

# Nehemiah 2 Commentary

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**Nehemiah 2:1** And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

- Nisan (KJV): [Es 3:7±](#)
- the twentieth (KJV): [Ne 1:1](#) [Ezr 7:1,7](#)
- I took up (KJV): [Ne 1:11](#) [Ge 40:11,21](#)

**NEHEMIAH UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
JUST A FEW NOTES NOW  
WILL FINISH IF THE LORD WILLS**

**And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.**

**Nisan.** This would mean the first day of the month Nisan, which was the first month of the religious year of Israel. The twentieth year of Artaxerxes is generally accepted as 445 B.C., in terms of more or less standard secular chronology. This date is important as the starting date of the uniquely significant prophecy of the seventy weeks (see notes on [Daniel 9:25-27±](#)).

**wine.** Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer (Nehemiah 1:11), evidence of the high degree of trust placed in him by Artaxerxes. The use of poison as a means of assassination was common in antiquity.

**Ryrie** - Nisan (Mar.-Apr.) of 444 B.C., four months after Nehemiah began praying, but still in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes's reign (1:1), since his official year began and ended in Tishri (Sept.-Oct.). For months of the year, see note on [Ex. 12:2±](#).

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- 3 qualities of a great leader: Waiting, Praying, Asking.
- 3 essentials to Christian Service: Investigation, Cooperation, Determination.

**WAITING** - Nehemiah didn't up and quit his job & then make haste to Jerusalem. Suetonius (Roman historian, just after time of Christ) said, Make haste slowly. No, he prayed & worked faithfully for 4 months. He waited to approach the king in the Lord's time. Is there anything he is asking you to wait for right now? How are you dealing with it? Need some tips? (Nehemiah Nuggets) 3 scriptures that help us not to rush into things:

1. Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD. Ex.14:13<sup>+</sup>
2. Sit still my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day. Ruth 3:18<sup>+</sup>
3. Be still and know that I am God. Ps.46:10

Waiting on the Lord is not wasting time but investing time. Working is easier than waiting...but wait any ways. A Latin Proverb, Impulse manages all things badly. We're in such a hurry. Annual cost of running red lights (in medical bills, car repairs, etc) \$7 billion. Average amount of time saved by running a red light: 50 seconds. (U.S. Department of Transportation, cited in Hope Health Letter (2/96). "To Verify," Leadership.) Do you have faith to wait? Let these Scriptures seep in:

- Is. 28:16 Whoever believes will not act hastily.
- Is.30:18b Blessed are all those who wait for Him.
- Hab .2:1-3 I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

Faith + Patience ≠ laziness. In what area is the lord asking you to wait in?

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#### **Matthew Henry's Concise - Nehemiah's Request to the King (2:1-8)**

Our prayers must be seconded with serious endeavours, else we mock God. We are not limited to certain moments in our addresses to the King of kings, but have liberty to go to him at all times; approaches to the throne of grace are never out of season. But the sense of God's displeasure and the afflictions of his people, are causes of sorrow to the children of God, under which no earthly delights can comfort. The king encouraged Nehemiah to tell his mind. This gave him boldness to speak; much more may the invitation Christ has given us to pray, and the promise that we shall speed, encourage us to come boldly to the throne of grace. Nehemiah prayed to the God of heaven, as infinitely above even this mighty monarch. He lifted up his heart to that God who understands the language of the heart. Nor should we ever engage in any pursuit in which it would be wrong for us thus to seek and expect the Divine direction, assistance, and blessing. There was an immediate answer to his prayer; for the seed of Jacob never sought the God of Jacob in vain.

**Nehemiah 2:2 So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid.**

- Why is thy (KJV): Ge 40:7
- sorrow (KJV): Pr 15:13<sup>+</sup>
- Then I (KJV): Probably the king spoke as if he had some suspicion that Nehemiah harboured some bad design, and that his face indicated some conceived treachery, or remorse; and, indeed, the words rendered sad, and sorrow of heart, might be rendered evil, and wickedness of heart.

