

NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 4 – “The Wall Defended Against Enemies”!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – **Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221**; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

NEHEMIAH – AN EXCELLENT STUDY FOR ANY SPIRIT LED BELIEVER PROJECT:

The study of Nehemiah is often used to set up a standard for the completing of any project or work that the LORD may call a believer to do.

- Recognizing the calling
- Right heart response to the calling
- Proper preparation through a season of prayer - The four months in prayer were not only spent in talking to God,
- But also in listening to Him and in working out a Spirit-led plan for what to do when God did open the door -
- Prayerful planning of what the project may require and how to fulfill those requirements.
- Good leaders learn a sense of God’s timing.
- Nehemiah’s wise diplomatic, approach gives us an example to follow.
- Willingness to make personal sacrifices to do what has to be done to complete the project.
- Willingness to be fully engaged in a “hands on” involvement in completing the project.
- A continual recognition of the hand of God leading to the completion of the project! All glory to Him!

TRIALS/RESISTANCE FROM THE ENEMY

1Pe 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

1Pe 1:7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Joh 17:14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

On this side of Heaven, there is never spiritual progress without resistance!

The Battle Belongs to the Lord - The Maranatha! Singers
No weapon that's fashioned against us shall stand
When the power of darkness comes in like a flood,
When your enemy presses in hard do not fear.

Chapter 4: The Jerusalem Gates - A Beautiful Picture Describing the Life and Teaching of Christ:
Whenever the people of God start doing the work of God, there will be opposition. A worker of weak faith and purpose will quit, but a person of resolution and confidence will overcome the opposition and finish the task. Nehemiah was such a person. Notice in these chapters the opposition that he faced (from both within and without the city) and the victories that he won.

Summary – Resistance/Response

The things of success we see so far in *Nehemiah*:

Resistance - Laughing, Chap. 2v19;

Response - 2v20 Called on the God of Heaven, building continues!

Ridicule/Mocking, 4v1-3;

Response - 4v4-6 Prayed, “Hear, O our God”; work begins/continues!

Threats, 4v8;

Response; 4v9 - Nevertheless we prayed! Set a watch day & night!

Discouragement/fear, 4v10-12;

Response - v13-14 – Positioned men (families) with swords, spears, bows. Encouraged the people “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.” Work continued!

Proper Response to Enemy Resistance

1. Have a heart to do the work!
2. They prayed!
3. They were watching!
4. Remember Your God!
5. Remember Your Sword!
6. Do all of this while listening for the trumpet - *come thither!*

TIME LINE – BOOKS OF EZRA – (“Bible Hub” online)

537 BC	The Proclamation of Cyrus	Ezra 1
537 BC	The Exiles Return	Ezra 2
535 BC	Temple Work Begins (70 yrs. from 605BC)	Ezra 3
534 BC	Adversaries Hinder Temple Work	Ezra 4
534 BC	Artaxerxes Orders Work Stopped	Ezra 4:17
520 BC	Tattenai's Letter to Darius	Ezra 5
520 BC	Temple Work Resumed by Darius' Decree	Ezra 6
(Books of Haggai & Zechariah occur here)		
515 BC	Completion and Dedication of the Temple	Ezra 6:16
(Book of Esther occurs here)		
BOOK OF ESTHER (about 60 yrs. from 1st return)		
483 BC	Queen Vashti Deposed	Esther 1
478 BC	Esther Becomes Queen	Esther 2
478 BC	Mordecai Thwarts a Conspiracy	Esther 2:21
474 BC	Haman Seeks Revenge on the Jews	Esther 3
473 BC	Mordecai Informs Esther of Haman's Plot	Esther 4
473 BC	Esther Prepares a Banquet	Esther 5
473 BC	The King Honors Mordecai	Esther 6
473 BC	Haman Is Hanged	Esther 7
473 BC	Xerxes' Edict on Behalf of Esther & Jews	Esther 8
472 BC	Purim Instituted	Esther 9
472 BC	Xerxes' Tribute to Mordecai	Esther 10
458 BC	Ezra to Jerusalem (147 years from 605; 79 years from 1 st return; 57 years from last verse of chapter 6!)	Ezra 7
458 BC	Ezra Commissioned by Artaxerxes	Ezra 7:11
457 BC	Families Return to Jerusalem with Ezra	Ezra 8
457 BC	Ezra's reforms (80 yrs. from 1 st return)	Ezra 9
456 BC	Ezra's Prayer About Inter-marriage	Ezra 10

