

Nehemiah Chapter 4

- Nehemiah has been appointed by king Artaxerxes to be the governor over Judea. He's come back to Jerusalem with a decree from the king, a commission to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.
- At first he doesn't reveal to the people what his full mission is, he goes out at night and surveys the walls and he establishes a plan for rebuilding the walls.
- Nehemiah then informs the people that he has authority from the king of Persia to re-build the walls of Jerusalem and he sets his plan in motion.
- All the different families of the priests, the Levites, the various groups, from within and without the city are assigned places along the wall so that they can all start at the same time so that it will all go up at once and fairly quickly.
- As the plan is put into motion, the people begin building and immediately the enemies round about them seek to hinder and oppose the work of the Lord.
- Chapters 4-6 describe at least nine different tactics that the enemy used to try to stop the work on the walls.

Speaking of Satan:

2 Corinthians 2:11 "... for we are not ignorant of his devices."

V: 1-2 When Sanballat found out he got ticked off, and indignant, mocking the Jews.

- This is the first tactic: **ridicule**. (Goliath ridiculed David, Sennacherib ridiculed Hezekiah)
- There are those that can stand in the battle when bullets are flying about, but melt away when they are laughed at.
- Sanballat is a Chaldean name, a Babylonian name that means "Hate in Disguise", or "Enemy in Secret" - although this doesn't seem to be much of a secret.
- Sanballat spoke, but not to the Jews - he spoke to his brethren and the men under his command to the army of Samaria - he spoke to those who would not argue with him or contradict him.

Revelation 12:10 Refers to Satan as "... the accuser of the brethren."

- Sanballat spoke sarcastically, slanderously; he spoke in the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

- Sanballat referred to the Jews as being “feeble” - then mockingly asks will they sacrifice? Meaning will they pray, like oh that’ll help.

1 Corinthians 1:27 “For God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

V: 3 Tobiah the Ammonite chimes in that they are wasting their time building the wall.

- He’s saying they are doing such a poor job that if a fox, a very light weight animal, even climbed on the wall they’re building it would fall down - in other words it’s not much of a fortification.

V: 4-5 As soon as Nehemiah hears of what his enemies are saying, he immediately begins to pray, taking it to the Lord. Nehemiah’s response to ridicule is prayer.

- This is the 3rd time we find Nehemiah praying.
- Nehemiah had somehow heard what Sanballat and Tobiah had said, whether they had spies in their camp or if it was just commonly known - either way Nehemiah prays against what these men have said.
- Turn their reproaches back upon them, turn the tables Lord - may they become a prey in the land of captivity.
- Don’t cover their sins, don’t blot out their sin - may they pay the price for their sin - kind of a genteel way of saying may they “go to hell!”

V: 6 So we built the wall - they did what they knew to be right even though everyone on the outside was against them.

“... for the people had a mind to work.” God had instilled something, a desire to work and to serve Him.

Philippians 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

V: 7-8 2nd weapon of the enemy: **intimidation.**

- In these short passages thus far we see that the enemies of Israel have increased from Sanballat & Tobiah, to the Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites (Philistines) - same as today the enemies of Israel are increasing.
- These other pagan nations once again set themselves against Israel, they conspired to hinder the work of God.

V: 9 Nevertheless - "all that aside" we made our prayer to God.

Philippians 4:6-7 "6Be careful for nothing; (be anxious for nothing) but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

- They prayed, and they set a watch. They looked to God, and they did their part showing due diligence.
- Prayer does not preclude activity, it precedes activity. Prayer and prudence as opposed to prayer and presumption.

V: 10 Enemy tactic #3: **Discouragement**. If the Jews became discouraged they would defeat themselves.

- "Judah" said (who's that?) The people of Judah...
- They were saying that the laborers were getting tired or worn out - and there is still much debris to remove, and much work to be done; we can't do it, it's too much, it's overwhelming.
- There are those on the outside that want to speak against, to ridicule, and to intimidate - and sadly there are / were those on the inside that said they're right, it's useless, it can't be done... Naysayers, discouragers as opposed to encouragers.

