

## **Nehemiah 2:1-20 – Study Leader’s Questions**

### ***How God answered prayer, Nehemiah 2:1-3***

1. *What is Nehemiah doing when God answers Nehemiah’s prayers (Nehemiah 2:1)?*
2. *What did the king observe and say to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:2)?*
3. *What concern did Nehemiah express in response (Nehemiah 2:3)?*

### ***Stepping out in faith, Nehemiah 2:4-9***

4. *What did the king ask Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:4)?*
5. *What did Nehemiah do before answering (Nehemiah 2:4)? What response did he make to the king?*
6. *When the king asked for details, what further request did Nehemiah make (Nehemiah 2:7-8)?*
7. *How did the king respond (Nehemiah 2:8)?*
8. *What can we learn from the provision of an army and horsemen given to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:9)?*

### ***Encouragement and Opposition to God’s work, Nehemiah 2:10-20***

9. *Who was unhappy and why (Nehemiah 2:9, 19)? Why would such men be disturbed?*
10. *How did the opponents hinder the work? How did Nehemiah respond (Nehemiah 2:19)?*
11. *What did he say to motivate the people? How did they respond?*
12. *What lessons can we learn from this chapter about useful service to God?*

## Nehemiah 2:1-20 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 1-9, 149-151, 181-185, 199-212, 467 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 676, 684, 687-689, 694-697, 716, 726, 1149 for detailed comments.

### *How God answered prayer, Nehemiah 2:1-3*

1. *What is Nehemiah doing when God answers Nehemiah's prayers (Nehemiah 2:1)?*

His everyday duties:

***"For I was the king's cupbearer"*** Nehemiah 1:20.

In this respect, Nehemiah was like other servants of God going about their everyday duties at the time of God's calling for them or particular revelation to them.

David:

***"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither"*** 1 Samuel 16:11.

Daniel:

***"And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it"*** Daniel 8:27.

Peter, Andrew, John, James, Matthew:

***"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him"*** Matthew 4:18-22.

***"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him"*** Matthew 9:9.

The faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ should keep in mind the principle that Paul expressed in 1 Corinthians 7:17, ever ready for the Lord's particular summons.

***"But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches...Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called"*** 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20.

2. *What did the king observe and say to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:2)?*

The king observed something out of the ordinary. Kings should be observant and well-informed.

***"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds"*** Proverbs 27:23.

It is the same for the Christian, who is a member of "a royal priesthood" 1 Peter 2:9, according to 1 Corinthians 12:25-26.

***"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."***

In this case, the king observed that his servant was sad for no apparent reason and asked him why.

It is the same for the Christian with respect to always being open and sensitive to the ministry to him of ***“the word of God”*** which is the sharpest discerner of all, Ephesians 6:17, to respond as in James 1:22 ***“...be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.”***

***“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”*** Hebrews 4:12.

3. What concern did Nehemiah express in response (Nehemiah 2:3)?

The destruction of the city, in the way that Jeremiah had done 140 years earlier:

***“How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!”*** Lamentations 1:1.

God had borne that sadness for all that time.

***“Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD’S flock is carried away captive”*** Jeremiah 13:15-17.

It should be the same for the Christian with respect to those on whom ***“the wrath of God abideth”*** John 3:36.

***“(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things)”*** Philippians 3:18-19.

#### ***Stepping out in faith, Nehemiah 2:4-9***

4. What did the king ask Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:4)?

He asked what his servant wanted. Even as Master, the Lord Jesus Christ asks a similar question for anyone who is or would be His servant.

***“...What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?...”*** Luke 18:41.

*Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much;  
None can ever ask too much – John Newton*

See [www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/c/o/comemsou.htm](http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/c/o/comemsou.htm).

5. What did Nehemiah do before answering (Nehemiah 2:4)? What response did he make to the king?

He continued ***“instant in prayer”*** Romans 12:12. ***“So I prayed to the God of heaven”*** Nehemiah 2:4.

See Nehemiah 2:5.

