

## ACPC Bible Studies November 2016 (5) Nehemiah 2: 1-10

### *Introduction*

Nehemiah is sad and cannot hide it from the King. Even though the King is an enemy of the Hebrews, he is a wise and sensitive man. In verse 2, he sees that Nehemiah is not ill. He is suffering from a "sadness of heart". Nehemiah is also a wise and good man. This story tells us what happens when two men like that meet. Firstly, there must be honesty and respect. Nehemiah tells the King what the problem actually is. He doesn't "soften" the problem. He knows that Jerusalem has been destroyed by the King's allies. The King could become very angry. However, the King respects Nehemiah and listens carefully. Then he asks Nehemiah what he wants. Secondly, resolving problems requires faith. Nehemiah first of all prays to God for courage. Then he trusts God as he tells the King what he wants. Nehemiah knows however, that it would be a threat to the King if Nehemiah rebuilt the walls. The city could then defend itself. It would be a great surprise if the King grants his request. However, the King does so. Perhaps we can say that God moved the King, even against his own interests. We can also say that Nehemiah has built up trust with the King. He asks for and receives a leave of absence. This story tells us that honesty, faith and trust can work miracles. In verse 10 however, we see that Nehemiah's problems are far from over.

### *Notes*

1. Nehemiah tasted the wine to see if it was poisoned. He was an advisor and bodyguard.
2. The dates suggest that chapter 2 is occurred 4 months after chapter 1
3. Verse 5: It was up to God, not Nehemiah to change the King's heart.
4. V.6. The Queen was listening to them. This was no secret deal but totally open to all.
5. V7-9. Nehemiah had prayer, a vision and a detailed plan all ready to go! He knew what he needed, such as letters of safe conduct and where to get timber

### *Questions*

1. See note 2. What was Nehemiah doing in those 4 months?
2. Verses 3 to 5. Nehemiah doesn't blame anyone. He simply states the problem. What should we do when we have a problem that we are sad about?
3. Nehemiah diplomatically doesn't mention the name of the city. This may not have been meant to deceive the King. He meant to build a new, peaceful Jerusalem.
4. V. 4 the King's answer surprised Nehemiah, so he had to have an immediate prayer and immediate answer. How do you feel in situations like that?
5. What is your plan for the immediate future? How important is planning well?
6. Why does opposition to God's plans grow and what can we do about it?

### *Conclusion*

Nehemiah began in a humanly hopeless situation. Although he held a high position in the King's court, he could not see any way to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He could not leave Persia. Nevertheless, he had faith, prayer, courage, honesty and a detailed, well thought-out plan. He had built up trust and respect with the King. God used these things to work a miracle. God surprised Nehemiah and suddenly he had to make instant decisions. This passage challenges us deeply to be like Nehemiah. We need to trust God and win respect for our Christian qualities. Nehemiah has a big vision. He wants to rebuild the City completely and rebuild the people of God into a worthy, well lead community.