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH (about 100 years from 1st return)

445 BC	Nehemiah's Prayer for the Exiles	Nehemiah 1
444 BC	Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Nehemiah 2
444 BC	Builders of the Walls Named	Nehemiah 3
444 BC	Builders Overcome Ridicule	Nehemiah 4
444 BC	Nehemiah Abolishes Debt and Bondage	Nehemiah 5
444 BC	Sanballat's Plot	Nehemiah 6
444 BC	Completion of the Wall	Nehemiah 6:15
444 BC	Census of Returned Exiles	Nehemiah 7
444 BC	Ezra Reads the Law	Nehemiah 8
444 BC	Israelites Fast and Repent	Nehemiah 9
444 BC	Israelites Seal the Covenant	Nehemiah 10
444 BC	People Settle in Jerusalem	Neh. 11, 12
432 BC	Nehemiah Restores Laws	Nehemiah 13

Kings of Persia in Ezra-Nehemiah:

Cyrus (539-530-9yrs); Darius I (522-486-36yrs); Xerxes (Ahasueres – 485-464-21yrs); Artaxerxes I (464-423-41yrs)

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NEHEMIAH CHAPTER 3 – The Wall Defended Against Enemies!

Opposition to the Work

Neh 4:1 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious (kindled with fire) and very indignant (strong displeasure), and mocked the Jews.

Neh 4:2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?"

Neh 4:3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."

Neh 4:4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity!

Neh 4:5 Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders.

v. 1 Laughing at them hadn't stopped them—the work progressed—so now the enemy will use the weapon of ridicule before others. They mock that which was precious to God but despised by Sanballat. *Furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews:* Because Nehemiah's protection by the king's letters, all Sanballat and Tobiah could do was to discourage the Jews into stopping. Believers have the same attack. Although legally set free by our King, we can be discouraged by mocking and sarcasm is so common by those opposing God's work. *Act 2:13 Others mocking ... Mar 5:40 And they ridiculed Him... Luk 22:63 Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him.... Luk 23:36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine,*

v. 2 The enemies questions were pertinent, questions the children of Israel were likely asking themselves, wondering if they would be able to complete the task. Ridicule is one method the enemy will use. Discouragement is a powerful weapon because it is somewhat the opposite of faith. here faith believes God and His love and promises, discouragement looks for and believes the worst - and tends to forget about who God is and what He has promised to do.

v. 3 He will break down their stone wall: Tobiah made a huge mistake. He called the wall *their* stone wall; it wasn't *their* wall at all, but God's - he was criticizing God's wall, God's work. Critics who bring nothing but discouragement often miss what God is doing; because they don't like the wall, they can't believe it is God's work. In the same way, the church is God's church; Jesus loves His bride. One should always be careful about the way you talk about Jesus' bride.

vs. 4-5 Nehemiah comes against the discouraging attack with prayer. *Hear, O our God*, a response was a great example. He didn't debate. He didn't form a committee. He didn't deal with the two enemies directly. Instead, **he took it to God in prayer!** *Hear, O our God, for we are despised:* In his prayer, Nehemiah first asked for God's attention and mercy. God did care about Nehemiah and the work of rebuilding, but Nehemiah needed God to *display* it and he also needed to *sense* God's presence and care. **Turn their reproach... do not cover their iniquity:** Nehemiah then asked God to battle their enemies for them. He depended on God to fight the battle. God gave him a work to do, and he would not be distracted from it. If we are angry and someone or have a real enemy, then we can go at them in prayer.

