensitive issue, but strategically important to Artaxerxes
- Darius allowed Zerubbabel to rebuild Temple, but not walls
- Artaxerxes allowed Ezra to go to reform the religion and the Priesthood, but didn't rebuild walls
- Would the king trust Nehemiah to do what others couldn't do?



NEHEMIAH

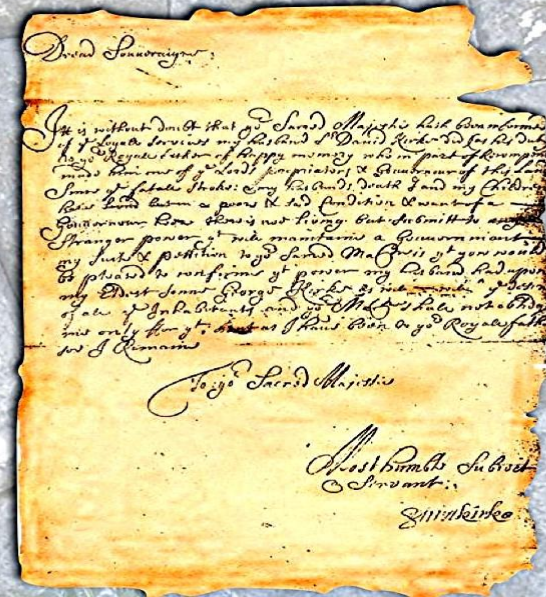
THE CHALLENGE OF REBUILDING THE WALLS



- Nehemiah was NOT Ezra
- He was a capable, pragmatic, politician
- Walls had lain in ruin for 175 years
- Artaxerxes' motives were political
- Nehemiah would be the Governor of Judah
- The king didn't know that it was God orchestrating everything from Heaven for His purposes

Nehemiah Used The King's Letters

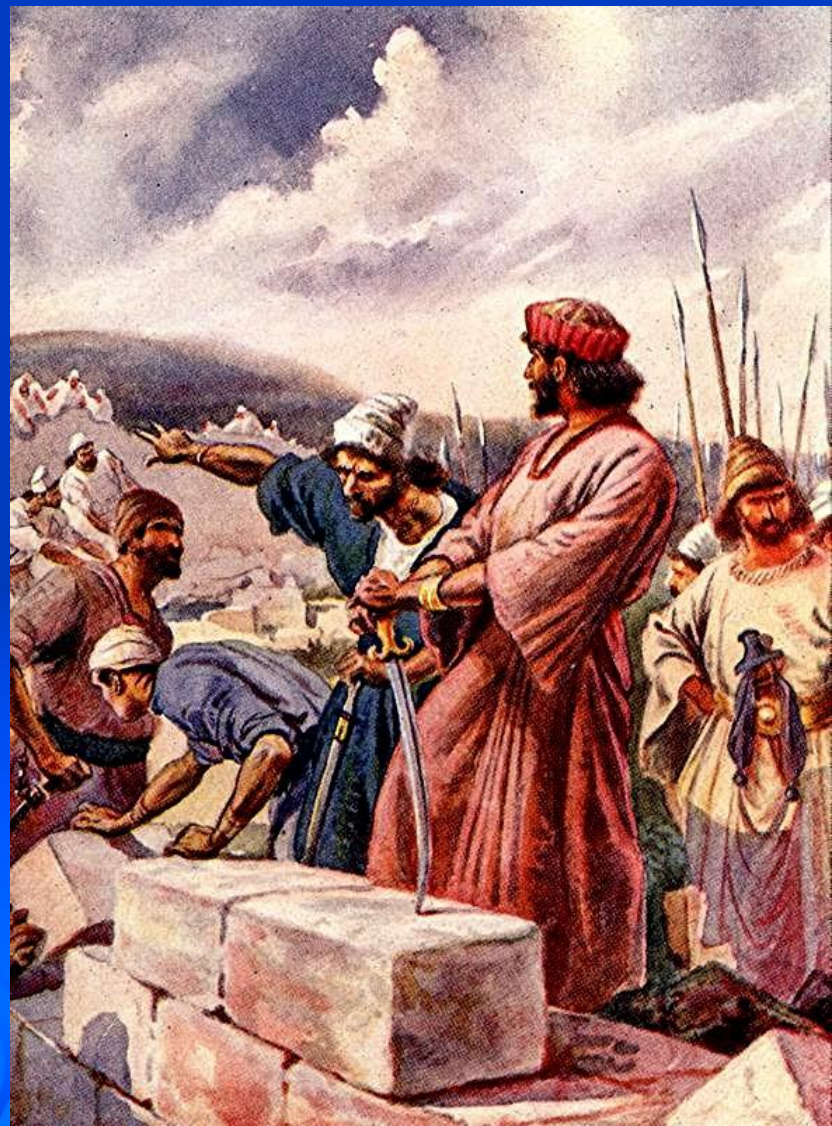
“Then **I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters.** The king had also sent army officers and soldiers on horses with me.” Nehemiah 2:9a NCV



