

NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 2

¹ And it came to pass in the month of Nisan of the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that the wine was before me. And I took the wine, and gave *it* to the king; and there was not another before him. ² And the king said to me, "Why is your countenance sad, and you do not control yourself? And now this is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much alarmed, ³ and I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, even the home of the tombs of my fathers, has been laid waste, and her gates have been devoured with fire?" ⁴ And the king said to me, "What is your 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* would send him into Judah, to the city of the tombs of my fathers; then will I rebuild it." ⁶ And the king, and his concubine that sat next to him, said to me, "For how long will your journey be, and when will you return?" And *the proposal* was pleasing before the king, and he sent me away, and I appointed him a time. ⁷ And I said to the king, "If *it pleases* the king, let him give me letters to the governors beyond the river, so as to permit me to pass, till I come to Judah; ⁸ and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the garden which belongs to the king, that he may give me timber to cover the gates, and for the wall of the city, and for the house into which I shall enter." And the king gave to me, according as the good hand of God *was upon me*.

⁹ And I came to the governors beyond the river, and I gave them the king's letters. (Now the king had sent with me captains of the army and horsemen). ¹⁰ And Sanballat the Horonite heard *it*, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and it was grievous to them that a man had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. ¹¹ So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. ¹² And I rose up by night, I and a few men with me; and I told no man what God put into my heart to do with Israel; and there was no beast with me, except the beast which I rode upon. ¹³ And I went forth by the gate of the valley by night, and to the mouth of the Well of Fig Trees, and to the Refuse Gate; and I mourned over the wall of Jerusalem which they were destroying, and her gates were devoured with fire. ¹⁴ And I passed on to the Fountain Gate, and to the king's pool; and there was no room for the beast to pass under me. ¹⁵ And I went up by the wall of the brook by night, and mourned over the wall, and passed through the gate of the valley, and returned. ¹⁶ And the sentinels did not know why I went, nor what I was doing; and until that time I did not tell it to the Jews, or to the priests, or to the nobles, or to the captains, or to the rest *of the men* who did the work.

¹⁷ Then I said to them, "You see this evil, in which we are, how Jerusalem is desolate, and her gates have been set on fire. Come, and let us build throughout the wall of Jerusalem, and we shall no longer be a reproach." ¹⁸ And I told them of the hand of God which was good upon me, also about the words of the king which he spoke to me. And I said, "Let us arise and build." And their hands were strengthened for the good *work*. ¹⁹ And Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Gesham the Arabian, heard *it*, and they laughed us to scorn, and came to us, and said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing? Are you revolting against the king?" ²⁰ And I answered them, and said to

them, "The God of heaven, He shall prosper us, and we His servants are pure, and we will build; but you have no part, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem."