

Nehemiah 2:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

Analysis

And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

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. Jerusalem's wall (chomah, חומָה) provided security, dignity, and testimony to God's faithfulness. City gates were strategic both defensively and administratively, controlling access and serving as centers of commerce and justice. 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 2:8 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

פָּתָח לְךָ אֶשְׁר בַּפְּרָד סֶמֶן רָאשָׁךְ אֶל וְאֶגְרָת	And a letter	H413	unto Asaph	the keeper	forest	H834	And the king	H4428
H107		H623		H8104		H6508		
שָׁעַר יְמִינְךָ לְקַרְוֹת עַצְיָם לְיַמְינְךָ אֶת שָׁעַר יְמִינְךָ	granted	H834	me timber	to make beams	H7136	H853	for the gates	H8179
H5414		H0		H6086				
בָּעֵיר וְלֹחֵם תְּלַבֵּית אֲשֶׁר בַּבִּיכְךָ הַעֲלֵמָת וְלֹבֶת תְּלַבֵּית אֲשֶׁר בַּבִּיכְךָ הַעֲלֵמָת	of the palace	H834	and for the house	and for the wall	H2346		of the city	H5892
H1002		H1004			H2346			
לְיַמְינְךָ אֶת שָׁעַר יְמִינְךָ וְלֹבֶת תְּלַבֵּית אֲשֶׁר בַּבִּיכְךָ הַעֲלֵמָת וְלֹבֶת תְּלַבֵּית אֲשֶׁר בַּבִּיכְךָ הַעֲלֵמָת	and for the house	H834	that I shall enter into	H935	H413	H5414	granted	H0
H1004								
עַלְיוֹן הַטּוֹב אֶלְמָה יְמִינְךָ קִידָּם פָּתָח לְךָ	And the king	H4428	hand	of my God	me according to the good	H2896	H5921	
H3027		H430						

Additional Cross-References

Ezra 7:6 (Kingdom): This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

Isaiah 66:14 (Parallel theme): And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies.

Nehemiah 7:2 (References God): That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.

Daniel 1:9 (References God): Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

Genesis 32:28 (References God): And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Ezra 5:5 (References God): But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

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