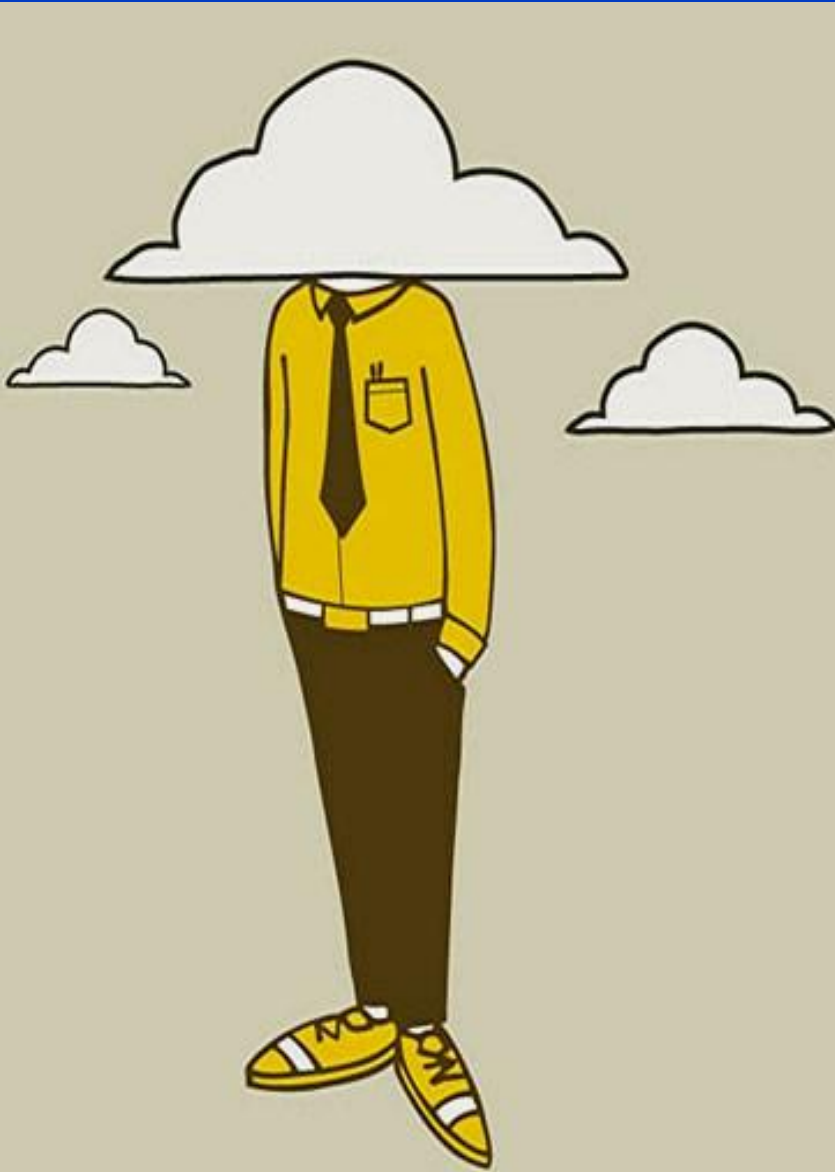
- King asked how long Nehemiah would be gone, we don't know his response.....but he wouldn't return for 12 years
- Nehemiah got letters of safe passage and introduction
- Being named Governor of Judah created a firestorm
- Nehemiah seen as unwelcome competition from local and regional leaders who wanted control of Judah

NEHEMIAH'S MISSION APPEARED TO BE SECULAR

- Letter to Asaf, manager of royal forests, authorizing timber for gates, walls, and Governor's mansion
- Mansion a symbol of authority
- Rebuilding of walls intended to:
 - 1) Create a formidable strategic outpost for the King
 - 2) Revive the economy
 - 3) Grow the Jewish population
 - 4) Provide safety and security for the people
- Sounds more worldly than pious



THIS IS THE WORLD, NOT HEAVEN



- The Father knows we need these things
- Sending another Priest, like Ezra, wasn't the answer
- Believers don't live on bread alone, but we need bread to live
- Harder to think on things of God on an empty stomach than when we're safe and secure
- Nehemiah had a partnership with God
- Ready to take action, takes risks and gets his hands dirty
- A role model of Godly let's-get-it-done leadership