

Nehemiah 9

Verses 1- 4

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them. ²The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and they stood and confessed their sins and the wrongdoings of their fathers. ³While they stood in their place, they read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for a fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God. ⁴Now on the Levites' platform stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and they cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God.

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them.

This was the second day after the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles

See chart 905

Jewish Feasts						
Feast	Scripture	Date Observed	Roman Calendar	Sabbath	Offerings	Commemorates
Passover	Lev. 23:05	Nisan 14 At twilight	March/April	No	Numbers 28:16-24	Oldest son saved from death
Festival of Unleavened Bread	Lev. 23:6-8	Nisan 15-21	March/April	Day 1 & 7 Spec Sabbath	Numbers 28:16-24	The hasty flight from Egypt
Offering the First Fruits	Lev. 23:9-14	After the Sabbath	March/April	No	Numbers 28:16-24	Beginning of the barley harvest
Feast Of Weeks (Pentecost)	Lev. 23:15-22	50 days after F.F.	May/June	Special Sabbath	Numbers 28:26-31	beginning of the wheat harvest.
Festival of Trumpets	Lev. 23:23-25	Tishri 1	September	Special Sabbath	Numbers 29:1-6	Civil New Year
Day of Atonement	Lev. 23:26-32	Tishri 10	Sept/Oct	Sabbath	Numbers 29:7-11	Forgiveness of sin for the nation
Tabernacles Temp. Shelters	Lev. 23:33-34	Tishri 15-22	Sept/Oct	Day 1 & 8 Spec Sabbath	Numbers 29:12-38	Wilderness End of harvest

They stood and confessed their sins and the wrongdoings of their fathers.

The people wanted to do this in the last chapter after they had heard the reading of God's law but it was inappropriate to be sad during the feast so they waited until the feast was over to mourn their long history of rebellion against God.

This was a good example of people using some good ole common sense because it would have been inappropriate to mourn during a festival which is a time of joy. Jesus made this point to the Pharisees when they wanted the disciples to fast.

See Matt 9:14-15

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John *came to Him, asking, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the groom cannot mourn as long as the groom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

¹⁶ But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. ¹⁷ Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.”

Jesus gave two examples of people using common sense.

1. Don't put a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment.

If this was done the new piece of cloth would shrink when the garment was washed and it would pull away from the old material that could no longer shrink.

2. Don't put new wine into old wineskins.

The new wine expands as it ferments and it would destroy the old wine skin that is no longer flexible.

The disciples could not fast (an act of mourning) while their savior was present because He was their light and life. Unfortunately this was not the case with the disciples of John or the Pharisees?

But a time was coming when Jesus would be taken away from the disciples and then they would mourn because they had lost their savior. Now that would soon change but for a while the disciples could not help but mourn.

The moral of the story is that we should not try to force times of joy or mourning into times when they do not fit. Good ole common sense.

Verses 5 – 8

Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah said, “Arise, bless the Lord your God forever and ever!

**May Your glorious name be blessed
And exalted above all blessing and praise!
⁶ You alone are the Lord.
You have made the heavens,
The heaven of heavens with all their lights,
The earth and everything that is on it,
The seas and everything that is in them.
You give life to all of them,
And the heavenly lights bow down before You.
⁷ You are the Lord God,
Who chose Abram
And brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees,
And gave him the name Abraham.
⁸ You found his heart faithful before You,
And made a covenant with him
To give *him* the land of the Canaanite,
Of the Hittite and the Amorite,
Of the Perizzite, the Jebusite, and the Gergashite—
To give *it* to his descendants.
And You have fulfilled Your promise,
Because You are righteous.**

**⁶ You alone are the Lord.
You have made the heavens,
The heaven of heavens with all their lights,
The earth and everything that is on it,
The seas and everything that is in them.
You give life to all of them,
And the heavenly lights bow down before You.**

The beginning of their praise to God began with His creation of everything. Isn't it ironic that there are many people in the church that no longer believe that God created the Universe and all that is within it? The so called "scientific" theory of evolution has replaced the creator with time, chance, and the laws of nature working on matter. God is no longer needed in their theory.

⁷ You are the Lord God, Who chose Abram

⁸ You found his heart faithful before You,

Why did God choose Abraham? Because he was a person of faith. Abraham was far from perfect but he was willing to sacrifice his only son just as the Father has done for us.