v. 1 “But”, after laughing, now the enemy uses a most common way of resistance; **Mocking!** Whenever God's work revives, there is sure to be **mocking and reproach**, which the enemy always uses when they don't have anything else really to attack. **It is a mistake to reply. It's best to always talk to God first, before talking to man! Let us hand over our cause to God, and go on with His work.** Mocking can only be effective, if we let it be effective ~ “Mind of a scholar; heart of a child; the hide of a rhinoceros” **On this side of Heaven, there is never spiritual progress without resistance!**

v. 2 Sanballat's mocking questions are all those believers will encounter and are actually need to be done! Many good works has been so looked upon with contempt by the proud and haughty scorners. **We need to remember how Nehemiah handles this situation!**

v. 3 Enemies run in packs, now Tobiah shows up and add his sarcasm! **We need to be beware of mocking, reproach and sarcasm, which topple many who would stand strong under direct attack or persecution.**

vs. 4-5 Don't put on the gloves! Don't go into the ring! Pray! Prayer is so often our last resort but with Nehemiah it was the first resort. If you use it as the first resort then you'll never get to the last resort of desperation.

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INTERPRETATION

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Neh 4:6 So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.

Neh 4:7 Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, (enemies from four sides, conspiring together)

Neh 4:8 and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion.

Neh 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night. (Watch and pray!)

Neh 4:10 Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

v. 6 The work continues on with greater and greater strength after the attack and Nehemiah's prayer: the. *So we built the wall...* God answered the prayer by giving them all **a mind to work**. *This is exactly what Satan wants to destroy with his attacks.* He wants to make us feel defeated, or passive, or self-focused, or discouraged. . The prayer was answered in the people of God doing the work. Nehemiah's prayer asked God to take care of his enemies, and God answered by taking care of His people. .. *half its height*: The work was almost half finished. It was an exciting, but dangerous time. Much had been done, but much was left to do.

v. 7 *gaps...beginning to be closed*: The half-high wall was almost continuous now, resulting in. the enemies becoming **very angry**. The work of God often makes the enemy of our soul angry and they often rage against the progress being made by believers touching a lost world for Jesus Christ. It's not bad to make the devil angry.

v. 8 *All of them conspired together to come and attack*: Becoming more serious, the enemies didn't simply complain or mock, they threatened and planned for violence. The enemy didn't attack. They just talked about it. Sanballat and Tobiah were hoping that the threat of attack would be enough. Satan uses the same strategy of fear against us. If we are paralyzed by a threat the threat has worked - even when nothing actually happens against us. ... **confusion**: Creating confusion is an important strategy of Satan. A confused people will never move forward and fulfill God's work.

v. 9 *Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God... set the watch* taking practical steps *against them day and night* because of the threat. They **set the watchmen up day and night to watch**. God expects us to be prudent and use a **combination of prayer and wise precautionary measures**. God allowed the attack to go on. He could have stopped them instantly. He must have been delighted that His people drew closer to Him with a deeper trust than ever before. God did His perfect work *both* in building the walls and His people. **Day and night**: This shows that Nehemiah was determined! He wouldn't let the security of daylight or the sleepiness of night keep him from the work.

v. 10 **opposition comes from within**. The battle moves now from outside the city to inside. **The enemy loves to attack when tiredness sets in!** Satan followed this same tactic in Acts 5-6 when he used Ananias and Sapphira and the complaining widows inside the fellowship of the church. *Judah..* supposed to be the strongest, bravest tribe brings up a challenge from within -- that of fatigue and discouragement! **much rubbish**: The work of rebuilding the walls was not only construction, but cleaning and hauling away 100 years of rubbish. Clearing away the rubbish seemed endless!

