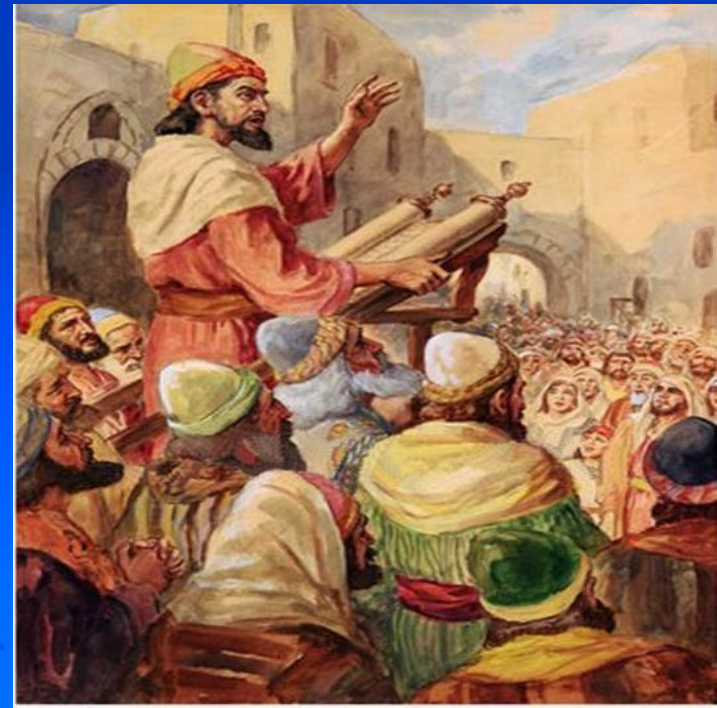



# EZRA IS NOT THE HIGH PRIEST

- It is the Law of Moses being taught, not the entire 5 books of Torah
- Ezra a reformer and overseer
- People not assembled at the Temple probably due to crowd size and purity issues
- Ezra speaking especially to the common folk



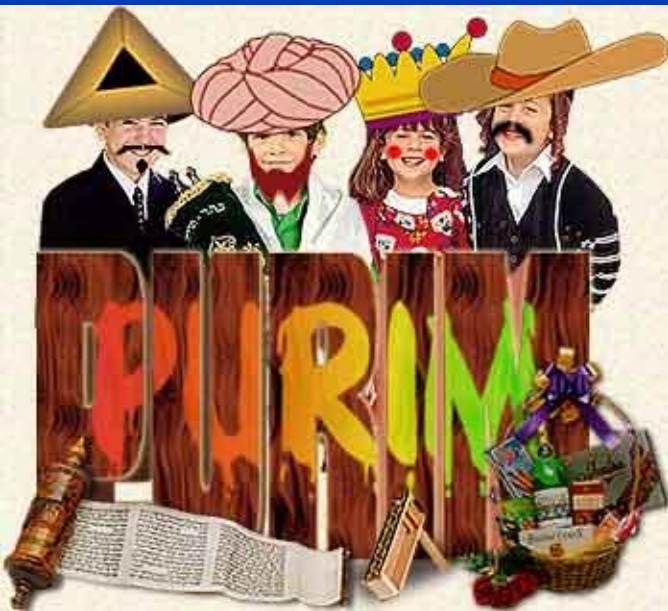
# GOD'S COMMUNITY

- 
- Principle: Leadership is the linchpin of any society
  - However that is no excuse for anyone to shun their individual responsibilities
  - Each “piece” plays a role in a community, and none more so than in a Community of God
  - Each person is responsible to the Lord and will be held accountable

# DAY OF WORSHIP

- This manmade concept has led to disharmony within the Church and between Jews, Messianics and Christians
- Holy convocation = *miqra* means: reading, proclamation, summons
- *Chag, atseret* both refer to assembling
- Jews have NO designated “day of worship”
- God did NOT ordain a designated weekly “day of worship”
- Roman Emperor Constantine designated a national “day of worship” in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.
- NOTHING WRONG with assembling to worship on Shabbat, or Sunday, or any other day, but one day is NOT superior to another nor is any day regarded as prohibited from worship

# NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 9



- Chapter 9 in five parts:
- 1) vs. 6 Creation
- 2) vss. 7 -8 Abraham
- 3) vss. 9-11 The Exodus
- 4) vss. 12-21 Wilderness Journey
- 5) vss. 22 – end Promised Land
- This meeting is Ezra's idea, held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Tishri
- It is OK to hold a special religious event provided it is done in the proper spirit and doesn't replace God-ordained holy days

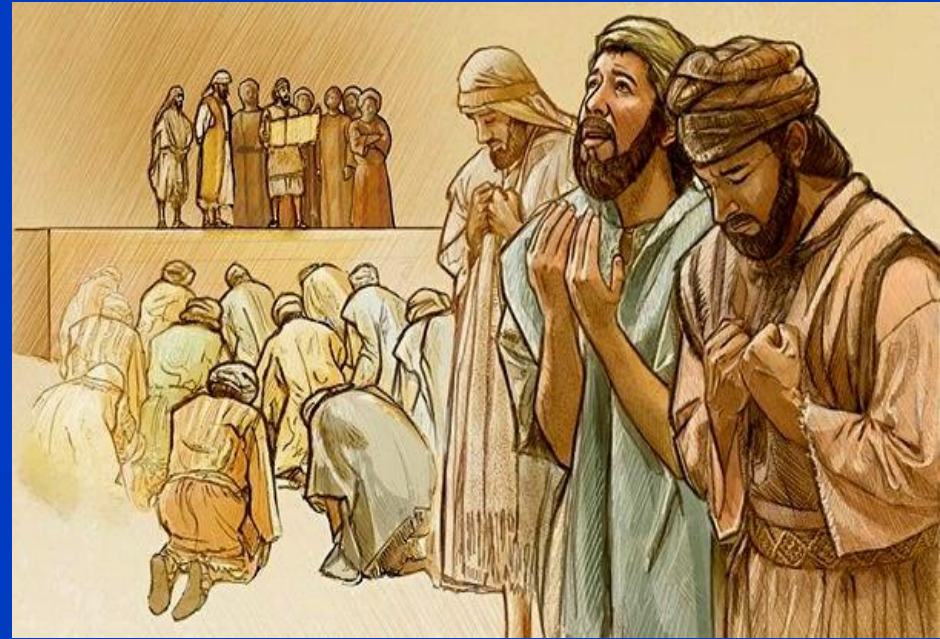
# A DAY OF MOURNING



- After the 3 Biblical Feasts of Tishri, Ezra called for a day to assemble and mourn, confess, and repent
- Nehemiah 9:1 *asaph* = assemble
- Genealogical Israelites to separate from “sons of strangers”
- Not divisive, because this prayer gathering dealt with the Hebrews’ natural identity
- Didn’t involve those with gentile ancestors who didn’t do the things the prayer is confessing
- Here “Israel” means only direct descendants of Jacob

# THE SPECIAL SERVICE BEGINS

- People listened to the Law being read for 3 hours
- Next, they prostrated themselves and confessed for 3 more hours
- Every place we see “Lord” or “Adonai” the Hebrew is YHWH