***“And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I may build it.”***

Nehemiah 2:5 expresses in type the process of prayer that may be expressed as:

- Seeking the king's pleasure
- Beseeching the king's favour
- Uplifting the king's mission
- Exalting the king's purpose

1 John 3:22 summarises this process. It should be memorised.

**“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”**

6. *When the king asked for details, what further request did Nehemiah make (Nehemiah 2:7-8)?*

Letters by the king i.e. **“the king's word”** 2 Samuel 24:4, 1 Chronicles 21:4, 6 **“in writing”** 2 Chronicles 36:22, Ezra 1:1 to **“the powers that be”** Romans 13:1 i.e. local governors and the keepers of **“my necessities”** Acts 20:34 i.e. the local Forestry Commissioner, **“Asaph the keeper of the king's forest”** Nehemiah 2:8.

The name **“Asaph”** is mentioned 46 times in scripture. 45 times refers to a Jewish servant of God. It appears that **“Artaxerxes the king”** Nehemiah 2:1, in addition to a Jewish cup bearer, had chosen a *Jewish* servant as **“the keeper of the king's forest”** just as King Ahasuerus chose **“Mordecai the Jew”** Esther 10:3, who is **“a Benjaminite”** Esther 2:5. Note that Britain was at the height of her power when Queen Victoria made *Benjamin* Disraeli, a *Jew*, her prime minister and *Persia* is a type of England Daniel 7:4. Daniel, another Jew, was also high up in a Persian hierarchy, Daniel 1:6, 6:28. (Note that in accordance with Daniel 5:28, **“Artaxerxes the king”** Nehemiah 2:1 was, like his predecessor **“Cyrus king of Persia”** Ezra 1:1, also **“king of Babylon”** Ezra 5:13, Nehemiah 13:6.)

See [www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1000/1000\\_01.asp](http://www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1000/1000_01.asp) *Love the Jewish People*.

For the Christian, letters by the king i.e. **“the king's word”** 2 Samuel 24:4, 1 Chronicles 21:4, 6 **“in writing”** 2 Chronicles 36:22, Ezra 1:1 point to Philippians 2:9 **“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name”** such that prayer should be in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ according to John 16:24, Ephesians 5:20.

**“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”**

**“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”**

7. *How did the king respond (Nehemiah 2:8)?*

He responded as God wanted him to.

**“And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me”** Nehemiah 2:8.

**“The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will”** Proverbs 21:1.

The Christian's heart should always be open to the Lord's direction.

**“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ”** 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

8. What can we learn from the provision of an army and horsemen given to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:9)?

Nehemiah's mission differs from Ezra's mission, although both missions had the king's approval, oversight and blessing and both missions required outstanding faith in prayer, Ephesians 3:20.

Ezra's mission was principally aimed at re-establishing the spiritual life of Israel with the temple of Jerusalem at its heart.

Nehemiah's mission was principally aimed at re-establishing the national life of Israel with the wall of Jerusalem as its identity.

The following contrasting scriptures illustrate the difference in Ezra's and Nehemiah's respective missions.

**“Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counselors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem”** Ezra 7:12-16.

The king did support Ezra's mission.

**“And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily”** Ezra 7:20-21.

See Ezra 7:15-24 for the full context of the king's support.

The king also required that Ezra undertake an obligatory teaching ministry to the local populace, which was backed up with kingly authority.

**“And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment”** Ezra 7:25-26.

However, the success of Ezra's mission was totally given over to ***“the hand of God”*** for its fulfilment.

**“Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us”** Ezra 8:21-23.

The success of Nehemiah's mission also depended on *"the good hand of my God upon me"* but it was also *an official state-controlled mission* for the physical restoration of one of the imperial provinces' civic centre with respect to rebuilding its walled boundary in order to signify authority, emphasise separation, provide protection and, as indicated above, re-establish identity. Proverbs 25:28 states *"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls"* and such a city is a place *"without any order"* Job 10:22 and disorder that would *genuinely* let *"damage grow to the hurt of the kings"* Ezra 4:22.

