



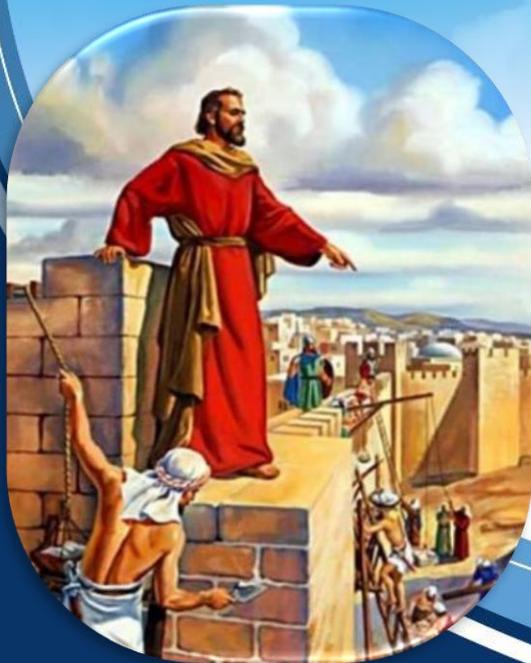
NEHEMIAH

Lesson 2 for October 12, 2019

After about 13 years after Ezra arrived at Jerusalem, Nehemiah was the cupbearer of the king of Persia.

When Nehemiah heard about the poor situation of Jerusalem, he accepted the mission God called him to fulfill: to rebuild Jerusalem.

He immediately took action after being appointed governor of Judah.



▶ **Nehemiah in Persia:**

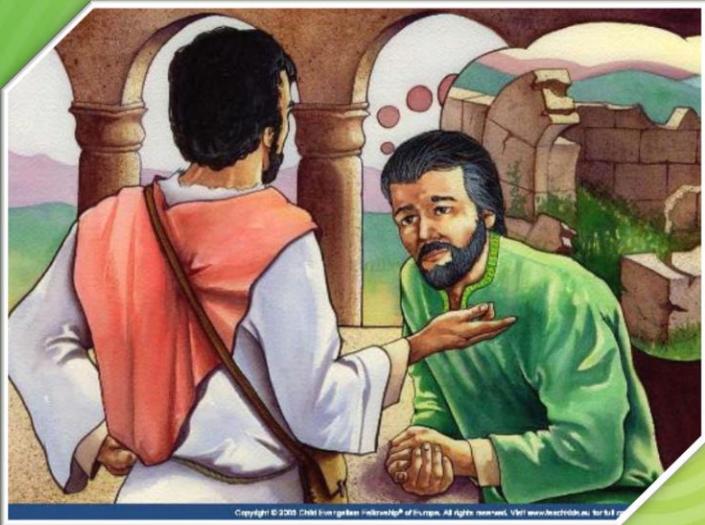
- The news
- The prayer
- The request

▶ **Nehemiah in Jerusalem:**

- His authority
- His plan

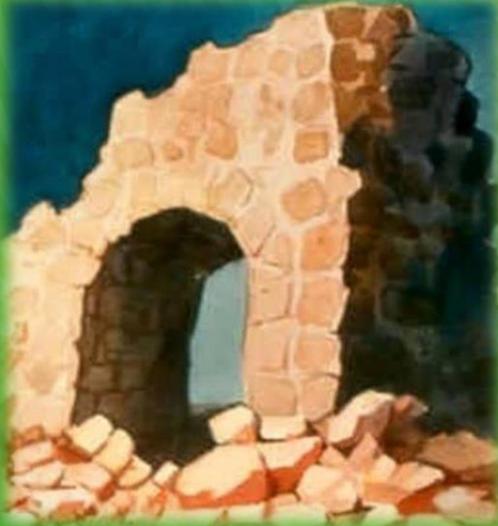
THE NEWS

“And they said to me, ‘The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.’” (Nehemiah 1:3)

