

**Lesson 20**  
The Problem of Usury and Its Solution  
( Nehemiah 5:1-19 )

**Questions**

1. What problem came up among the Jews that Nehemiah had to deal with (5:1-5)?
  
2. How did Nehemiah react to this problem among his brethren (5:6)?
  
3. What did Nehemiah request of the Jewish leaders to resolve this problem (5:7-11)?
  
4. What did the Jewish leaders promise to do to alleviate this problem (5:12-13)?
  
5. How long was Nehemiah governor and what did he do that was different from the former governors and why (5:14-15)?
  
6. What else did Nehemiah do to help his brethren during this difficult time and why (5:17-18)?
  
7. What did Nehemiah request in his prayer to God (5:19; see also 13:14, 22, 31)?

**Digging Deeper**

1. What was the “king’s tribute” (5:4; see Ezra 4:13; 7:24)?
  
2. What is usury and what did the Law of Moses say about it concerning the Israelites (5:7, 10; see Ex. 22:25-27; Deut. 23:19-20; and Lev. 25:35-38)? Is it wrong to charge interest today?

3. What role did Nehemiah have as the “governor” of the land (5:14; see also 8:9; 10:1; and 12:26)?
  
4. What are the approximate dates for the 12 years that Nehemiah was governor – the 20<sup>th</sup> year to the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Artaxerxes the king (5:14)?
  
5. What was the “bread of the governor” that Nehemiah refused to take (5:14, 18)?

### **Applications for Today**

1. Opposition to the Lord’s work can be external - from without God’s people (4:1-8), and internal - from within God’s people (5:1-13; Gal. 5:13-15).
2. Do we get upset when we hear that our brethren are having problems, or do we simply ignore them (5:6; Rom. 12:15; 1 Cor. 12:26)?
3. Good leadership will do what it can to help to alleviate the problems among their followers (including personal sacrifices), not make them worse (5:7-13; Acts 20:35).
4. Walking in the fear of our God will help us to treat our brethren properly (5:9, 15; Deut. 8:6; 10:12; Isa. 50:10).
5. A magnanimous spirit of giving and generosity is needed to today among God’s people, especially when they find themselves in difficult times (5:14-19; Prov. 11:24-25; 19:17).
6. God will remember the good deeds that we do for others (5:19; Heb. 6:10).