

Face to Face Bible Bits

The book of Nehemiah
Chapter 2 verses 1-5, 8-11;
Chapter 4 verses 1-3, 6-9;
Chapter 6 verse 15;
Chapter 8 verse 1-12



4. God reaching out and rebuilding the wrecked and returned

During the month of Nisan in the twentieth year that Artaxerxes was king of Persia, I served him his wine, as I had done before. I had never been sad to the face of the King before. So the king said, “Why is your face sad? You’re not sick. Something must be bothering you.”

Even though I was frightened, I answered, “May the King live forever! Why shouldn’t my face be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and its gates have been burned down.”

The king asked, “What do you want me to do?”

I prayed to the God who rules from heaven. Then I told the king, “Sir, if it’s all right with you, and I have pleased the face of the King, please send me back to Judah, so that I can rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.”

God was good to me, and the king did everything I asked.

The king sent some army officers and cavalry troops along with me, and as I traveled through the Western Provinces, I gave letters to the governors.

But when Sanballat from Horon and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about what had happened, they became very angry, because they didn’t want anyone to help the people of Israel.

When Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, heard that we were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he became angry and started insulting our people. To the faces of his friends and the Samaritan army he said, “What is this feeble bunch of Jews trying to do? Are they going to rebuild the wall and offer sacrifices all in one day? Do they think they can make something out of this pile of scorched stones?”

Tobiah from Ammon was standing beside Sanballat and said, “Look at the wall they are building! Why, even a fox could knock over this pile of stones.”

The people worked hard, and we built the walls of Jerusa-





lem halfway up again. But **Sanballat, Tobiah**, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the people from the city of Ashdod saw the walls going up and the holes being repaired. So they became **angry** and decided to stir up trouble, and to fight against the people of Jerusalem. But we kept on praying to our God, and we also stationed **guards** day and night.

Every day from dawn to dark, half of the workers **rebuilt** the walls, while the rest stood **guard** with their spears.

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On the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, the wall was completely **rebuilt**. It had taken fifty-two days. When our enemies in the surrounding nations learned that the work was finished, they felt helpless, because they knew that our God had helped us **rebuild** the wall.

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On the first day of the seventh month, the people came together in the open area in front of the **Water Gate**. Ezra was up on a high platform, where he could be seen by everyone, and when he opened the **book**, they all stood up. Ezra praised the great LORD God, and the people shouted, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD.

After this, the Levites went among the people, explaining the meaning of what Ezra had **read**.

The people started **crying** when **God's Law was read** to them. Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the Levites who had been teaching the people all said, "This is a special day for the LORD your God. So don't be **sad** and don't **cry**! Enjoy your good food and wine and share some with those who didn't have anything to bring. Don't be **sad**! This is a special day. The Joy of the Lord is your strength."



When the people returned to their homes, they celebrated by eating and drinking and by sharing their food with those in need, because they had understood what had been **read** to them.

Read more in Nehemiah chapter 2, 4 6 and 8