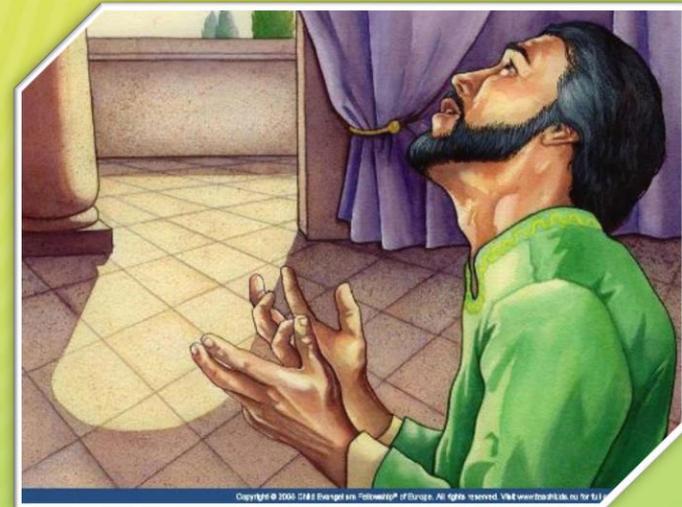


In 445 BC, Nehemiah was visited by his brother Hanani at Shushan. Hanani told him really bad news about Jerusalem and the repatriated.

Artaxerxes had ordered the reconstruction of Jerusalem to stop (Ezra 4). Then it was destroyed by their enemies; their walls and gates were burned down.



Nehemiah immediately prayed and fasted for the people and the city of Jerusalem, asking God to intervene.

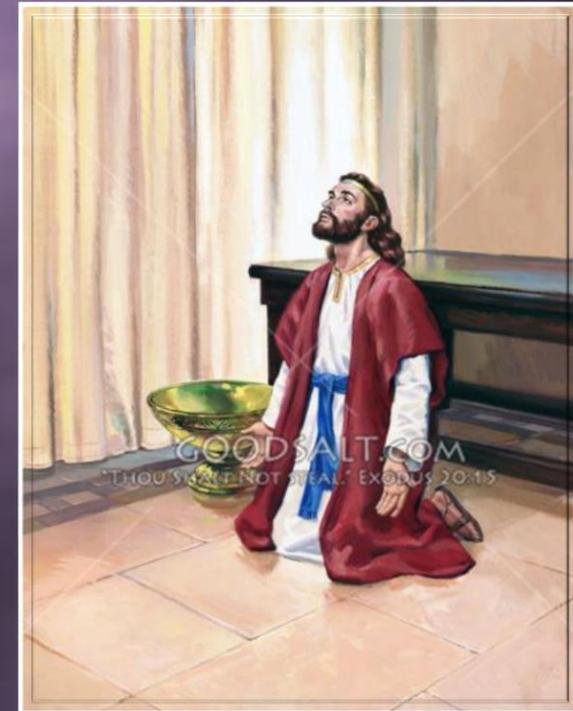
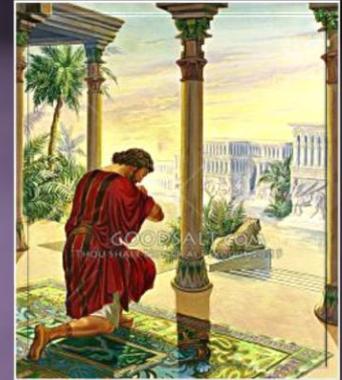


THE PRAYER

"Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses" (Nehemiah 1:8)

This was Nehemiah's prayer (Nehemiah 1:5-11):

- A God, You are great and merciful (v. 5)
- B Hear my prayer (v. 6)
- C I confess that we have sinned (v. 6-7)
- D Remember Your promises (v. 8-9)
- C' You have redeemed us (v. 10)
- B' Hear my prayer (v. 11)
- A' God, give us prosperity and grace (v. 11)



The book of Nehemiah shows him as a man of prayer (2:4; 4:4-5, 9; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 29).

The key point of this prayer is to remember God's promises and claim them.

God likes to hear us claiming His promises. He's eager to fulfill them in our lives (Luke 11:13).

