

More Opposition to the Remnant During Artaxerxes' Reign (c. 456–446 BC)

Ezra 4:8–23

Rehum's Letter to Artaxerxes

8 Rehum the royal officer and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes as follows
 9 (then Rehum the royal officer, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates, the judges, the envoys, the officials, the Persians, the Erechs, the Babylonians, the Susians (that is the Elamites)
 10 and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and the rest of *the province Beyond the River*) and now
 11 this is the copy of the letter which they sent to him: "To King Artaxerxes *from* your servants, the men of *the province Beyond the River*. And now,
 12 be it known to the king that the Jews who have come up from near you to us have gone to Jerusalem. They are building the rebellious and wicked city. They are finishing the wall and repairing the foundation.
 13 Now be it known to the king that if this city is built and the walls are finished, they will not pay tribute and toll, and the royal revenue will be reduced.
 14 Now since we eat the salt of the palace and the dishonor of the king is not proper for us to see, we send and make *this* known to the king,
 15 so that it may be investigated in the book of records of your ancestors. You will find in the book of records and learn that this city is a rebellious city, hurtful to kings and provinces, and they have rebelled in its midst from ancient times. Because of that this city was destroyed.
 16 We make known to the king that if this city is built and the walls are finished, you will have nothing in *the province Beyond the River*."

Artaxerxes' Reply

17 The king sent a reply: "To Rehum the royal officer, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their associates who live in Samaria and the rest of *the province Beyond the River*, greetings. And now
 18 the letter that you sent to us has been translated *and* read before me.
 19 And I issued a decree, and they searched and found that this city from ancient days revolted against kings, and rebellion and sedition has been made in it.
 20 Mighty kings have ruled over Jerusalem, *governing all the province Beyond the River*, to whom tribute, duty, and tax has been given.
 21 So now, issue forth a decree that these men stop and this city not be built, until a decree is issued from me.
 22 And be careful not to be negligent on this matter. Why should damage grow to hurt kings?"

Rehum Brings Work on Jerusalem's Walls to a Halt

23 Then when a copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their associates they returned in a hurry to Jerusalem against the Jews and they stopped them by force and power.

Nehemiah Learns of the Remnant's Adversity (Kislev [December] 445 BC)

Nehemiah 1

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. It happened in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year, that I myself was in the citadel in Susa,
 2 and one of my brothers, Hanani, came with some men from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had escaped the captivity and about Jerusalem.
 3 They replied to me, "The survivors in the province who have survived the captivity are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned in the fire."
 4 When I heard these words, I sat and wept and mourned for days, and I was fasting and praying before the God of the heavens.
 5 I said, "O Yahweh God of the heavens, the great and awesome one who keeps the covenant and loyal love for the ones who love him and for those who keep his commands.
 6 Please, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I am praying before you by day and by night for your servants, the Israelites, and confessing the sins of the Israelites that we have sinned against you. I and my father's house have sinned.
 7 We have certainly offended you and have not kept the commands, regulations, and judgments that you have commanded your servant Moses.
 8 Please, remember the word that you have commanded to your servant Moses, saying, 'If you act unfaithfully I will scatter you all among the nations.
 9 But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, even though all of your outcasts are at the furthest parts of heaven, I will gather them and bring them to the place which I have chosen to make my name dwell.' [cf. [Deut 4:25–31](#); [30:1–10](#)]

10 They are your servants and your people whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. [\[Deut 9:29\]](#)
 11 O Lord, please let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight to revere in your name. Please, let your servant be successful this day and give him compassion before this man." I was cupbearer for the king.

Artaxerxes Authorizes Nehemiah to Rebuild Jerusalem's Walls (Nisan [April] 444 BC)

Nehemiah 2:1–8

1 It happened in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I carried the wine and gave it to the king. And I had never been sad before the king.
 2 So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad since you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." And I was very much afraid.
 3 I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad when the city of my ancestors' burial site is ruined and her gates are consumed by fire?"
 4 Then the king said to me, "What is your request?" So I prayed to the God of the heavens.
 5 Then I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has *found* favor in your presence, *I ask* that you send me to Judah, to the city of my ancestors' burial sites, so that I may rebuild it."
 6 With the queen sitting beside him, the king said to me, "How long will your journey be and when will you return?" So it pleased the king and he sent me, and I set for him an appointed time.
 7 Then I said to the king, "If it is good for the king, let letters be given to me for the governors *in the province* Beyond the River, that they may let me pass until I come to Judah.
 8 Also, a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's land reserve, that he should give me timber for laying the beams for the gates of the citadel of the house and for the walls of the city, and for the house which I will enter." And the king gave *permission* to me, according to the good hand of God on me.

