

## Thought for the Day 30th July - Joan Loane

Nehemiah 1 - 2:9

Nehemiah was faced with a dilemma. Would he identify with his people and face execution? He was very respected in his job as cup-bearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia so he did not need to involve himself. If he appeared sad in front of the king, he could be executed.

When his brothers told him that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates burnt with fire, he sat down and wept. For some days he mourned and fasted and then he prayed to the God of heaven. He acknowledged the greatness and awesomeness of God and this brought him to realise and confess the Israelites' sin, including his own. He then reminded God of His promise to take them back if they returned to Him.

It was four months later when he appeared before the king showing his sadness. He was very much afraid but told the king how Jerusalem lay in ruin. The king asked what he wanted. At this, he 'prayed to the God of heaven'. (Some call this an 'arrow' prayer...a quick impromptu prayer for help.)

The king granted his requests for leave, letters of safe-conduct to Judah and to get timber from the king's forest. The king also threw in an escort of army officers and cavalry for good measure!

This prayer reminded me of the ACTS of prayer someone told me about years ago...Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and then, Supplication! Of course, God does answer in the negative sometimes...He knows better than we do what's good for us!

Let us remember to focus on the greatness of our God when we pray, rather the greatness of our problems!