THE REQUEST

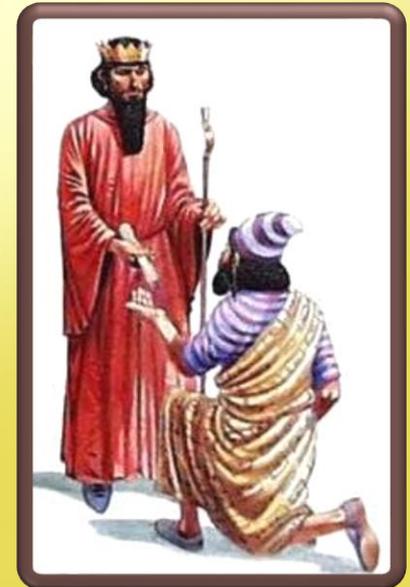
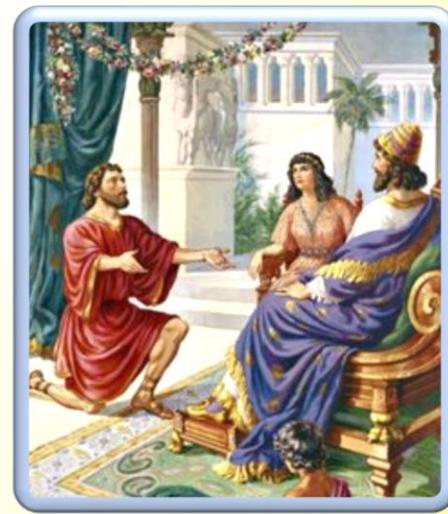
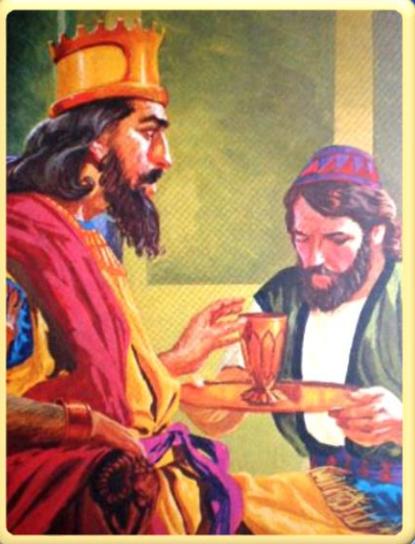
"Then the king said to me, 'What do you request?' So I prayed to the God of heaven." (Nehemiah 2:4)

Nehemiah was a public servant at Artaxerxes's court. He held great responsibility as he interacted with the king of Persia as his cupbearer.

Four months after Nehemiah's prayer, the right moment came, and God let him talk to Artaxerxes about his request (444 BC).

The king was concerned about the sadness his cupbearer was showing. Nehemiah appealed to the king's emotions. He requested permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Artaxerxes was moved by God. He appointed Nehemiah as governor of Judah and authorized the reconstruction.



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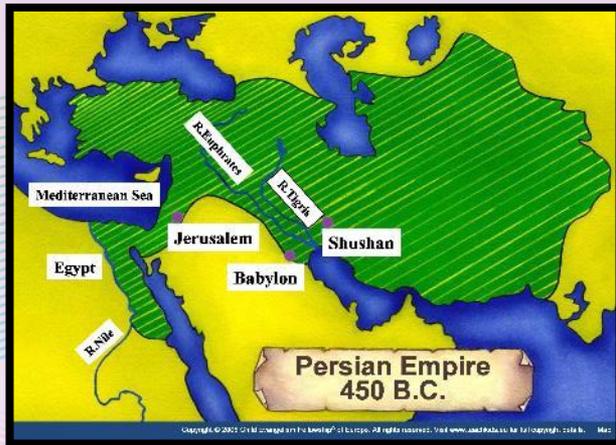
“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes. A closet of communion may be found wherever we are. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul.”