Therefore, *federal troops were sent to accompany the mission*, who were not appropriate for Ezra's more *spiritually oriented* mission of *re-establishing Jerusalem's worship and conforming the local populace to the laws of the God Who was to be worshipped*.

Nehemiah had a more *materially oriented* mission of *re-building Jerusalem's wall, using the king's building materials that would also be used to build a house for the governor's residence as the king's official representative*.

*"And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it"* Nehemiah 2:5.

*"Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 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. Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me"* Nehemiah 2:7-9.

Note in passing that Ezra's and Nehemiah's missions together depict an Old Testament state-church system under a benevolent dictator. This system will be implemented again when the Lord comes back, Isaiah 2:1-4.

For now, all such state-church systems (some, like the British system, being more benevolent than others, the Catholic (evolutionary theism\* is the state religion), Marxist (evolutionary atheism\*\* is the state religion), Mohammedan systems (dictatorial theism is the state religion but evolutionary theism\*\*\* is tolerated) are satanic counterfeits of Old Testament Israel, pointing to the End Times one-world kingdom of the beast that the Lord will overthrow at the Second Advent.

See Revelation 13-19 and Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther* pp 208-212.

\*See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic\\_Church\\_and\\_evolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_and_evolution).

\*\*See [www.bestbiblescience.org/hscom.htm](http://www.bestbiblescience.org/hscom.htm), [creation.com/atheism-a-religion](http://creation.com/atheism-a-religion).

\*\*\*See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic\\_views\\_on\\_evolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_views_on_evolution).

Nevertheless, the lesson for the Christian, who must *"Occupy till I come"* Luke 19:13 is that God considers the fulfilment of both spiritual and material responsibilities as vital for the life of a nation and Mark 12:17 summarises these responsibilities, noting that *"God is a Spirit"* John 4:24 and Caesar is a man. See also Romans 13:1-8, 1 Timothy 2:1-5, Titus 3:1 and 1 Peter 2:17.

Mark 12:17 reads as follows:

*"And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him."*

## ***Encouragement and Opposition to God's work, Nehemiah 2:10-20***

9. *Who was unhappy and why (Nehemiah 2:9, 19)? Why would such men be disturbed?*

***“The enemies of the Jews”*** Esther 9:1 were unhappy, as identified in Nehemiah 2:19, today's Palestinians, so-called. See *Israel, A Deadly Piece of Dirt* by Dr Peter S. Ruckman.

Noting ***“Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian,”*** they are also identified in Psalm 83:4-8. See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 826 and Dr Ruckman's commentary *Volume II of the Book of Psalms* pp 611-618. Note that ***“the Hagarenes”*** are from Ishmael via Hagar, Genesis 16:11, 12, i.e. they are Arabians, like Geshem and Mohammedans. The term ***“Selah”*** emphasises the Second Advent application. See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 571 and Dr Ruckman's commentary *Volume I of the Book of Psalms* pp 13-17.

***“They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee: The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.”***

Like Seir, Ezekiel 35:1, they have ***“a perpetual hatred”*** of Israel and, then as now, are intent on the genocide of all Jews, just as the Catholic Hitler sought to make Europe *Juderien* – Jew-free. See also *Israel – Past, Present, Future* by this writer, available as an e-copy on request.

***“We will declare OUR STATE...with Jerusalem as its capitol; yes Jerusalem, the eternal capitol of OUR State whether [the Jews] like it or not! Now we are on OUR holy land, and we are regaining this HOLY land inch by inch”*** - Yasser Arafat, May 1999 (emphasis in original).

Ezekiel 35:5 reads as follows, with a Second Advent emphasis according to Isaiah 66:8, Zechariah 3:9, Acts 3:19.

***“Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end:”***

God then says in Ezekiel 35:6:

***“Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee.”***

The lesson for the Christian is, don't ever side with the Palestinians, so-called, their supporters, saved or lost, or any ***“evil workers”*** Philippians 3:1.

