### Nehemiah

## Chapter 2

1Well, it was in the month of Nisan in the 20th year [of the reign] of King ArthaSastha that I was bringing him some wine… I took it up and handed it to the king in private, 2and then the king asked me:  
  
 ‘Why’s your face so downcast and why are you so unhappy? This appears to be nothing other than a [broken] heart!’  
  
Well, I was frightened, 3but I said to the king:  
  
 ‘O king, may you live throughout the ages!  
  
 ‘Why shouldn’t my face be sad? For the city where the houses and tombs of my ancestors are, has been destroyed – and its gates have been burned with fire!’  
  
4Then the king asked me:  
  
 ‘So, what is it that you’re looking for?’  
  
Well, I then prayed [silently] to Jehovah the God of heaven, 5and thereafter I said to the king:  
  
 ‘If the king is moved to do such a good thing, and if he’s pleased enough with his servant that stands before him... Please send me to Judah and to the city of the tombs of my ancestors, so that I can rebuild it!’  
  
6Then the king (who was sitting next to his concubine) asked me:  
  
 ‘How long will this take and when will you return?’  
  
Well, the king [found my proposal] to be good and he sent me off. Then I [wrote a letter of] confirmation to him, which said:  
  
 7‘To the king:  
  
 ‘If it pleases the king, please give me letters to the vassal kings on the other side of the river, so as to allow me safe passage to Judah.  
  
 8‘Also provide me a letter to Asaph, the king’s groundskeeper, and ask him to provide me with enough wood to make roofs for the gates along the city’s walls and for the house where I’ll be staying.’  
  
Then, by the hand of God, the king provided this to me.  
  
  
9And when I reached the vassal kings on the other side of the river, I gave them the letters from the king. The king had also sent his top general along with me, as well as a contingent of cavalry.  
  
10But when SanBalLat the Horonite and TobiJah (his AmMonite servant) heard of it, all of this appeared wrong to them, since they were very unhappy that anyone would be coming to do good things for the sons of IsraEl.  
  
  
11Well, when I got to JeruSalem, I [rested] for three days.  
  
12Then I got up during the night and I took a few men with me. I didn’t have to report to anyone, because it was God who’d put it into my heart to do this for JeruSalem. And I didn’t bring along any animals, except the one that I rode.  
  
13I traveled through the I traveled through the <span class="placename">City GateI traveled through the <span class="placename">City Gate</span> out to the mouth of the I traveled through the <span class="placename">City Gate</span> out to the mouth of the <span class="placename">Well of DragonsI traveled through the <span class="placename">City Gate</span> out to the mouth of the <span class="placename">Well of Dragons</span>, and past the I traveled through the <span class="placename">City Gate</span> out to the mouth of the <span class="placename">Well of Dragons</span>, and past the <span class="placename">Manure GateI traveled through the <span class="placename">City Gate</span> out to the mouth of the <span class="placename">Well of Dragons</span>, and past the <span class="placename">Manure Gate</span>...  
  
Then I examined the walls of JeruSalem that had been torn down and the gates that had been burned with fire.  
  
14I passed by the I passed by the <span class="placename">Fountain GateI passed by the <span class="placename">Fountain Gate</span>, then I went up to the I passed by the <span class="placename">Fountain Gate</span>, then I went up to the <span class="placename">Pool of the KingI passed by the <span class="placename">Fountain Gate</span>, then I went up to the <span class="placename">Pool of the King</span> to a place where I could get through [on horseback], 15then I rode down into the then I rode down into the <span class="placename">Cedar (Kidron) Valleythen I rode down into the <span class="placename">Cedar (Kidron) Valley</span> that night, studying the walls, until I had reached the then I rode down into the <span class="placename">Cedar (Kidron) Valley</span> that night, studying the walls, until I had reached the <span class="placename">Valley Gatethen I rode down into the <span class="placename">Cedar (Kidron) Valley</span> that night, studying the walls, until I had reached the <span class="placename">Valley Gate</span>.  
  
That’s when I turned around and went back.  
  
  
16Well, the guards didn’t know why I went there or what I was doing, nor did I report what I was doing to any of the Judeans, the Priests, the important ones, the generals, or to any of the rest that had been doing the work until then.  
  
17But later, I said this to them:  
  
 ‘Do you see this wicked condition that we’re in?  
 JeruSalem is a waste and its gates have been burned.  
 Come on, let’s build a wall around JeruSalem so we’re no longer a joke!’  
  
18Then I explained how the hand of God had blest me with the things that the king had said to me, and I told them:  
  
 ‘Now, let’s get up and build!’  
  
Well, this emboldened their hands to do what was good!  
  
  
19But when SanBalLat the Horonite, his servant TobiJah the AmMonite, and the Arab Gesham heard about this, they laughed out loud... For were disgusted with us, and they asked:  
  
 ‘Just what do you think you’re doing?  
 Have you chosen to revolt against the king?’  
  
20But I spoke right back to them and said:  
  
 ‘The God of the heavens will bless us, because we (His servants) are pure; therefore, we’ll arise and build!  
  
 ‘However, you may have no part in doing this or in giving us the legal right to do so, nor will your [names] be remembered in JeruSalem.’