E.G.W. (Steps to Christ, cp. 11, p. 99)

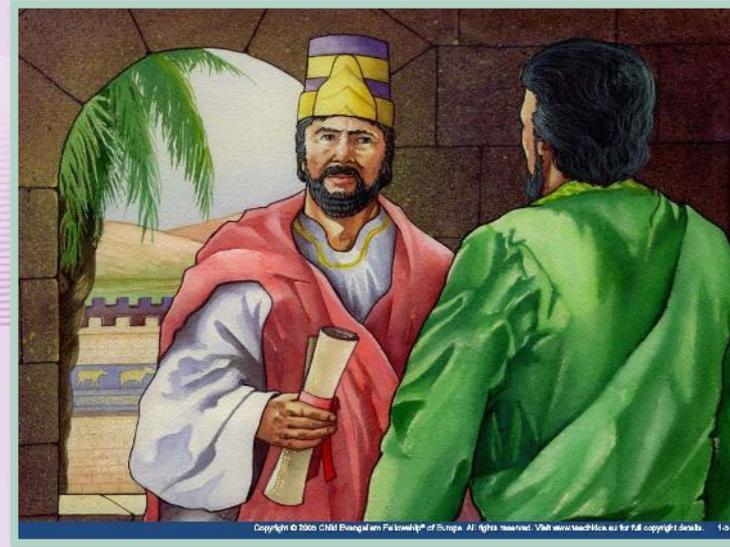
HIS AUTHORITY

"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." (Nehemiah 2:9)

Judah was located in the region "beyond the River", or Transeuphratia.

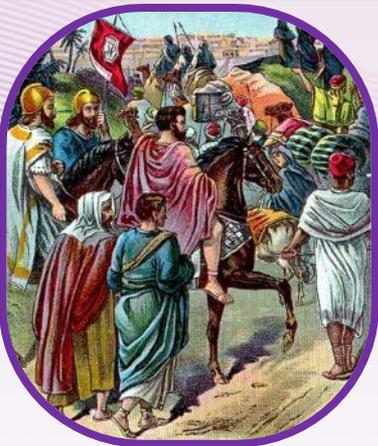


The king gave Nehemiah a personal guard and letters for the governors of that region. Asaf was ordered to give Nehemiah all the material he would need for rebuilding the walls.



Sanballat (governor of Samaria), Tobiah (governor of Ammon) and Geshem (governor of Edom and Moab) got annoyed when they heard that Nehemiah was coming to help the Jewish people.

They tried to spoil Nehemiah's work from its very beginning.



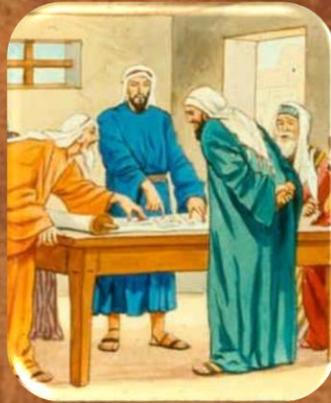
HIS PLAN

“And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.” (Nehemiah 2:16)

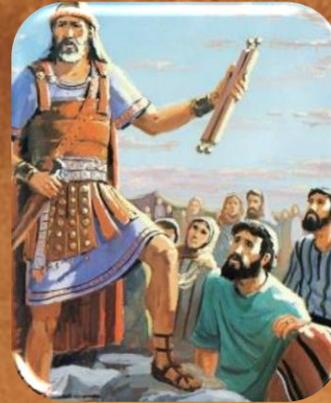
Nehemiah didn't trust his little army alone but used a special suit of armor: God's promises, and the assurance that he was doing God's work. He advanced cautiously:



He *reviewed* the actual situation himself



He *planned* the work to be done



He *gathered* the leaders and shared his plan



He *encouraged* everyone to work



He *requested* commitment

We must include God in our plans and conversations when we manage projects and when we are in contact with people. Always use uplifting and encouraging words.

“God’s children are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligent and provident care. They encounter many difficulties and often hinder the working of Providence in their behalf, because they regard prudence and painstaking effort as having little to do with religion. Nehemiah did not regard his duty done when he had wept and prayed before the Lord. He united his petitions with holy endeavor, putting forth earnest, prayerful efforts for the success of the enterprise in which he was engaged. Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the carrying forward of sacred enterprises today as in the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls.”

E.G.W. (Prophets and Kings, cp. 52, p. 633)