See [www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1055/1055\\_01.asp](http://www.chick.com/reading/tracts/1055/1055_01.asp) *Somebody Angry?*

10. *How did the opponents hinder the work? How did Nehemiah respond (Nehemiah 2:19)?*

They used ridicule and false accusation. These tactics would recur, Nehemiah 4:3, 6:6, 7.

Nehemiah answered with appropriate discourtesy and ***“plentifully declared the thing as it is”*** Job 26:3 in Nehemiah 2:20.

***“Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.”***

That is how the Christian should ***“reprove...the unfruitful works of darkness”*** Ephesians 5:11.

11. What did he say to motivate the people? How did they respond?

Nehemiah gave an **“honest report”** Acts 6:3 of the current situation, an assurance of **“the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me”** Nehemiah 2:18 and an exhortation **“to provoke unto love and to good works”** Hebrews 10:24.

They responded by showing a commitment to God **“serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind”** 1 Chronicles 28:9.

**“And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work”** Nehemiah 2:18.

That is how the Christian should serve, according to Hebrews 13:20-21, **“by the grace of God”** 1 Corinthians 15:10.

**“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”**

12. What lessons can we learn from this chapter about useful service to God?

The following guidelines are not the same as Bill Gates’ *11 Rules of Life*. He didn’t make them and there aren’t only 11 but from a practical standpoint, some overlap may be possible, [urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl\\_bill\\_gates\\_speech.htm](http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_bill_gates_speech.htm).

*Question 1:* Be a good worker in God’s current calling, 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20.

*Question 2:* Be a willing recipient of God’s discerning word, Hebrews 4:12.

*Question 3:* Be a steadfast witness to God’s abiding wrath, Philippians 3:18-19.

*Question 4:* Be an earnest petitioner for God’s **“abundance of grace”** Luke 18:41, Romans 5:17.

*Question 5:* Be an obedient observer of God’s commandments **“unto all pleasing”** Colossians 1:10, 1 John 3:22.

*Question 6:* Be a faithful exalter of God’s **“name...above every name”** Philippians 2:9.

*Question 7:* Be a heartfelt respondent to God’s direction, 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

*Question 8:* Be a responsible subject of God’s hierarchy, Mark 12:17.

*Question 9:* Be an unwavering enemy of God’s enemies, Philippians 3:1.

*Question 10:* Be a steadfast reprover of God’s gainsayers, Ephesians 5:11.

*Question 11:* Be a considerate provoker of God’s fellow servants, Hebrews 10:24.

**“And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in”** Isaiah 58:12.

### Note on Nehemiah 2:13

***“And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.”***

Observe that the expression ***“the dragon well”*** has 13 letters that should immediately sound a warning to the student of scripture who obeys 2 Timothy 2:15. See *Bible Numerics* pp 36-38, *Mark of the Beast* Chapter 4 and *The Bible Babel* Chapter 6 by Dr Peter S. Ruckman.

The reading ***“the dragon well”*** is well established. The pre-1611 Bibles, including those of the 16<sup>th</sup> century English Protestant Reformation, Wycliffe, Coverdale, Great, Matthew (Rogers, after Tyn-dale), Bishops’, Geneva Bibles all have the word ***“dragon.”***

Of the post-1611 Bibles, the DRV Douay-Rheims Challoner Revision 1749-1752, RV Revised Version 1885\*, NASV, JB, NJB, NRSV, CEV Contemporary English Version, ESV English Standard Version, NCV New Century Version have the word ***“dragon”*** or similar.

\*See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised\\_Version](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Version).

The ASV, American Standard Version of 1901\*, RSV, Green’s Hebrew-English Interlinear, 1984 NIV, 2011 NIV, 2005 TNIV, NLT New Living Translation have the word ***“jackal’s”*** or similar.

\*See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Standard\\_Version](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Standard_Version).

