

Nehemiah – Building the Future, Part 4

The book of Nehemiah is not just about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem – it is about building a **FUTURE** for God’s people! Jerusalem looked like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina – the city was destroyed and the people were scattered and demoralized. As we proceed through Nehemiah’s 2500-year-old journal, we find that in only 52 days, 42 different working parties restored a 50 foot high wall with a circumference of 4 miles at a rate of 504 feet per day – while fighting against opposition. How did they accomplish in only 52 days what no one had been able to do in 140 years?! **THEY PRAYED, YES ... BUT THEY ALSO ACTED!**

Chapter 1 – Nehemiah didn’t get new information, he got a new burden.
Chapter 2 – The city of Jerusalem (church) needed both walls and gates.
Chapter 3 – It took unity (working next to each other) to build the city.
Chapter 4 – There is always opposition when we try to do a work for God.

Nehemiah had three enemies in his quest to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls of protection and separation – and we have the same three enemies!

SANBALLAT – the main enemy with much wealth and influence, his name means “hatred in secret” – represents the **DEVIL** who says the walls are “NOT NECESSARY”

TOBIAH – his name means “Jehovah is good,” a strange name for someone opposing God’s people (they have a tendency to not only do bad, but also do some good) – represents the **FLESH** that says the walls are “TOO MUCH WORK”

GESHEM – the most subtle enemy, his name means “corporeal” or “having material substance” – represents the **WORLD** that says the walls are “INTOLERANT”

Nehemiah 4:1 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

Sanballat has “hatred in secret” for all humanity – but it is hidden so well most unsaved people don’t even believe he exists! They are bound by his power and ironically don’t want to become Christians because they are afraid they will lose their “freedom”! But Sanballat’s tactics change once WALLS start going up – his anger and mockery begin with a vengeance!

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds:)

Nehemiah 4:2-3 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

The devil will tell you that it is impossible to build anything in your life or in our church that would be strong enough to be a threat to him – BUT HE IS LYING!

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because **there is no truth in him**. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar**, and the father of it.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which **God, that cannot lie**, promised before the world began;

In our battle against the devil, there is both an AIR WAR and a GROUND WAR. The air war leads the way, and it is more dramatic than the ground war – but we need BOTH to win the battle! Most churches are good at one or the other – but we need to fight in the AIR and on the GROUND.

Who fights the battle? God or man? The answer – WE BOTH FIGHT!

Nehemiah 4:9 Nevertheless we made our **prayer unto our God**, and **set a watch** against them day and night, because of them.

1 Samuel 17:47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for **the battle is the LORD’S (GOD’S PART)**, and he will give you into our hands.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil (OUR PART)**, and he will flee from you.

1 Timothy 6:12 **Fight the good fight of faith (OUR PART)**, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1 Corinthians 9:26 I therefore so **run**, not as uncertainly; so **fight** I, not as one that beateth the air:

GOD DOES HIS PART AND WE DO OUR PART!

Philippians 2:12-13 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling. **For it is God which worketh in you** both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Our enemy is subtle, and he never misses an opportunity to attack!

Nehemiah 4:13 Therefore set I in the **lower places** behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

NIV – “exposed places”

TEV – “wherever it was still unfinished”

CEV – “where there were still holes in it”

AMP – “where it was least protected”

MES – “at the most vulnerable places”

Sanballat / Satan isn't stupid – he attacks in our areas of weakness!
GUARD THE “LOWER PLACES” IN YOUR LIFE!

Everyone is involved in this battle and building project whether they know it or not (you're either an asset or a liability, either a helping hand or just dead weight, to the church). **Every believer has been given the dual job of BATTLING and BUILDING – at the same time!**

Nehemiah 4:17-20 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one **with one of his hands** wrought in the work, and **with the other hand** held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, **The work is great and large, and we are separated** upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the **sound of the trumpet**, resort ye thither unto us: **our God shall fight for us.**

We all need to have a sword in one hand to BATTLE and a trowel in the other hand to BUILD.

We need to remember that the work we are doing is very diversified, but although we are “separated” we are working on the same project for God!

When your spiritual leadership sounds the trumpet, rally around them and fight the enemy – that's when God steps in and fights for us!

We are engaged in AIR WAR and GROUND WAR – and we need both!