**So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid.**

**Ryrie** - A sad countenance was not tolerated in the royal presence, so Nehemiah had good reason to be afraid (cf. Est. 4:2<sup>+</sup>).

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**Brian Bell** - SECOND QUALITY OF A GREAT LEADER - **PRAYING** (Neh 2:2-4) Why was Nehemiah afraid? What was the rule of the day? No one was to appear before the king w/sadness or bad news.

Esther 4:1,2+ When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry. He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

You could lose your life for having one bad day at the office. My, how some have perfected the act of sadness among others. Each time you speak to them it is the whoa is me syndrome. Often simply seeking attention (I'm not referring to those legitimately sad)

Through fear...a splendid courage. His secret?...Prayer. He was effective in his 911 Prayers because he spent much time alone w/the Lord. i.e. all of chapter And 4 months worth so far. Regular times of prayer must be the context for all our instant prayers. Do you talk to God like this throughout your day? Interesting to note, Nehemiah could come to the God's Throne of Grace any time, but he had to wait an invitation before Artaxerxes throne?

**Nehemiah 2:3 I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"**

- Let the king (KJV): Far from wishing ill to my master, I wish him to live for ever. 1Ki 1:31+ Da 2:4+ Da 3:9+ Da 5:10+ Da 6:6,21+
- the city (KJV): Ne 1:3 Ps 102:14 Ps 137:6 La 2:9
- the place (KJV): 2Ch 21:20+ 2Ch 28:27+ 2Ch 32:33+

**I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"**

In typical Rabbinical Jewish fashion, he answers a question, w/a question. (not demanding) Tombs – why does he mention this? A pagan monarch wouldn't be moved to sorrow over the ruins of Jerusalem, but would show respect for the dead.

**Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

- For what (KJV): 1Ki 3:5+ Es 5:3,6+ Es 7:2+ Mk 10:51+
- So I prayed (KJV): Ne 1:4,11 2Sa 15:31+ Pr 3:6+ Php 4:6+

**Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

Excellent practical example of 1Th 5:17+.

**Believer's Study Bible** - vv. 4-7) The decree of Artaxerxes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in the twentieth year of his reign (cf. 1:1, note) marks the beginning of the "seventy weeks" foretold by Daniel (cf. Dan. 9:24+, note). The month "Nisan" corresponds to March-April. Nehemiah waited some four months in the confident hope that God would provide an opportunity for him to make his appeal to the king (vv. 2, 3). Note his brief prayer before answering the king's timely question (v. 4), even though he had a definite strategy already in mind (vv. 7, 8).

**Ryrie** - Though Nehemiah's prayer was (of necessity) brief and silent, it had been preceded by a long period of petition to the Lord (1:4-11).

**Nehemiah 2:5 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."**

- If it please (KJV): Ezr 5:17 Es 1:19+ Es 5:8+ Es 7:3+ Es 8:5+
- and if thy (KJV): Ru 2:13+ 2Sa 14:22+ Pr 3:4+

**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."**

445BC: the start date for Daniel's 70 weeks in Dan 9:25<sup>+</sup>. Note Nehemiah asks for permission to rebuild THE CITY, not the Temple...thus corresponding exactly to Dan 9:25<sup>+</sup> - "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.. But the Jews would not recognize the time (KAIIROS: a fixed and definite time when things are brought to crisis, a specific opportunity) of His visitation (Luke 19:44<sup>+</sup>) - "and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

**Henry Morris** - build it. Nehemiah's request and commission were not to build the temple, which was already completed, but the city, especially its walls (Daniel 9:25<sup>+</sup>).

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**Brian Bell** - **THIRD QUALITY OF A GREAT LEADER - ASKING** (Neh 2:5-10)

He needed safe passage & building materials. He answers the king confidently & respectfully. Which of these 2 do you struggle with? If you were telling the story to a friend would it come across too confident w/no respect? Like, (with attitude) then I told that king...] Or would you show respect only & leave off any confidence? [uh, uh, uh, I don't need anything Mr.King Sir!] Remember you're one of The Kings kids. When you speak up for your King, or on behalf of Him, or as an ambassador from Him...Speak up, with respect.

