

Nehemiah 1 & 2

Introduction

- Who is Nehemiah?
- Where is he?
- How does he fit in the story?

¹The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the citadel,

² that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem.

The News that Changes His Life

³ And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”

⁴As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah's Prayer

⁵And I said, “O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

⁶let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants,

confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.

⁷We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

⁸Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples,

⁹but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of

heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.'

¹⁰They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.

¹¹O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give

success to your servant today,
and grant him mercy in the
sight of this man.” Now I was
cupbearer to the king.

<https://bible.com/bible/59/neh.1.1-11.ESV>

Nehemiah and the King

¹In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

²And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

³I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

⁴Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king,

and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.”

⁶And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

⁷And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,

⁸and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of

the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Nehemiah Getting Started

⁹Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.

¹⁰But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

¹¹So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. ¹²Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem.

There was no animal with me but
the one on which I rode.

¹³I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire.

¹⁴Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass.

¹⁵Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned.

¹⁶And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

17 Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.”

18 And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.

And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

Nehemiah and Opposition

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us

and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?”

20 Then I replied to them, “The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.”