Physical fatigue affects us emotionally and spiritually!

v. 6 *So we built the wall*: God answered the prayer by giving them all **a mind to work**. **A mind to work (their heart's desire)** is a gift from God, and no significant job will ever be accomplished until people come together with **a mind to work**. Often we miss God's answer of our prayers, in that we pray for Him to do a work in the lives of our enemies. He answers by moving in our lives, but we resist that moving. **Do we have a mind to work in unity with one other? Never allow ridicule to stop your ministry; "take it to the Lord in prayer" and keep on working.**
vs. 7-8 **#2 of the ways of enemy resistance; Attack – threat of force or violence!** Here the **second method** in attempting to stop the work. What Satan cannot accomplish by deceit he attempts to do by force. This a **stronger method than of attacking!** We see the enemy being unsuccessful in laughing, mocking and scorning, now **resorting to threatening and planning for violence!** This **was a serious threat!** Again we need to notice how Nehemiah responds!

v. 9 **Faith and works!** Prayer does not preclude activity, but it needs to precedes activity. Prayer is never an excuse to do nothing. It's never an excuse just to be fool-hearty. Whatever the problem is, we see **Nehemiah going to prayer!** For too many of us, it's not good that too frequently it is just prayer and presumption. Oliver Cromwell – “Trust in Lord and keep your powder dry!” Nehemiah did not depend on prayer alone; he also set a watch.

v. 10 **Fatigue and discouragement** – the **attack from within!** Now the heart of the people must have been a **discouragement** for Nehemiah. It's easy to lead when your followers are full of enthusiasm and have a heart to work. **But what do you do when that begins to fade? In our Christian life, nothing much can be built for God's glory unless rubbish is swept away as well. It's just long, hard work! Everyone will meet discouragement! Discouragement from just a few can affect the whole body!**

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Neh 4:11 And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

Neh 4:12 So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times (saying over and over!). "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us." (bad news spreading from the inside!)

Neh 4:13 Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

Neh 4:14 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

The Work Resumes

Neh 4:15 And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work.

Neh 4:16 So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah.

Neh 4:17 Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. (The Sword and the Trowel (Word of God and practical things)

Neh 4:18 Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

vs. 11-12 Fear and faith can never abide in the same heart. We have a rumor the enemy started that their armies would suddenly invade Jerusalem. The Jews living outside the city heard this report and carried it to Nehemiah ten times. How persistent Satan's workers can be. Responding, Nehemiah set the guard on the walls and encouraged the people not to fear. The work stopped. The challenge from the outside: the enemies plan a surprise attack. Often, attacks from the adversary are successful only if they come as a surprise. **The enemy took advantage of the Jews' discouragement, and they planned a surprise attack.**

v. 13 Nehemiah organizes the defense. He told them to bring out their armor. It was time to get serious, to put on the full armor, and to get ready to fight with every resource they had.

v. 14 *Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord:* That is always the cure for fear. The cause for fear is getting our eyes upon the enemy and the threats of the enemy and that will cause fear, but the cure for fear is getting your eyes on the Lord. Remember the Lord! You're forgetting something; "greater is He that is with us". He is within. Remember the Lord

v. 15 When they saw the defenses of the people of God, the enemies shrunk back. They didn't want a battle because they knew they would lose. What the enemies wanted was for the people of God to give them the victory through failing to watch and be ready. *All...returned everyone to his work:* This was the victory. Defending against the attack was not the victory, but getting on with the work was the victory.

v. 16 Some of the workers were **handling the trowels with one hand and the other hand, their sword or their spears** Some of the servants did the work of defending and some did the work of building. **Day and night they were occupied in this task. They would gather in the city at night for protection and then sunrise they'd go out and do the work.** They took no time off except of course the Sabbath day and the washing of their clothes.

v. 17 The threats cut the work force in half, and even those who worked carried weapons in case of attack

v.18 As they worked they were ready to fight; they were girded for the battle. These were working long hours from the time the sun came up in the morning until the stars appeared at night they were out there working on the wall. ... *trumpet...*; to give the alarm of war, that everyone might lay aside his work, and prepare for the battle.