Verses 9 - 12

**“You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,
And heard their cry by the Red Sea.**

**¹⁰ Then You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
Against all his servants and all the people of his land;
For You knew that they acted arrogantly toward them,
And You made a name for Yourself as *it is* this day.**

**¹¹ You divided the sea before them,
So they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground;
And You hurled their pursuers into the depths,
Like a stone into raging waters.**

**¹² And with a pillar of cloud You led them by day,
And with a pillar of fire by night
To light for them the way
In which they were to go.**

This says that all the people of Egypt played a role in this injustice. But how did the common people act arrogantly?

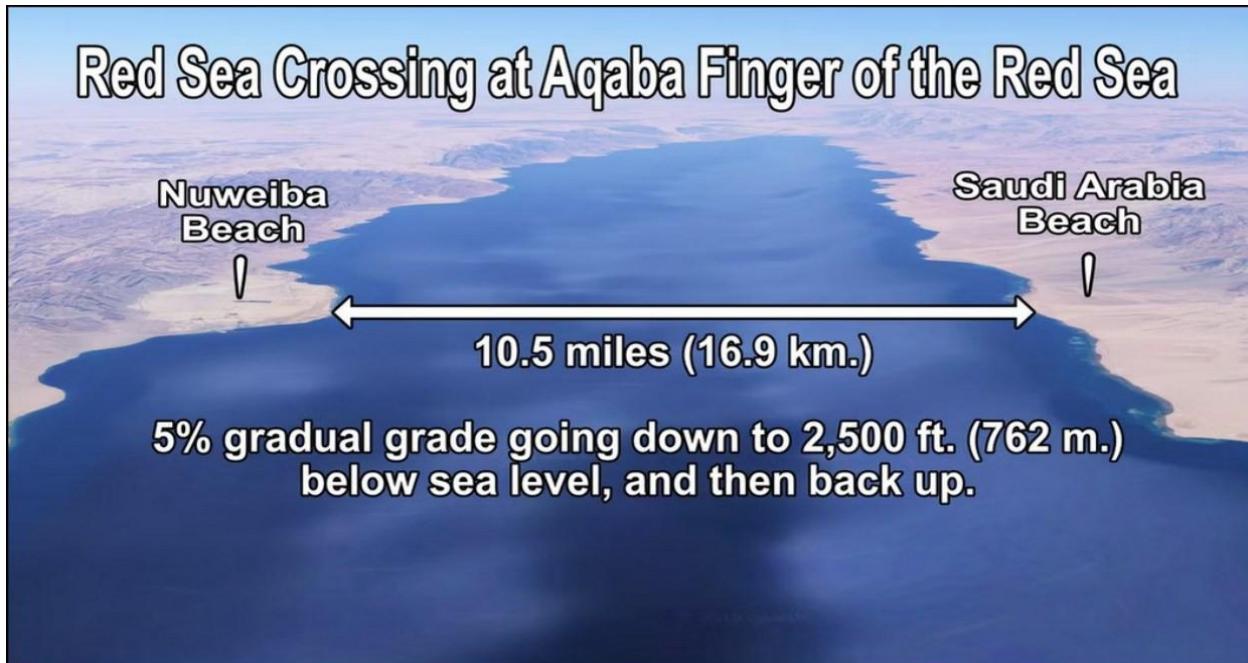
See Exodus 1:8-10

⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, otherwise they will multiply, and in the event of war, they will also join those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land.”

Someone might argue that the people could only do what the King decided to do but the word of God indicates that the King persuaded the people to enslave the Hebrews by appealing to their fears. Bad or evil kings rule like a dictator but a more enlightened king wants to persuade those in his kingdom to do what he desires. This kind of king may do some evil things but he is not a dictator.

**11 You divided the sea before them,
So they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground;
And You hurled their pursuers into the depths,**

See pics 910. God displaced 10.5 miles of water that reached a depth of 2500 feet.



911. This next pic does not show the magnitude of this event but it will have to do.



Verses 13 - 15

¹³ Then You came down on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven;
You gave them just ordinances and true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.

¹⁴ So You made known to them Your holy Sabbath,
And gave them commandments, statutes, and law,
Through Your servant Moses.

¹⁵ You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger,
You brought out water from a rock for them for their thirst,
And You told them to enter in order to take possession of
The land which You swore to give them.

¹³ Then You came down on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven;
You gave them just ordinances and true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.

See video 915 8.15 Location of Mt. Sinai

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.15.html>

¹⁴ So You made known to them Your holy Sabbath,
And gave them commandments, statutes, and law,
Through Your servant Moses.

God presented himself in a dramatic way on Mount Sinai and gave the Jews commandments, civil laws and holy days that were designed to help them remember the great things that He had done for Israel.