Nehemiah's Nocturnal Inspection (July 444 BC)

Nehemiah 2:9–20

9 I came to the governors of *the province* Beyond the River, and I gave them the letters of the king. Then the king sent troop commanders and horses with me.
 10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and the Ammonite servant Tobiah heard *this*, they were greatly displeased that a person had come to seek the welfare of the Israelites.
 11 I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days.
 12 I got up during the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anybody what my God put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. No animal *was* with me except the animal that I was riding on.
 13 I went out during the night at the gate of the valley by the Dragon spring and to the Dung Gate. And I examined the walls in Jerusalem and its gates that had been destroyed by the fire.
 14 I crossed over to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no place for my mount to cross over.
 15 So I went up by the valley during the night and was examining the wall. Then I returned and came to the Valley Gate and returned.
 16 The prefects did not know where I had gone and what I was doing. I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the prefects, and the rest of the workers.
 17 Then I said to them, "You see the misery that we are in, that Jerusalem is ruined and its gates burned by the fire. Come, build the walls of Jerusalem and we shall no longer be a disgrace."
 18 I told them of the good hand of my God that was upon me and surely the words of the king that were spoken to me. And they said, "Let us arise and build!" And they strengthened their hands for *this* good work.
 19 But Sanballat the Horonite, the Ammonite servant Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard it, and they mocked and despised us, saying, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"
 20 Then I answered and said to them, "The God of the heavens himself will let us succeed, and we his servants shall arise and build. But for you there is no share, right, or memorial in Jerusalem."

Rebuilding the Walls of Jerusalem (July 31–September 21, 444 BC)

Nehemiah 3

Repairing the Northern and Western Walls

1 Then Eliashib the high priest and his brothers the priests arose and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and erected its doors. They consecrated it up to the Tower of the Hundred and up to the Tower of Hananel.
 2 And next to him the men of Jericho built, and next to him Zaccur son of Imri built.

- 3 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and erected its doors, its bolts, and its bars.
- 4 Next to them Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, repaired. Next to them Meshullam son of Berekiah, son of Meshezabel, repaired. Next to them Zadok son of Baana repaired.
- 5 Next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles did not put their neck to the work of their lord.
- 6 Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam repaired the old Yeshanah Gate. They laid its beams and erected its doors, its bolts, and its bars.
- 7 Next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah who were under the rule of the governor of *the province* Beyond the River, repaired.
- 8 Next to him Uzziel son of Harhaiah (goldsmiths) repaired. Next to him Hananiah son of the perfume-makers repaired. They restored Jerusalem up to the Broad Wall.
- 9 Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, commander of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired.
- 10 Next to them Jedaiah son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house. Next to him Hattush son of Hashabneiah repaired.
- 11 Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens.
- 12 Next to him Shallum son of Hallohesh, commander of half of the district of Jerusalem, repaired with his daughters.
- 13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and erected its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and a thousand cubits of the wall up to the Dung Gate.
- 14 Malkijah son of Recab, commander of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and erected its doors, its bolts, and its bars.
- 15 Shallun son of Col-Hozeh, the commander of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and erected its doors, its bolts, its bars, and *he built* the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, right up to the steps going down from the city of David.

Construction of the Eastern Wall

- 16 After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, commander of half of the district of Beth Zur, repaired up to *a point* opposite the burial sites of David, and up to the artificial pool and to the house of the mighty warriors.
- 17 After him the Levites repaired; Rehum son of Bani, and next to him Hashabiah, commander of half of the district of Keilah, repaired his district.
- 18 After him their brothers repaired: Bavvai son of Henadad, commander of half of the district of Keilah,
- 19 next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, commander of Mizpah, repaired a second section of a wall opposite of the ascent of the armory at the angle.
- 20 After him Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired a second section of a wall from the angle up to the doorway of the house of Eliashib the high priest.
- 21 After him Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, repaired a second section of a wall from the doorway of the house of Eliashib up to the end of the house of Eliashib.
- 22 After him the priests, men from the vicinity, repaired.
- 23 After them Benjamin and Hasshub repaired opposite their house. After them Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, repaired beside his house.
- 24 After him Binnui son of Henadad repaired a second section of a wall from the house of Azariah up to the angle up to the corner.
- 25 Palal son of Uzai *repaired* opposite the Angle at the tower that juts out from the upper house of the king, at the courtyard of the guard. After him Pedaiah son of Parosh
- 26 and the temple servants who were living on Ophel *repaired* up to opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower.
- 27 After him the Tekoites repaired a second section of a wall opposite the projecting tower that goes out as far as the wall of Ophel.
- 28 Above the Horse Gate the priests repaired, each one opposite his house.
- 29 After them Zadok son of Immer repaired opposite his house. After him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, keeper of the East Gate, repaired.
- 30 After him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshullam son of Berekiah repaired *the wall* opposite his room.
- 31 After him Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired up to the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Enrollment Gate and up to the upper room of the corner.
- 32 Between the upper room of the corner to the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants repaired.

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