Numbers 13 lays out how the 10 unfaithful spies discouraged the nation and they got stopped at Kadesh-Barnea weren't able to enter into the promised land.

[Why Judah?](#)

Nehemiah 6:17-19 (turn to) "17Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. 18For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19Also they report his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear."

- There were spies and secret operatives within the camp!
- Later in **Ch. 13** we'll read that some of the leaders of Judah were not wholly devoted to the Lord, but were more interested in making money. The combination of marriage and money divided their loyalties, and they became the source of discouragement.
- Obvious attacks from without are easier to deal with than attacks from within.

V: 11-12 4th tactic: **Fear.**

- Our enemies will sneak in among us, they're going to destroy us. They were living in fear, they weren't sleeping properly, they were weary, and tired. They wanted to give up.
- Isn't that just how the enemy works!?

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Ephesians 4:27 "Neither give place to the devil."

- We've got to be careful that we don't hearken to the words of the enemy - no matter who he uses to spew them.
- 10 times the people came to Nehemiah that the attack was imminent; so Nehemiah prepared - V: 13

V: 13 Nehemiah prepared to meet the enemy. He set some men on the high places so the enemy could see that they were prepared for battle. He set others in the lower places so that if they broke through he could ambush them.

- We too have to be ready for battle at all times, prepared:

Ephesians 6:13-18 "¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season;..."

1 Peter 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

V: 14 Exhortation: "***Be not ye afraid of them:...***" Great exhortation or encouragement but the first question this raises is why shouldn't I be afraid? The answer is in the second part of this "***... remember the Lord.***"

- Fear is one of Satan's best tools and he seeks to use it against us all the time which is why Jesus is always telling His followers not to be afraid.

1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

- The cure for fear is to remember the Lord, the greatness of our God, our Savior - to see things in light of who He is and what He can do.
- The cause of fear is taking our eyes off of the Lord and looking at the enemy or the thing we fear. The cure is to look to the Lord, to focus on Him.

1 John 4:4 “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

David said:

Psalm 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

- So the exhortation: “Don’t be afraid, remember the Lord is with you, keep your eyes on Him” - and then go out and fight!

V: 14b “... fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.” - Fight!

V: 15 The Lord brought their counsels to nought! He does that.

Psalm 33:10 “The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.”

- When the enemies knew that we knew - the jig was up! So we got back to work.

James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

V: 16-18 From that point forward, 1/2 the men worked, the other half stood ready with swords, spears, and shields - ready for war.

- The rulers stood behind the people, they were there with the people.
- All that were building, working, doing the various construction jobs did so with their swords strapped to their side.

Hebrews 4:12 “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged 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.”

- Strapped to our side, engraved in our hearts:

Psalm 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.”

- Nehemiah kept the trumpeter close by so as to be able to give the signal to go to battle at any moment, standing by, ready at a moments notice.
- This is a good example for us to follow, we too need to be listening for that trumpet to sound!

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

V: 19-20 The battle plan - we're spread out pretty far. When you hear the trumpet, respond to where you hear the trumpet call, know that our God will fight for us.

V: 21-23 Everyone is working long hours, sleeping in Jerusalem, setting a watch over the night, back at it early in the morning. Nobody took off their clothes except to wash them.

- Nehemiah instituted a 2nd shift, requiring those living outside the walls to remain in Jerusalem at night to help guard the city.
- It is often while we sleep / aren't paying attention that the enemy does his most devastating work.

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

- It's not always easy serving the Lord, long hours at times, always having to be vigilant, but the Sabbath is coming and we can rest in Him.
- Nehemiah led by example, he was a leader who served, and a servant who led.
- Eventually they get the wall built in 50 days time.

V: 6 The people had a mind to work.

V: 9 They had a heart to pray.

V: 20 They had an ear to hear.

V: 23 They had a leader with the faith to stand.

V: 14-15 They had a God who is great and terrible who enabled them to do what He called them to do and fought on their behalf giving them the victory.

- The moral to this story: Don't give up! Keep going! God is with you!

1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”