¹⁵ You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger,
You brought out water from a rock for them for their thirst,
And You told them to enter in order to take possession of
The land which You swore to give them.

God also provided their needs for food and water for 40 years while they were in the wilderness. He also gave them an opportunity to live in the land of Canaan.

Verses 16 - 21

¹⁶ “But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly;
They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments.
¹⁷ They refused to listen,
And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You performed among them;
So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in
Egypt.
But You are a God of forgiveness,
Gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and abounding in mercy;
And You did not abandon them.
¹⁸ Even when they made for themselves
A calf of cast metal
And said, ‘This is your god
Who brought you up from Egypt,’
And committed great blasphemies,
¹⁹ You, in Your great compassion,
Did not abandon them in the wilderness;
The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day,
To guide them on their way,
Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go.
²⁰ Instead, You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them,
You did not withhold Your manna from their mouth,
And You gave them water for their thirst.
²¹ Indeed, for forty years You provided for them in the wilderness *and they were not lacking;*
Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell up.

^{17a} They refused to listen,
And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You performed among them;
So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.

See Numbers 14:3 - 4

³ So why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder! Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ So they said to one another, “Let’s appoint a leader and return to Egypt!”

In Numbers 14 it says, “**they said to one another let's appoint a leader**” but here we find out that they actually appointed someone. They were actually serious about returning to Egypt.

**^{17b} But You are a God of forgiveness,
Gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger and abounding in mercy;
And You did not abandon them.**

Despite their rebellious attitude, God continued to bless them. However, we should not forget that they paid a high price for their rebellion. That generation did not enter the Promised Land but died in the wilderness.

**¹⁹ You, in Your great compassion,
Did not abandon them in the wilderness;
The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day,
To guide them on their way,
Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go.
²⁰ Instead, You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them,
You did not withhold Your manna from their mouth,
And You gave them water for their thirst.
²¹ Indeed, for forty years You provided for them in the wilderness *and they were not lacking;*
Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell up.**

The Israelites often forgot how much God was doing for them on a daily basis.

1. The pillar of cloud to guide them
2. The pillar of fire to light the way.
3. The daily manna.
4. The water that came forth from rocks.
5. Their clothes did not wear out.
6. Their feet did not swell.

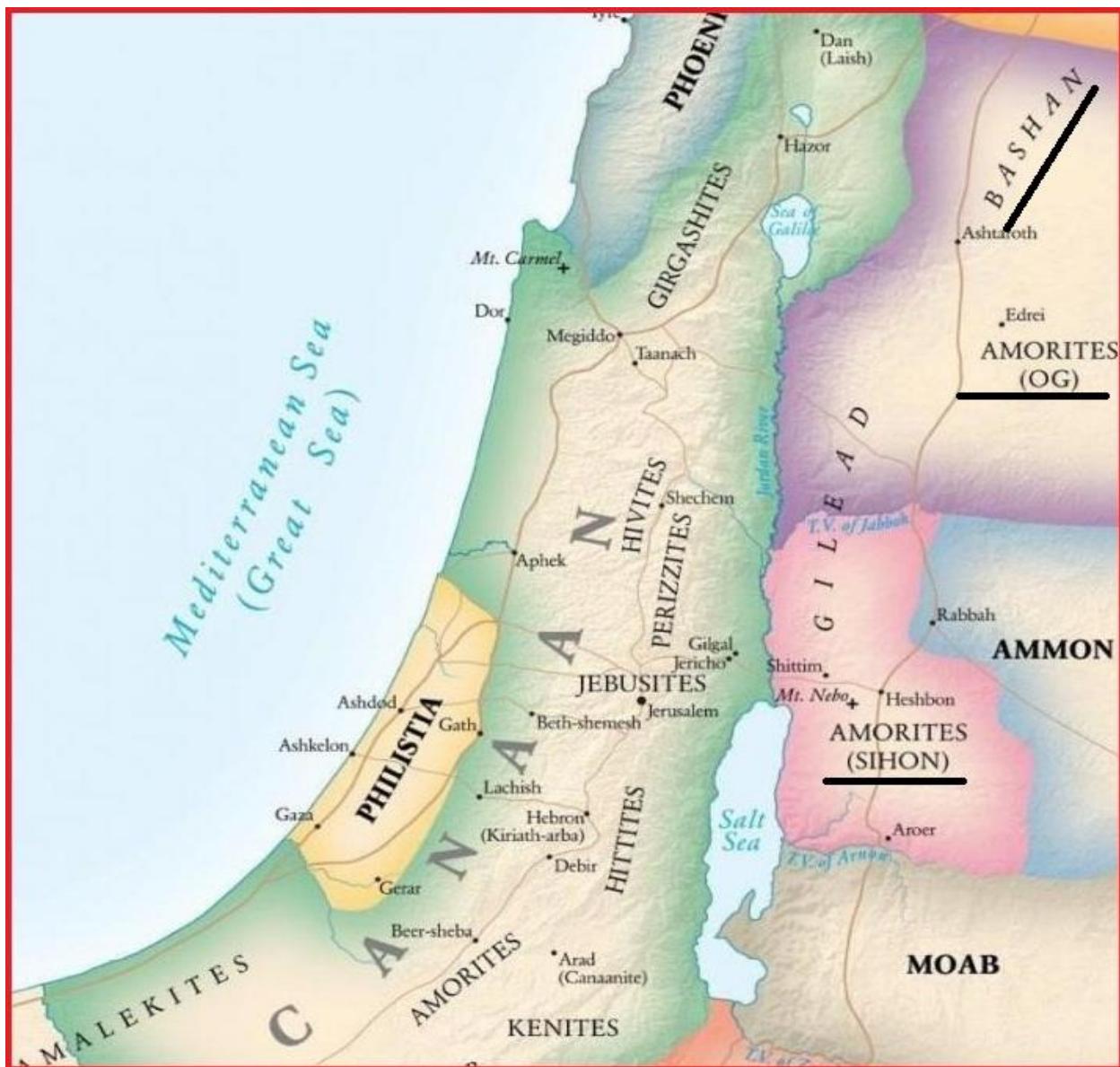
The fact that their feet did not swell while in the wilderness is another detail we did not previously know.