So he asks for 2 things:**SEND ME** (Neh 2:5,6 AND **GIVE ME** Neh 2:7-10) Whenever God wants to get a work done, He uses willing people. (He can override of course) Nehemiah had been planning his work carefully, so he was able to give the king satisfactory answers. It is not clear thinking & organization OR Prayer. But instead... **Prayer + clear thinking & organization**. They are not opposites but allies, best friends.

Nehemiah was very thorough as a leader. He knew the time schedule & even had his building list made. He even knew the name of the keeper of the forest. (Neh 2:8)

**Nehemiah 2:6 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 I gave him a definite time.**

the queen (KJV): Heb. the wife, It was probably Esther who was present at this time, and who seconded Nehemiah's request.

So it pleased (KJV): Ne 2:4 Ne 1:11 Isa 58:12 Isa 61:4<sup>+</sup> Isa 65:24

I set him a time (KJV): It is probable that this time was no more than six months, or a year; after which he either returned, or had his leave of absence lengthened, as we find he was twelve years governor of the Jews. Ne 5:14 Ne 13:6

**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 I gave him a definite time.**

**Henry Morris** - the queen. This apparently arbitrary reference to the queen may have been inserted because she was Queen Esther. Some scholars believe her husband Ahasuerus was the same as Artaxerxes (both being titles rather than personal names). Others believe Artaxerxes was either Esther's son or stepson. In any case, the reputation of Artaxerxes was unusually benign for an ancient emperor, and this may have been in part a result of Esther's influence.

**Ryrie** - Since it was not customary for the queen to appear at formal banquets, her presence indicates that this was a private affair. I gave him a definite time. Nehemiah probably agreed to return after a relatively short time, which was later extended, for he stayed 12 years (5:14).

**Nehemiah 2:7 And I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah,**

- let letters (KJV): Ne 2:9 Ezr 6:6 Ezr 7:21
- that they may (KJV): Ezr 8:22

**And I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah,**

**Ryrie** - 2:7-9 These letters, granting concessions to Nehemiah, form the decree of Dan. 9:25<sup>+</sup>. the fortress protected the Temple.

the house. I.e., the governor's home. Nehemiah was also given an armed escort (v. 9). See note on Ezra 8:22.

**Brian Bell** - **GIVE ME** (Neh 2:7-10) How does this relate to Ezra 8:22 who, for integrity's sake, wouldn't ask this from the king? Ezra refused military protection for a testimony to the faithfulness of God (i.e. God will take care of his own) Nehemiah on the other hand was a governor on official business; he could not travel without his military escort.

**Nehemiah 2:8 and 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 which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.**

- the wall (KJV): Ne 2:17 Ne 3:1-32
- the house (KJV): Ne 3:7 Ne 7:2
- the king (KJV): Ne 2:18 Ge 32:28 Ezr 5:5 Ezr 6:22 Ezr 7:6,9,27,28 Pr 21:1 Isa 66:14 Da 1:9 Ac 7:10+ Ac 26:22+ 2Co 8:16+

**and 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 which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.**

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "king's forest" was probably a wooded area near Jerusalem. Asaph, a Jew, was a keeper. The "house that I will occupy" is an allusion to the governor's residence. Nehemiah assumes that his request to the king necessitates appointment as governor of Judah.

**Brian Bell** - He trusted in the Lords strong hand (Neh 1:10) & in His good hand (Neh 2:8) to accomplish this great task. [See discussion of this great truth The Hand of the LORD.](#)

**Nehemiah 2:9 Then I came to the governors of the provinces beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen.**

- to the governors (KJV): Ne 2:7
- Now the (KJV): Ezr 8:22

## RETURN OF EXILES FROM BABYLON

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

### Matthew Henry's Concise - Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem (Neh 2:9-18)

When Nehemiah had considered the matter, he told the Jews that God had put it into his heart to build the wall of Jerusalem. He does not undertake to do it without them. By stirring up ourselves and one another to that which is good, we strengthen ourselves and one another for it. We are weak in our duty, when we are cold and careless.