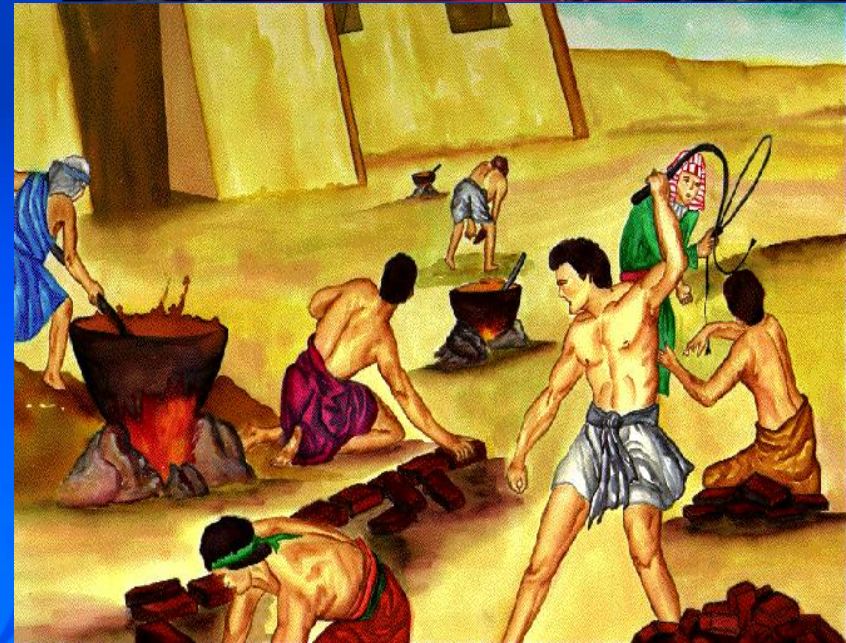
# THE MEANING OF *SHAMAYIM*

- *Shamayim* is both plural & singular
- Can mean the place where God dwells
- Can mean the sky, the universe
- The two were not well differentiated in the minds of the ancient Hebrews
- *Tsava ha'shamayim* = hosts of the heavens
- Most times we can't tell what was in the Biblical author's mind about Heaven and the sky, stars and angels



# FROM THE FALL TO REDEMPTION

## ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

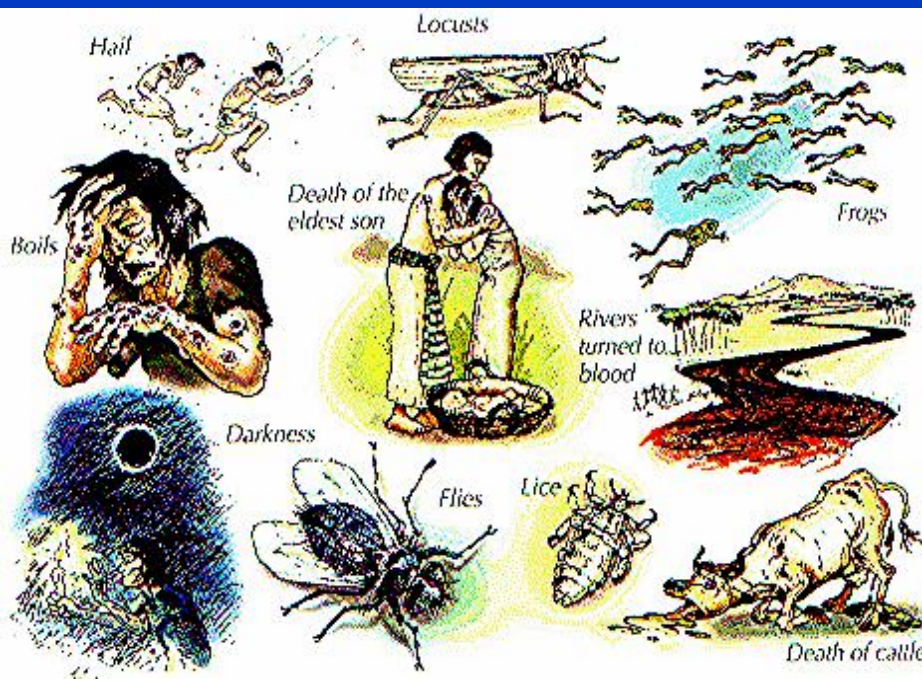


- Vs. 7 moves from Creation to Abraham
- With Abraham God took the 1<sup>st</sup> concrete step towards fixing the problem
- Humankind was divided into Hebrews and everyone else
- God made a covenant with Abraham to give him land currently occupied by the Canaanites
- Vs. 9 takes us to Egypt
- God's character is developed as God who loves His people and will bring about all He promises



# GOD ACTS TO SAVE ISRAEL

- God watched over His people, saw their distress, and ACTED!
- Gen.12:3 bless those who bless you, curse those who curse you
- At first Egypt was good to Israel, then turned on them
- **Shem** = name = reputation
- God became known as a Deliverer, a Savior



# CROSSING OVER



- Not even the mighty waters of the Red Sea could stop God from delivering His people
- When we try to save ourselves, the result is frustration
- When we submit to God, He does it all!
- We are safe on the other side, but can choose to return to Egypt
- This remains so all through the Millennium

# GOD STAYS WITH US DURING THE JOURNEY

- God provides:
- 1) Guidance on the journey
- 2) Laws of guidance in life
- 3) Sustenance and material provision
- 4) Assurance of the Promised Land
- Even when the people rebelled, God didn't cancel the covenants
- After the people repented, God once again provided for Israel
- We can count on the same things!

