

Nehemiah 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

Analysis

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

This verse within Nehemiah 2 addresses themes of providence, courage, planning, vision. The narrative shows God's providence in moving the king's heart while honoring Nehemiah's faithful preparation through months of prayer. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. The post-exilic community had returned to Judah but remained politically subject to Persia, living under imperial administration while attempting to rebuild covenant identity. Archaeological evidence confirms Persian-period occupation of Jerusalem and the wall's route. The

Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture, temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 2:1 deepen your understanding of God's character and His work in human history?
2. What specific action or attitude change does this verse call you to make in your walk with God?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי

H1961

בְּחֹדֶשׁ

H2320

שָׁנָה תְּצִוָּה

H5212

שָׁנָה יָמִים

H8141

H6242

in the twentieth

לְאַרְתָּחֶשֶׁסׁ סָטָא

of Artaxerxes

H783

לֹאָתָר לְרֹא

it unto the king

H4428

בְּיַם

that wine

H3196

לְפָנָיו

in his presence

H6440

וְאַשְׁר אָשָׁר

him and I took up

H5375

אֶת

H853

that wine

H3196

בְּיַם וְאֶת

and gave

H5414

לֹאָתָר לְרֹא

it unto the king

H4428

כִּי יְהִי וְלֹא

H3808

H1961

לְפָנָיו

בְּעֵ

Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence

H7451

H6440

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 7:1 (Kingdom): Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,

Nehemiah 1:11 (Kingdom): O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Nehemiah 1:1 (Parallel theme): The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,