

# Nehemiah 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

## Analysis

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**That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.**

Hanani appears again in 7:2 as one whom Nehemiah appoints over Jerusalem, likely indicating he was Nehemiah's biological brother. The phrase 'one of my brethren' could mean brother or fellow Jew, but the later reference suggests family relation. 'Certain men of Judah' indicates a delegation, perhaps traveling for business or bringing reports to exiled Jews. Nehemiah's immediate question reveals his heart's priority—despite years in Persia, Jerusalem remained central to his identity.

The phrase 'the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity' refers to those who survived exile and returned to Judah, distinguishing them from Jews still in dispersion. Sha'al (שָׁאַל, 'asked') suggests earnest, persistent questioning—not casual inquiry but deep concern. His dual focus on people ('the Jews') and place ('Jerusalem') shows balanced concern for both community and location. This reflects covenant theology where God chose both a people and a place for His name to dwell.

## Historical Context

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Travel between Judah and Persia occurred regularly for various reasons—commerce, official business, and maintaining family connections. The 900-mile journey took approximately four months, indicating this wasn't casual travel but purposeful undertaking. The term 'remnant' theology dominated post-exilic thought—Isaiah and Jeremiah had prophesied that a remnant would survive judgment and return. These weren't merely survivors but the covenant community through whom God would fulfill His promises.

Archaeological evidence from this period shows Jerusalem was a small, impoverished settlement compared to its former glory. The returned community struggled economically and politically, vulnerable to hostile neighbors. Yet covenant-faithful Jews like Nehemiah, despite comfortable lives in exile, maintained deep connection to the land and people of God's choosing.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What demonstrates your practical concern for struggling believers beyond your immediate context or comfort zone?
2. How do you maintain awareness of significant needs in God's kingdom while managing daily responsibilities?
3. Who are the 'remnant' in your generation—faithful believers persevering in difficult circumstances—and how can you support them?

