–Save This Page as a PDF–

Favor with King Artakh’shasta
Nehemiah 2: 1-20



Four or five months after receiving sad news concerning the walls of **Jerusalem, Nehemiah** initiates a plan to secure the support of **the Persian king** for a rebuilding program. That **he** waited such a long time to act may reflect the delicate nature of **his** request for **the king’s** help. As we have already noted, **Ezra** reports that **King Artakh’shasta** had issued **a decree** which ordered work on **the walls of Jerusalem** to be stopped (**to see link click Av – Letters to Ahasuerus and Artakh’shasta**). **Nehemiah** needed to be careful with **his** planning, waiting for the exact time for approaching **the king** on that controversial subject. Other examples of careful planning come to mind. **Esther** planned carefully as **she** sought to save **her** people (see the commentary on **Esther Bb – The Plot Exposed by Esther**); **Naomi’s** suggestion to **Ruth** about securing the assistance of **Bo’az** (see the commentary on **Ruth Av – Na’omi’s Wonderful Plan for Ruth’s Life**); and the discussion between **Bathsheba** and **Nathan** about an effective approach to **David** so that **Solomon** would be appointed king (see the commentary on **the Life of Solomon Al – A Royal Conspiracy**).

King Artakh’shasta responded favorably to **Nehemiah**, thus reversing **his** own **decree**. But **Nehemiah** would have opposition from three influential leaders:

Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the servant, the Ammorite (Nehemiah 2:10 and 19), and **Geshem the Arab.** No doubt it was this strong opposition to his coming that caused **Nehemiah** to survey **the City** by night. Only a secret group of people knew of **Nehemiah's** hidden, night tours when **he** inspected the ruins of **Yerushalayim** and estimated what could and should be done. When **Nehemiah** called **the people** together told **them** about the sorry state of **Tziyon**. **They** accepted **his** leadership and indicated that **they** were ready to begin the difficult task of rebuilding.[210]