The NKJV, HCSB, Holman Christian Standard Bible have ***“Serpent”*** or similar i.e. ***“Serpent’s.”***

The NWT New World Translation has ***“Big Snake.”***

In sum of the 25 versions sampled for comparison with the AV1611:

6 pre-1611 Bibles, Wycliffe, Coverdale, Great, Matthew, Bishops’, Geneva have ***“dragon.”***

9 post-1611 Bibles, DRV, RV, NASV, JB, NJB, NRSV, CEV, ESV, NCV have ***“dragon.”***

7 post-1611 Bibles, ASV, RSV, Green, 1984, 2011 NIVs, 2005 TNIV, NLT have ***“jackal.”***

3 post-1611 Bibles, NKJV, HCSB, NWT have ***“Serpent”*** or similar (***“Big Snake”*** NWT).

15 of the 25 versions sampled support the AV1611. 3 read partially with the AV1611. 7 in total read as the 1984 NIV, including the 1984 NIV itself. The AV 1611 word ***“Dragon”*** has appreciably greater support amongst the pre and post-1611 versions than ***“jackal”*** by a simple comparison. It is the correct reading according to the following explanation.

The explanation of the term ***“the dragon well”*** is found in Dr Ruckman’s commentaries *The Books of Genesis* Chapter 1, *Job* Chapter 41, *Revelation* Chapter 12 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 1-2, 769-770.

The ***“Leviathan”*** of Job 41:1 etc. is ***“a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads...the great dragon...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan”*** Revelation 12:3, 9. That is the Devil’s actual form and his geographical location in the created universe is ***“the deep”*** Job 41:31, ***“the waters which were above the firmament”*** Genesis 1:7. After his defeat in ***“the war in heaven”*** Revelation 12:7, the Devil will be forced down through ***“the deep”*** and ***“the firmament”*** to the earth in the End Times according to Revelation 12:9 ***“he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”***

For now, however, ***“Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”*** 2 Corinthians 11:14 and he can temporarily project himself into other locations, including ***“the third heaven”*** 2 Corinthians 12:2, Job 1:6, 2:1 and ***“to and fro in the earth”*** Job 1:7. See Matthew 4:1-11.

The Devil’s presence in ***“the deep”*** is one reason why the expression ***“and God saw that it was good”*** Genesis 1:10 is missing from Genesis 1:8. The presence of ***“principalities...powers...the rulers of the darkness of this world...spiritual wickedness in high places”*** Ephesians 6:12 ***“in the fir-***

*mament of the heaven*” Genesis 1:14 is another. See Daniel 10:20 with respect to *“the prince of Persia”* and *“the prince of Grecia”* for specific examples.

What God made in Genesis 1:3-31 was *“very good”* but the Devil and the *“principalities...powers...rulers of the darkness of this world...spiritual wickedness in high places”* existed before the creation of Genesis 1:3-31. They were not and are not *“very good,”* quite the opposite.

The people of Nehemiah’s time knew enough scripture e.g. Job 41 to know that *“Leviathan” “the great dragon...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan”* was associated with water and a large volume of water at that. It is not surprising that they should name a well after him, especially in view of its location *“by the gate of the valley”* Nehemiah 2:13. This valley, to the south of Jerusalem, is *“Tophet”* Isaiah 30:33, *“the valley of the son of Hinnom”* Jeremiah 7:31 and it has evil associations in scripture.

**“For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.”**

**“And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.”**

*“Tophet”* Isaiah 30:33, *“the valley of the son of Hinnom”* Jeremiah 7:31 pictures hell *“in the heart of the earth”* Matthew 12:40, Acts 2:27, 31, Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, the millennial lake of fire in Edom, Isaiah 34:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and *“the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death”* Revelation 21:8 in eternity into which the Devil i.e. *“the dragon”* is cast after the judgement of the *“great white throne”* Revelation 20:11.

**“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever”** Revelation 20:10.

Faithful believers of Nehemiah’s time according to the physical layout of *“the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well”* evidently had at least some of that understanding of the Devil’s ultimate fate, which would have been an encouragement to them. They would have known Isaiah 27:1 with respect to the Devil’s ultimate fate at the Second Advent.

**“In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”**

Believers now, with a greater revelation, can draw even greater encouragement from Romans 16:20, according to the Lord’s timetable.

**“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.”**