**Nehemiah 2:10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel.**

- Sanballat (KJV): Ne 2:19 Ne 4:1-3,7 Ne 6:1
- Horonite (KJV): Isa 15:5 Jer 48:5,34
- the servant (KJV): Pr 30:22 Ec 10:7+
- the Ammonite (KJV): Ne 13:1
- it grieved (KJV): Nu 22:3,4+ Ps 112:10 Ps 122:6-9 Pr 27:4 Eze 25:6-8 Mic 7:9,10,16,17+ Ac 4:2+ Ac 5:24+ Ac 19:26,27+

- there was come (KJV): Ezr 4:4-23

**When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel.**

**Henry Morris** - Sanballat was governor of the Persian province of Samaria. His name has been found on one of the famous Elephantine papyri, dated 407 B.C.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Sanballat is identified by the Jewish historian Josephus as "satrap of Samaria" under the Persians. He was probably one of the "governors" to whom Nehemiah brought letters (v. 9). Sanballat is called "the Horonite" to designate his birthplace or residence, i.e., either Upper or Lower Beth Horon, which formerly belonged to Ephraim (cf. Josh. 16:3, 5<sup>+</sup>; Josh 18:13<sup>+</sup>). During the time of Nehemiah it was held by the Samaritans. Tobiah was either the native chief of the Ammonites or the servant or secretary of Sanballat (6:17, 19). In either case, by making alliances with various Jewish nobles (6:17; 13:4, 28), both individuals sought to sabotage the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah to fortify Jerusalem.

**Ryrie - Sanballat.** Also mentioned in the Elephantine Papyri as governor of Samaria, he assessed Nehemiah's arrival as a threat to Samaria's control of Judea. Tobiah. Probably an ex-slave, now governor of Ammon.

**Nehemiah 2:11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.**

- Ezr 8:32

**So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.**

**Believer's Study Bible** - (vv. 11,12) The potential for both opposition from without and discouragement from within made secrecy essential to the initial development of plans (cf. also Neh 2:16).

**Nehemiah 2:12 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 mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. ve no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem."**

- I arose (KJV): Ge 32:22-24 Jos 10:9<sup>+</sup> Jud 6:27<sup>+</sup> Jud 9:32<sup>+</sup> Mt 2:14<sup>+</sup>
- neither (KJV): Ec 3:7<sup>+</sup> Am 5:13 Mic 7:5<sup>+</sup> Mt 10:16<sup>+</sup>
- my God (KJV): This pious and noble-minded man attributes every thing to God. If he purposed any good, it was because God put it into his heart; if he did or received any good, it was because the good hand of his God was upon him; if he expected any good, it was because he earnestly prayed God to remember him for good. Ezr 7:27 Ps 51:18<sup>+</sup> Ps 122:6 Jer 31:33<sup>+</sup> Jer 32:40<sup>+</sup> 2Co 8:16<sup>+</sup> Jas 1:16,17<sup>+</sup> Rev 17:17<sup>+</sup>

**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 mind to do for Jerusalem and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. ve no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem."**

**Brian Bell** - Now, 3 essentials to Christian Service: Investigation, Cooperation, Determination.

**INVESTIGATION** (Neh 2:11-16) Feel it, experience it yourself. Before asking for help, he personally was acquainted with the needs. He's forced to dismount & have to actually stumble over the debris. Horseback to on foot. Difference of watching ground zero on TV to standing next to it after 9-11. Such emotional ties. [St Patricks Cathedral, Bag Pipes, orange buckets]

Dedicated leaders are awake when others are asleep. They also see more in darkness than others see in the daylight. In the night...by night (Neh 2:12,13) - It was dark. This is when God has you wrestle in some dark Gethsemane prayer.