Verses 22

**²² You also gave them kingdoms and peoples,
And allotted *them* to them as a boundary.
They took possession of the land of Sihon the king of Heshbon
And the land of Og the king of Bashan.**

These were kingdoms east of the Jordan River that were not part of the Promised Land. There was the kingdom of Bashan ruled by OG (the giant) to the north and the kingdom of Sihon to the south. The Amorites lived in both areas.

See Map 920



Verses 23 - 25

²³ You made their sons as numerous as the stars of heaven,
And You brought them into the land

Which You had told their fathers to enter and possess.

²⁴ So their sons entered and took possession of the land.

And You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites,
And You handed them over to them, with their kings and the peoples of the land,
To do with them as they desired.

²⁵ They captured fortified cities and a fertile land.

They took possession of houses full of every good thing,
Carved out cisterns, vineyards, olive groves,
Fruit trees in abundance.

So they ate, were filled and put on fat,

And lived luxuriously in Your great goodness.

²³ You made their sons as numerous as the stars of heaven,

And You brought them into the land

Which You had told their fathers to enter and possess.

Israel was now a nation of 2.5 million people. 2½ tribes lived east of the Jordan River and the other 9 ½ tribes lived in the Promised Land.

²⁴ So their sons entered and took possession of the land.

And You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites,

And You handed them over to them, with their kings and the peoples of the land,
To do with them as they desired.

The men of Israel fought for this land but it was the Lord that made them victorious.

²⁵ They captured fortified cities and a fertile land.

They took possession of houses full of every good thing,

Carved out cisterns, vineyards, olive groves,

Fruit trees in abundance.

So they ate, were filled and put on fat,

And lived luxuriously in Your great goodness.

Israel had tremendous wealth because of God; He gave them a fertile land with homes and vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees, animals, and silver and gold.

Verses 26 - 31

²⁶ “But they became rebellious and revolted against You,
And threw Your Law behind their backs
And killed Your prophets who had admonished them
In order to bring them back to You,
And they committed great blasphemies.

²⁷ Therefore You handed them over to their enemies who oppressed them,
But when they cried out to You in the time of their distress,
You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion
You gave them people who saved them from the hand of their enemies.

²⁸ But as soon as they had rest, they did evil again before You;
Therefore You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they ruled
over them.

When they cried out again to You, You heard from heaven,
And many times You rescued them according to Your compassion,

²⁹ And admonished them in order to turn them back to Your Law.
Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Your commandments but sinned
against Your ordinances,
Which, *if* a person follows them, then he will live by them.

And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not
listen.

³⁰ However, You remained patient with them for many years,
And admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets,
Yet they would not listen.

Therefore You handed them over to the peoples of the lands.

³¹ Nevertheless, in Your great compassion You did not make an end of them or
abandon them,
For You are a gracious and compassionate God.