vs. 11-12 The enemy took advantage of the Jews' discouragement, and they planned a surprise attack. "We are going to take them when they are not looking for us." **Fear and faith can never abide in the same heart. In Neh 4:11, we have a rumor the enemies armies would suddenly invade Jerusalem.**
Fear paralyzes; fear is contagious; (Dt. 20:3,8)

vs. 13 Nehemiah actively organized the defense. **Would we have wisely and calmly trusted God, doing the active things God would have us do to obtain the victory?**

v. 14 Fear is a tool that Satan often uses against the child of God. *Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord:* The Lord is with you and your families have need of you! One man in the truth of God can cause more in response than the threats of Sanballat and a whole army!

v. 15 **That plan of the enemy was thwarted and the work went on.** When under spiritual attack it's easy to feel that just enduring the storm is the victory. It isn't. The attack often comes to prevent your progress and work for the LORD. **Victory is enduring the attack and continuing the progress and work for the LORD.**

v. 16 Each builder had a trowel in one hand with which to build, and in the other hand he carried a sword with which to defend himself. These two weapons or instruments should be in the hands of believers today. The trowel represents the fact that believers should build themselves up in the most holy faith. That is for the inside.

v. 17 The kingdom of God is built with both a sword and a trowel, a sword to come against every spiritual force of wickedness in high places, and trowel to do the work of building up the people of God.

v.18 **When we are busy at work for the LORD, would we consider working day and night, protecting ourselves and one another should the need arise?**

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Neh 4:19 Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall.

Neh 4:20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there (resort ye thither unto us-KJV). Our God will fight for us."

Neh 4:21 So we labored in the work, and half of the men held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared.

Neh 4:22 At the same time I also said to the people, "Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day."

Neh 4:23 So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, except that everyone took them off for washing (everyone went to the water they went with sword).

v. 19 Nehemiah knew they had to keep in communication if the work was going to be done. The trumpets were a new way of communication there to meet the challenge.

v. 20 They stayed ready to sound the alarm at the slightest notice. They would not be caught off guard. *1Co 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

v. 21 They dedicated themselves to the work all the more, working hard from sunrise to past dark, even spending the night out at the job site to protect against attack.

vs. 22-23 Working almost day and night, they were occupied in this task. They would gather in the city at night for protection and then sunrise they'd go out and do the work. They just didn't take anytime off except of course the Sabbath day and the washing of their clothes. Even as they "went to the water" they took their swords!

The Battle Belongs to the Lord - The Maranatha! Singers

In heavenly armor we'll enter the land. The battle belongs to the Lord.

No weapon that's fashioned against us shall stand The battle belongs to the Lord

We sing glory, honor Power and strength to the Lord. We sing glory, honor Power and strength to the Lord

When the power of darkness comes in like a flood, The battle belongs to the Lord He's raised up a standard, the power of His blood, The battle belongs to the Lord And We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord. We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord

When your enemy presses in hard do not fear. The battle belongs to the Lord Take courage my friend, your redemption is near. The battle belongs to the Lord And We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord. We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord And We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord. We sing glory, honor, Power and strength to the Lord

v. 19 The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another:

v. 20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there: *Our God will fight for us.*" When we hear the trumpet we will come!

v. 21 They worked all the daylight hours, *from daybreak until the stars appeared.* God is looking for laborers. Is that you, me?

v. 22 They kept their clothes on all the time because they did not want to be caught unprepared. They were always ready to respond to the blast of a trumpet.

v. 23 We need to be always ready, always clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, always wearing the armor of God, ready for that final trumpet blast that will gather us together with our LORD.

These Jews are wonderful examples of what a Christian worker ought to be: they had a mind to work (*Neh 4:6*), a heart to pray (*Neh 4:9*), an eye to watch (*Neh 4:9*), and an ear to hear (*Neh 4:20*).

Proper Response to Enemy Resistance

1. Have a heart to do the work!
2. They prayed!
3. They were watching!
4. Remember Your God!
5. Remember Your Sword!
6. Do all of this while listening for the trumpet -*come thither!*

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