

## NEHEMIAH'S REQUEST. NEH. 2:1-10. 10/13/24. #02.

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2 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, *when wine was before him*, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. 2 Therefore the king said to me, "Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became *and* dreadfully afraid, 3 and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies waste*, and its gates are burned with fire?" 4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." 6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors *of the region beyond the River*, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains to the temple*, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me. 9 Then I went to the governors *in the region beyond the River*, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard *of it*, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.  
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### 1. A bold request

- a. After hearing the news from Jerusalem, Nehemiah spent 4 months fasting & praying (Dec., *kislev*, to April, *nisan*)
  - a1. The time had to be right for this request
  - a2. Neh. had to wait for the Lord's leading
- b. After 4 months the king noticed Neh.'s sadness
  - a1. Servants were not allowed to be sad before the king, for it suggested a plot on his life
  - a2. Personal matters were to be kept from king
- c. A great fear came over Neh.
  - a1. To be sad before the king was taboo
  - a2. Neh. would have only 1 chance to make his request, for the king's word was final
  - a3. Neh. silently said a quick prayer before God
- d. Neh. reveals that the city of his fathers was in ruins
  - a1. He does not mention Jerusalem, since it was the king who shut down the project of rebuilding the wall 12 years earlier (Ez. 4)

a2. Neh. refers to the city where his fathers were buried (a nostalgia to gain sympathy)

- e. Neh. mentions that the queen was sitting next to the king (suggests a private & not public setting & perhaps some sympathetic influence by the queen)
- f. The king asks Neh. what his request was (apparently he trusted Neh. & suspected nothing amiss)

g. Neh. asks for 2 bold things:

- a1. To be allowed to return to Jer. & rebuild it
- a2. To be given letters of certification & authorization to take lumber from the king's forest to rebuild gates (king to pay for project)
  - b1. Neh. had no resources to foot the bill
  - b2. Granting permission implied support

### 2. The king's response

- a. The king asks for a time table, which Neh. gives
- b. Artaxerxes gives Nehemiah all he asks for
  - a1. Providential = God controls kings (Pv. 21:1)
  - a2. Neh. could have all the lumber he needed from the king's forest (*pardaisos*, from Persian, meaning *beyond the wall*, referring to a garden, from which we derive *paradise*), probably the forests near the Jordan)

### 3. Trusting God in all his provisions

- a. Unlike Ezra, who was embarrassed to ask for an armed escort, Neh. took such an escort
  - a1. The armed cohort provided both protection & validity to the project as backed by king
  - a2. Ezra's failure to have soldiers backing him up thwarted the project
- b. God expects us to use the resources that he provides for us
  - a1. Presumptuous for us to expect divine intervention when he has provided other means for escape (help, police, doctor...)
  - a2. God gives us wisdom to help self & then provides providential help as needed
- c. Neh. needed the soldiers against Sanballat & Tobiah (family plagues Jews for 2 centuries)