**Nehemiah 2:13 So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire.**

- the gate (KJV): Ne 2:15 Ne 3:13 2Ch 26:9<sup>+</sup>

- the dung port (KJV): This was the gate on the eastern side of the city, through which the filth was carried to the brook Kidron and valley of Hinnom. Ne 3:13,14 Ne 12:31
- the walls (KJV): Ne 2:3,17 Ne 1:3 Jer 5:10

**So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Well and on to the Refuse Gate, inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were consumed by fire.**

**Henry Morris - dragon well.** Some modern versions, with no real justification, translate this as "jackal well." The Hebrew word, however, means "dragon," or at least some kind of monster. Most likely it refers to dinosaurs, that survived into historic times and gave rise to the worldwide legends of dragons (see notes on Job 40:15). The dragon well was known as such by the Jebusites who inhabited the region long before its conquest by Israel. Quite possibly the well was given its name by the first inhabitants who migrated there after the dispersion from Babel, when dinosaurs frequented the spring.

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "Serpent Well" is identified as either the well of Gihon or some spring in that vicinity because of its location between the "Valley Gate," which is the present "Jaffa Gate" on the western side of the city, and the "Refuse Gate," known by the same name today and located at the middle of the southern wall of Jerusalem.

**Ryrie** - 2:13-15 Nehemiah's nocturnal reconnaissance began at the SW Valley Gate, proceeded eastward to the King's Pool (probably the Pool of Siloam), then up the ravine (the Kidron Valley), because his donkey or mule could not make it over the rubble of the eastern wall. It is unclear from verse 15 whether he then turned westward, then S, making the complete circuit back to his original starting point, or whether he retraced his steps S, then W, back to the Valley Gate.

Gates. --The following is a complete list of the gates named in the Bible and by Josephus, with the reference to their occurrence:--

1. Gate of Ephraim. 2 Chr 25:23<sup>+</sup>; Nehe 8:16; 12:39  
This is probably the same as the--
2. Gate of Benjamin. Jere 20:2; 37:13; Zech 14:10<sup>+</sup> If so, it was 400 cubits distant from the--
3. Corner gate. 2 Chr 25:23<sup>+</sup>; 2 Chr 26:9<sup>+</sup>; Jere 31:38; Zech 14:10<sup>+</sup>
4. Gate of Joshua, governor of the city. # 2 Kin 23:8
5. Gate between the two walls. 2 Kin 25:4; Jere 39:4
6. Horse gate. Nehe 3:28; 2 Chr 23:15<sup>+</sup>; Jere 31:40
7. Ravine gate (i.e. opening on ravine of Hinnom). 2 Chr 26:9<sup>+</sup>; Nehe 2:13,15; 3:13
8. Fish gate. 2 Chr 33:14<sup>+</sup>; Nehe 3:13;  
Zeph 1:10<sup>+</sup>
9. Dung gate. Nehe 2:13; 3:13
10. Sheep gate. Nehe 3:1,32; 12:39
11. East gate. Nehe 3:29
12. Miphkad.# Nehe 3:31
13. Fountain gate (Siloam?). Nehe 12:37
14. Water gate. Nehe 12:37
15. Old Gate. Nehe 12:39
16. Prison gate. Nehe 12:39
17. Gate Harsith (perhaps the Sun; Authorized Version East gate).  
Jere 19:2
18. First gate. Zech 14:10<sup>+</sup>
19. Gate Gennath (gardens). Jos B.J. v. 4, - 4.
20. Essenes' gate. Jos. B.J. 4, - 2.

