

Nehemiah's Prayer Answered

2:1 **AND** it came about in the month Nisan, ^ain the twentieth year of King ^bArtaxerxes, that wine *was* before him, and ^cI took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. 2 So the king said to me, “Why is your face sad though you are not sick? ^aThis is nothing but sadness of heart.” Then I was very much afraid. 3 And I said to the king, “^aLet the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad ^bwhen the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?” 4 Then the king said to me, “What would you request?” ^aSo I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said to the king, “If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before 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 sitting beside him, “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me, and ^aI gave him a definite time. 7 And I said to the king, “If it please the king, let letters be given me ^afor the governors *of the provinces* beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s ^aforest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of ^bthe fortress which is by the ¹temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go.” And the king granted *them* to me because ^cthe good hand of my God *was* on me.

9 Then I came to ^athe governors *of the provinces* beyond the River and gave them the king’s letters. Now ^bthe king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. 10 And when ^aSanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite ¹official heard *about it*, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel.

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls

11 So I ^acame to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 And I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my ¹mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. 13 So I went out at night by ^athe Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon’s Well and *on* to the ¹Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem ^bwhich were broken down and its ^cgates which were consumed by fire. 14 Then I passed on to ^athe Fountain Gate and ^bthe King’s Pool, but there was no place for ¹my mount to pass. 15 So I went up at night by the ^aravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned. 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the rest who did the work.

17 Then I said to them, “You see the bad situation we are in, that ^aJerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem that we may no longer be a reproach.” 18 And I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me, and also about the king’s words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, “Let us arise and build.” ^aSo they put their hands to the good *work*. 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite ¹official, and ^aGeshem the Arab heard *it*, ^bthey mocked us and despised us and said, “What is this thing you are doing? ^cAre you rebelling against the king?” 20 So I answered them and said to them, “^aThe God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build, ^bbut you have no portion, right, or memorial in Jerusalem.”

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- ^a Neh. 1:1
^b Ezra 7:1
^c Neh. 1:11
^a Prov. 15:13
^a Dan. 2:4
^b 2 Kin. 25:8-10; 2 Chr. 36:19; Neh. 1:3; Jer. 52:12-14
^a Neh. 1:4
^a Neh. 13:6
^a Ezra 7:21; 8:36
^a Eccl. 2:5, 6
^b Neh. 7:2
¹ Lit., *house*
^c Ezra 7:6; Neh. 2:18
^a Neh. 2:7
^b Ezra 8:22
^a Neh. 2:19; 4:1
¹ Lit., *servant*
^a Ezra 8:32
¹ Lit., *heart*
^a Neh. 3:13
¹ Lit., *Gate of Ash-heaps*
^b Neh. 1:3
^c Neh. 2:3, 17
^a Neh. 3:15
^b 2 Kin. 20:20
¹ Lit., *the animal under me*
^a John 18:1
^a Neh. 1:3
^a 2 Sam. 2:7
¹ Lit., *servant*
^a Neh. 6:6
^b Neh. 4:1
^c Neh. 6:6
^a Ezra 4:3
^b Neh. 2:4; Acts 8:21

ⁱ*The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.