

# Nehemiah 2:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

## Analysis

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**Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.**

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. The construction work (banah, בָּנָה) symbolizes restoring what sin and judgment destroyed. 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

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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

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does Nehemiah 2:20 deepen your understanding of God's character and His work in human history?
2. What specific contribution can you make to building up Christ's church in your local community?
3. How does understanding your work as part of God's larger purposes transform your approach to daily responsibilities?

## Interlinear Text

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אֱלֹהִים	לְהַמִּ	אָמַרְתָּ	רְאֵבֶר	אָמַתָּם	בְּאָשָׁר	יָבָא	אֱלֹהִים	לְהַמִּ	אָמַרְתָּ	רְאֵבֶר	אָמַתָּם	בְּאָשָׁר	יָבָא	
Then answered	H853	H1697	I them and said	H0	H559	H587	unto them The God	H430	H0	H559	H587	H0	H430	
H7725							H5650							
עָבָדִים	אָנוּ	חֲנֹנוּ	לְנוּ	יְצַלְּלֵנִים	הַשְׁמָה	וְהַ	עָבָדִים	אָנוּ	חֲנֹנוּ	לְנוּ	יְצַלְּלֵנִים	הַשְׁמָה	וְהַ	
of heaven	H1931	he will prosper	H0	H6743	H587	H0	us therefore we his servants	H5650	H0	H6743	H587	H0	H5650	H0
H8064														
וְאַתָּה	לֹא	יְבָנֶנֶן	אָתָּה	וְבָנֶנֶן	אָתָּה	לֹא	וְאַתָּה	לֹא	יְבָנֶנֶן	אָתָּה	וְבָנֶנֶן	אָתָּה	לֹא	
will arise	and build	H0	H369	but ye have no portion	H2506	H0	nor right	H6666	H369	but ye have no portion	H2506	H0	H6666	H0
H6965	H1129													
בִּירוּשָׁלָם:	וְזָכָר	וְ	בִּירוּשָׁלָם:	וְזָכָר	וְ									
nor memorial	in Jerusalem	H3389												
H2146														

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezra 4:3** (References God): But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

**Acts 8:21** (References God): Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

**Nehemiah 2:4** (References God): Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

**Acts 10:31** (References God): And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

**Psalms 35:27** (Parallel theme): Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

**Isaiah 56:5** (Parallel theme): Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

**Ecclesiastes 7:18** (References God): It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

**Psalms 51:18** (References Jerusalem): Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

**Psalms 20:5** (References God): We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

**Acts 10:4** (References God): And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

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