

Building In Spite Of Troubles (Nehemiah 4)

- I. The Book of Nehemiah is an account of the building/rebuilding program in the post-captivity return of some of the Jews from Babylon. Nehemiah's account focuses on the wall.
 - A. Daniel had prophesied that the wall would be built *in troublous times*. **DAN 9:25.**
 - B. The builders faced troubles from without and from within, very typical for those who build for God's sake.
 - C. This book reminds us that troubles are to be expected, met with faith and according action, and that building should continue. Discipleship is a matter of counting the cost beforehand and completing the building project. **LUK 14:28-30; ACT 14:22.**
 - D. Troubles should not scuttle faith but perfect it. **ROM 5:1-5.**

- II. N.T. building is primarily concerned with:
 - A. building of local churches upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. **1CO 3:9-11; EPH 2:22.**
 - B. building upon faith thereafter. **JUDE 1:20; 2PE 1:5-8.**

- III. **vs.1-5.** Persecution was turned over to God in prayer.
 - A. Frustrated by the determination and success of God's people, the enemy tried to stir up trouble. c/w **ACT 13:49-50; 14:1-2, 19.**
 - 1. Where the antichrist Jews left off, pagan Rome set in, then papal Rome and her daughters and now secular humanism.
 - 2. The perpetuity of the church of Jesus Christ is not owing to a lack of troublers but to a sovereign determination by its Founder. **MAT 16:18.**
 - B. Sanballat is curiously echoed by Dr. C.I. Scofield in his footnote preceding the book of Ezra: "The post-captivity books deal with that feeble remnant which alone had a heart for God." (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 529)
 - 1. Scofield repeats the "feeble remnant" assessment in his footnote preceding **JER 23**. (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 795)
 - 2. To better advance Dr. Scofield's notion of a future restoration and rebuilding program, he gives the rebuilders here light regard, in curious accord with the enemies of the Jews. This might be called "...having the same spirit of [anti] faith..." (**2CO 4:13**).
 - 3. It should come as no surprise if a true church of Jesus Christ is accounted a feeble effort worthy of derision. But fear not. **LUK 12:32.**
 - C. Mocking the righteous who are doing God's work is standard fare.
 - 1. The Jews mocked their prophets. **2CH 36:16.**
 - 2. Jews and Gentiles mocked Christ. **MAT 27:29, 39-44.**
 - 3. The pagans mocked Paul's resurrection message. **ACT 17:32.**
 - 4. Satan's tactic of mockery intends to discourage the building of the church which is the pillar and ground of the truth (**1TI 3:15**) and which is the obstacle to his desire of complete dominion of the world.
 - 5. Mockery is also used against the individual striving to build himself up in faith.
 - a. "You're just a big hypocrite." But the flaws of saved men do not alter the facts of the gospel and its promises. A saved man who errs is not an unsaved man, he's just typical of saved men.
 - b. "No child of God would ever commit that error." But children of God still have an old nature that is capable of serious error. **ROM 5:8, 14-17.**
 - c. "I suppose Paul used a KJV too." Yes, the King Jesus Version which His

Spirit wrote, then preserved in translations and copies as promised.

- D. Nehemiah turned the matter over to God (**vs. 4-5**) for it was really God that they were mocking. God's honor, not Israel's dignity, was most at stake.
1. God is not mocked! **GAL 6:7 c/w PSA 2:4-5.**
 2. Instead of saying to the Jews, "Hear, O Israel, their taunts...", he said, "Hear, O our God..."
 - a. Let God's Israel be deaf to the mockery of the wicked. **PSA 38:12-15.**
 - b. God hears the impassioned pleas of the oppressed. **JAM 5:4.**
 - c. Christians should take mocking for righteousness' sake joyfully. **1PE 4:14 ct/w LUK 6:26.**
 3. Nehemiah's prayer was of a semi-imprecatory nature.
 - a. As Christians we do well to "...bless them that curse you, do good to them hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you" (**MAT 5:44**).
 - b. Yet our prayers are not without pleas for judgment against the wicked or deliverance from them. **GAL 5:12; 2TI 4:14-15; 2TH 3:1-2.**
- II. **v. 6.** "So (under circumstances of persecution) built we the wall..."
- A. These souls were undaunted by persecution. **PHIL 1:27-28; 1PE 3:14.**
 - B. They had a mind to work; they were motivated and unmoveable! **2CO 5:9; 1CO 15:58.**
- III. **vs. 7-12.** The enemies conspired to attack Jerusalem and hinder the work.
- A. People of diverse and sometimes opposing interests will nonetheless combine forces against the work of God. **LUK 23:12 c/w ACT 4:27.**
 - B. Believers must defend with constant vigilance against a conspiracy of the world, the flesh and the devil if faith is to be built in the soul and built upon.
 - C. The people prayed AND watched (**v. 9 c/w MAT 26:41; LUK 21:36; COL 4:2**). There was neither foolish independence of God nor foolish neglect of responsibility.
 - D. **v. 10.** Have you ever felt like Judah in the effort to build yourself up in Christ: tired out and overwhelmed with rubbish?
 1. God is able to make rubies rise from rubbish. Think of Paul.
 2. The lack of strength is well offset by grace. **2CO 12:9; PHIL 4:13.**
 3. Reject stains, futility and victimhood in favor of grace, faith and victory. **1JO 5:4.**
- IV. **vs. 12-20.** Nehemiah established a defence strategy.
- A. **v. 12.** It seems the workers were "...troubled on every side..." (**2CO 4:8**).
 - B. **v. 13.** Defenders were set in both the lower places and higher places.
 1. By this the foundation was secured against undermining, for "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (**PSA 11:3**). Let not the church of Jesus Christ therefore neglect its foundation of Jesus Christ, His apostles and prophets, and their doctrine. **EPH 2:20 c/w 1JO 4:6.**
 2. Both the higher and lower elements of the building were active in defence. Ministers and members both are responsible to "...earnestly contend for the faith..." (**JUDE 1:3**).
 - C. **v. 14.** Nehemiah encouraged them against the fear of man. c/w **ISA 8:12-13.**
 1. The fear of man brings a snare. **PRO 29:25a.**
 2. But faith runs by a different spirit. **PRO 29:25b c/w 2TI 1:7; HEB 13:5-6.**
 3. Those who by faith see God as great and terrible will see His enemies as small and pathetic.

- D. **vs. 16-20.** The people were ever ready to battle, constantly vigilant. **1PE 5:8-9.**
1. They held, as it were, both the sword and the trowel: building while defending. Gospel building includes gospel defending, which underscores the importance of doctrine. **1TI 4:16 c/w TIT 1:9-11.**
 2. God's word is our sword (**EPH 6:17**) and should be ever in the heart against a time of challenge. **PSA 119:11; 1PE 3:15.**
 3. The importance of the trumpet should not be overlooked.
 - a. The trumpet served as an alarm when trouble arose so as to coordinate a response.
 - b. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (**1CO 14:8**).
 - c. This argues for authoritative teaching from an authoritative sure word of prophecy, not namby-pamby gargling and multiple, contradictory "scriptures." **JOH 3:11; 1TH 2:13.**
- E. **vs. 19-20.** Mark how that their separation did not stop them from coming together to strive as one. c/w **PHIL 1:27.**
- V. **vs. 21-23.** "So we laboured in the work..."
- A. They laboured in spite of reproaches.
 - B. They laboured in spite of threats.
 - C. They laboured unitedly.
 - D. They were both ready builders and fighters.
 - E. They were constantly vigilant.
 - F. Nehemiah wisely guarded against the troubles that can happen during sleep. **MAT 13:24-25; ROM 13:11.**