

# *The Song of Nehemias*

The Old Testament figure of Nehemias, walking through his important role in Hebrew history, is truly a very interesting story (from the Book of Esdras-Nehemias). Here was a man who, although a captive slave from Jerusalem, worked his way up in the esteem of the Persians until he found himself holding high offices in the Persian court. He was cupbearer to His Imperial Majesty King Artaxerxes. In spite of his high office in the realm of the Persian people, Nehemias never lost his love for his own native people and never forgot their sad plight. He wanted to do something that would be of help to them. When he heard that "the walls of the city of Jerusalem were broken and the gates thereof burned with fire," he was greatly distressed.

Soon after he had learned about the destruction of the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemias was in attendance of King Artaxerxes at a court banquet. When he presented the cup of wine to the king, the ruler noted a harassed look on the formerly placid and pleasant countenance of Nehemias. The look was of such a nature that the monarch was dismayed and asked him the cause of the look of sadness upon his face. Nehemias turned to the king, and said: "O king, live forever. Why should not my countenance be sorrowful, seeing the city of the place of the sepulchres of my fathers is desolate, and gates thereof are burnt with fire?" When the king asked him what he wanted him to do, Nehemias said: "If it seem good to the king, that thou wouldst send me into Judea to the city of the sepulchre of my father, and I will build it." Artaxerxes agreed and even went so far as to assign to Nehemias a small

