

Nehemiah 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Analysis

Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

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 Hebrew *palal* (פָּלַל) for prayer indicates intercession and petition, emphasizing dependence on God. 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

Related Passages

Study Questions

- ## Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

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Nehemiah 1:4 (Prayer): And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

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.

Philippians 4:6 (Prayer): Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Mark 10:51 (Parallel theme): And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

1 Kings 3:5 (References God): In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

Esther 7:2 (Kingdom): And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Esther 5:6 (Kingdom): And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

Esther 5:3 (Kingdom): Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.