²⁶ “But they became rebellious and revolted against You,
And threw Your Law behind their backs
And killed Your prophets who had admonished them
In order to bring them back to You,
And they committed great blasphemies.

Israel should have been thankful for their prosperity but instead they rejected God and His law. We know this was during the period of the kings because this is when God sent His prophets to Israel. 1050 to 586 BC.

²⁷ Therefore You handed them over to their enemies who oppressed them,
But when they cried out to You in the time of their distress,
You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion
You gave them people who saved them from the hand of their enemies.
²⁸ But as soon as they had rest, they did evil again before You;
Therefore You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they ruled
over them.
When they cried out again to You, You heard from heaven,
And many times You rescued them according to Your compassion,
²⁹ And admonished them in order to turn them back to Your Law.

This cycle of Israel calling on God for help and then God showing them compassion, only to see them reject Him when things got better is a good summary of what happened during the time of the Judges. 1350 to 1050 BC.

³⁰ However, You remained patient with them for many years,
And admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets,
Yet they would not listen.
Therefore You handed them over to the peoples of the lands.
³¹ Nevertheless, in Your great compassion You did not make an end of them or
abandon them,
For You are a gracious and compassionate God.

This section is once again focused of the prophets during the period of the kings.

While the people of Israel as a whole rejected God and His law, God remained faithful to the promise that he made to Abraham that all the nations would be blessed thru him. We know that this promise was fulfilled in the Messiah around 28 AD. Since then the true Jews, believers in Christ, are under the new Covenant established by Jesus.

See Romans 2:28 – 29

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.

This is how Paul could say in Romans 11:26 that all Israel will be saved. Jewish and Gentile believers will all be saved in the end time.

Verses 32 - 38

³² “Now then, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps *His covenant and faithfulness*,
Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You,
Which has happened to us, our kings, our leaders, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and to all Your people,
From the days of the kings of Assyria to this day.
³³ However, You are righteous in everything that has happened to us;
For You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly.
³⁴ For our kings, our leaders, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Your Law
Or paid attention to Your commandments and Your admonitions with which You have admonished them.
³⁵ But they, in their own kingdom,
With Your great goodness which You gave them,
With the broad and rich land which You placed before them,
Did not serve You or turn from their evil deeds.
³⁶ Behold, we are slaves today,
And as for the land which You gave to our fathers to eat its fruit and its bounty,
Behold, we are slaves on it.
³⁷ And its abundant produce is for the kings
Whom You have set over us because of our sins;
They also rule over our bodies
And over our cattle as they please,
So we are in great distress.
³⁸ “Now because of all this
We are making an agreement in writing;
And on the sealed *document are the names of our leaders, our Levites, and our priests.*”

³² “Now then, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps *His covenant and faithfulness*,
Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You,
Which has happened to us, our kings, our leaders, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and to all Your people,
From the days of the kings of Assyria to this day.

Israel had been defeated by a number of the surrounding nations during their long history but Assyria was the first nation to deport them to another land. Being removed from the Promised Land was a devastating blow to a nation that saw themselves as the apple of God's eye.

³³ **However, You are righteous in everything that has happened to us;**

For You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly.

³⁴ **For our kings, our leaders, our priests, and our fathers have not kept Your Law**

Or paid attention to Your commandments and Your admonitions with which You have admonished them.

This remnant that was left, about 60,000 people, acknowledged that God was righteous in what He had done and that they had been unfaithful.

³⁶ **Behold, we are slaves today,**

**And as for the land which You gave to our fathers to eat its fruit and its bounty,
Behold, we are slaves on it.**

³⁷ **And its abundant produce is for the kings**

Whom You have set over us because of our sins;

They also rule over our bodies

And over our cattle as they please,

So we are in great distress.

Israel was given two options in Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

1. They could ignore the Law and suffer all of the curses that Moses outlined.
2. They could follow the law of God and receive many blessings.

The nation as a whole chose option one and paid the price for that decision. The 10 Northern tribes went into captivity in 722 BC and the 2 Southern tribes were deported in 586 BC. When they returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra they were back in Jerusalem but they were still under the control of the Persians and life was not easy for most of the people.

³⁸ **“Now because of all this**

We are making an agreement in writing;

And on the sealed *document* are the names of our leaders, our Levites, and our priests.”

Israel wanted to be free but true freedom is only possible under God's leadership so the people decided to live according to God's rules.

This verse should probably be the first verse of the next chapter. When the bible was divided into chapters and verses it was not under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.