To these should be added the following gates to the temple: --

Gate Sur, 2 Kin 11:6  
called also gate of foundation. 2 Chr 23:5<sup>+</sup>

Gate of the guard, or behind the guard,  
2 Kin 11:6,19; called the high gate.  
2 Kin 15:35; 2 Chr 23:20<sup>+</sup>; 2 Chr 27:3<sup>+</sup>

Gate Shallecheth. 1 Chr 26:16<sup>+</sup>

At present the chief gates are --

1. The Zion's gate and the dung gate, in the south wall;
2. St. Stephen's gate and the golden gate (now walled up), in the east wall;
3. The Damascus gate and
4. Herod's gate, in the north wall; and
5. The Jaffa gate, in the west wall.

**Nehemiah 2:14 Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass.**

- the gate of the fountain (KJV): The gate leading either to the fountain of Siloam, on the east of the city, or to that of Gihon, on the west. Ne 3:15 2Ki 18:17+ 2Ki 20:20+ 2Ch 32:30+
- the king's pool (KJV): Probably the aqueduct made by Hezekiah to bring the waters of Gihon to the city of David.

**Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass.**

**Nehemiah 2:15 So I went up at night by the ravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned.**

- the brook (KJV): The brook Kidron, 2Sa 15:23+ Jer 31:38-40+ Joh 18:1+
- the gate (KJV): The gate leading to the valley of Jehoshaphat, east of the city, through which the brook Kidron flows. It was by this gate he went out; so that he went round the whole of the city, and entered by the same gate. Ne 2:13

**So I went up at night by the ravine and inspected the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned.**

**Nehemiah 2:16 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.**

- the rulers (KJV): Ne 2:12

**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.**

**Nehemiah 2:17 Then I said to them, "You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach."**

- Ye see (KJV): La 2:2,8,9 La 3:51
- come (KJV): Ezr 5:1,2 Ezr 10:2-4 Isa 35:3,4+
- a reproach (KJV): Ne 1:3 1Sa 11:2+ Ps 44:13 Ps 79:4,12 Ps 89:50,51 Jer 24:9+ La 3:45,46 Eze 5:14+ Eze 22:4,5

**Then I said to them, "You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach - Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the walls in 586 B.C.**

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**Brian Bell - COOPERATION** (Neh 2:17,18) Secure others to help you. Nehemiah didn't believe in a one-man band. He challenged the leaders to work with him, not for him. 1 can chase a 1000, but 2 put 10,000 to flight. Deut.32:30+ paraphrase

The motive? To not be a reproach (Neh 2:17b). He sought the Glory of God & the Good of the nation. If you are a Leader here are some questions. (Adapted from Warren Weirsbe, pg.35) Do you have a burden first in your heart for the work the Lord has given you to do? (Neh 2:12) Next, are you willing to sacrifice to see it accomplished? Are you patient in gathering the facts & planning the

work? Are you willing to allow others to help you & learn along w/you, or are you a lone ranger? Are people following you or the Lord?

If the Lord has you as a Follower in a ministry... Do you listen to your leader? Do you share his/her burdens? Do you cling to the past & are afraid of God doing something new? Are you cooperating w/the enemy in any way? Do you tend to be a destroyer or a builder?

**Nehemiah 2:18 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." So they put their hands to the good work.**

- the hand (KJV): Ne 2:8
- So they strengthened (KJV): 2Sa 2:7+ 1Ch 11:10+ 1Ch 19:13+ 2Ch 32:5+ Ezr 6:22 Hag 1:13,14 Eph 6:10+ Php 2:13+

**Related passage:**

Philippians 2:13+ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

**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." So they put their hands to the good work.**

**Nehemiah 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard it, they mocked us and despised us and said, "What is this thing you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"**

- Sanballat (KJV): Ne 2:10 Ne 6:1,2
- Geshem (KJV): Ne 6:9, Gashmu
- they (KJV): Job 30:1 Ps 44:13,14 Ps 79:4 Ps 80:6 Jer 20:8 Mk 5:40+ Heb 11:36+
- will ye rebel (KJV): Ne 6:6 Ezr 4:15,16 Lu 23:2+ Joh 19:12+ Ac 24:5+

**But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard it, they mocked us and despised us and said, "What is this thing you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"**

**Believer's Study Bible** - "Geshem the Arab" (cf. 6:6) is known from several inscriptions as a powerful, semi-independent vassal of Persia. The alignment of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem against the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah means that Judah was literally surrounded by opposition: Sanballat (north), Tobiah (east), and Geshem (south). Cf. 4:1, note.

**Ryrie - Geshem.** A powerful chieftain of Dedan in NW Arabia. Nehemiah was surrounded by enemies who tried to intimidate him by insinuating that he wanted to rebel against the king of Persia.

**Matthew Henry's Concise - The Opposition of the Adversaries (Neh 2:19,20)** - The enmity of the serpent's seed against the cause of Christ is confined to no age or nation. The application to ourselves is plain. The church of God asks for our help. Is it not desolate, and exposed to assaults? Does the consideration of its low estate cause you any grief? Let not business, pleasure, or the support of a party so engage attention, as that Zion and her welfare shall be nothing to you.

**Nehemiah 2:20 So I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem."**

- The God (KJV): Ne 2:4 2Ch 26:5+ Ps 20:5 Ps 35:27 Ps 102:13,14 Ps 122:6 Ec 7:18+
- ye have no (KJV): Ezr 4:3 Ac 8:21+
- memorial (KJV): Ex 28:29+ Lev 2:2+ Lev 24:7+ Nu 10:10+ Isa 56:5 Zec 6:14 Ac 10:4,31+ When Nehemiah had prayed for the relief of his countrymen, and perhaps in David's words, Ps 51:18+, he did not sit still and say, "Let God now do his own work, for I have no more to do;" but set himself to do what he could towards it; and here we find that the people were of one heart with Nehemiah. Our prayers must be seconded with our serious endeavours, or else we mock God. Nearly four months had passed, namely, from Chisleu to Nisan (November to March), before Nehemiah made his application to the king for leave to go to Jerusalem; either because the winter was not a proper time for such a journey, and he would not make a motion till he could pursue it, or because it was so long before his month of waiting upon the king came, and there was no coming into his

presence until called for, Es 4:11<sup>+</sup>. We are not thus limited to certain moments in our addresses to the King of kings, but have liberty of access to him at all times; to the throne of grace we never come unseasonably.

**So I answered them and said to them, “The God of heaven will give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right or memorial in Jerusalem.”**

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**Brian Bell** - Well, when ever you are shown the needs, decided to meet that need, & then rise to the occasion...then opposition is usually aroused. (Neh 2:19,20)

**DETERMINATION** (Neh 2:19,20) Push through trouble. Who are these guys?

- Sanballat – chief political enemy of Nehemiah. He was governor of Samaria. Hear his attitude in Neh 4:1,2. A letter found by archeologists dated to 407 BC confirmed his position.
- Tobiah – is thought to be a Jew w/lands in Gilead. [name means pleasing to Jehovah] :( He has many family ties in Jerusalem. The phrase Ammonite official refers to his position, not his race.
- Geshem – probably chief of the Arabs, south of Palestine.

The weapon of ridicule is the only weapon some carry...and boy they can wield it well. This is the very weapon enemies used back in Ezra 4. Ridicule is a very effective means to discourage us from acting. A smirk, a raised eyebrow, or a mocking laugh have kept many Christians from teaching Children's Church, playing an instrument, following a call to the mission field, or moving towards full time ministry.

Have you ever run into a Sanballat or a Tobiah? They have many descendants in society today...ever meet one? I remember being discouraged from moving out here. What have you been talked out of? Embarrassed by? Will you pray about doing them again?

This means encouragement must go so far, if the opposite is true. Who on the other hand has been quiet the encouragement to you? (Gary Ansdell w/ls.61<sup>+</sup>)

Nehemiah performed no signs, no wonders, nor any prophesy's, he just faithfully did his work & prepared a city for the coming of the Messiah. Da 9:25<sup>+</sup>.