

5 – THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS (NEHEMIAH 4:1-6:19)

I. Nehemiah's Efforts Against Opposition (Nehemiah 4:1-23)

A. The Response to Slander (Nehemiah 4:1-5)

- When Sanballat heard that the walls were being rebuilt, he became angry and mocked the Jews.
- He questioned what the feeble Jews were doing before the army of Samaria.
- Tobiah the Ammonite also mocked the Jews saying that a fox would knock their wall down.
- Nehemiah responds by asking the Lord to turn their enemies' reproach on their own heads.
- Nehemiah asks the Lord not to forgive their iniquity because they are provoking the Lord.

B. The Conspiracy to Attack (Nehemiah 4:6-23)

- When the opposition heard that the gaps in the walls were being filled, they became angry.
- They conspired to attack Jerusalem and create confusion.
- Nehemiah responded with prayer to God and setting up a night and day watch.
- The workers became physically exhausted from the work and fearful of a secret attack.
- Nehemiah positioned men behind the lower parts of the walls with spears and bows.
- He also positioned the people according to their families with weapons.
- Nehemiah spoke to the people and encourage to trust the Lord and fight for their families.
- The people were told to stay in Jerusalem, as they worked and remain on guard continually.

II. Nehemiah As Governor (Nehemiah 5:1-19)

A. The Issue of Usury (Nehemiah 5:1-13)

- There was a great outcry from the people against certain of their Jewish brethren.
- During the famine, they mortgaged their lands, vineyards and homes in order to buy grain.
- Others had borrowed money in order to pay the king's tax on their lands and vineyards.
- In order to repay their debts, they had to sell their children into slavery.
- There was no way for the people to redeem their children since they no longer had their lands.

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- Nehemiah rebuked the nobles and rulers for charging usury from the brethren.
- Nehemiah called a great assembly to deal with them.
- They had redeemed brethren from the nations, yet they were selling them into slavery again.
- He called the accused to walk in the fear of the Lord and stop charging usury.
- They were to restore the lands and vineyards, as well as a portion of the money to the people.
- The accused stated that they would restore the land and money, as they swore oaths to do so.

B. Service As Governor (Nehemiah 5:14-19)

- Nehemiah and his brother did not eat the governor's provision during his 12-year tenure.
- Because he feared the Lord, Nehemiah did not burden the people as past governors have done.
- Nehemiah and his servants labored on the wall and he daily hosted 150 Jews at his table.
- Because the bondage on the people was great, Nehemiah did not demand the provision.

III. More Opposition to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6:1-14)

- The opposition heard the walls were finished, though the gates were not hung yet.
- So, they sent word to Nehemiah to meet with them in the villages on the plain of Ono.
- Nehemiah replied that he was busy doing a great work and cannot stop for the meeting.
- Sanballat then send word that the rumor is Nehemiah is setting himself up as king.
- He also stated that it is rumored that they will rebel against the king.
- Nehemiah replied that the rumors were not true, as he recognized their plot against him.
- Nehemiah visited the house of a man who was a secret informer.
- This man proposed that Nehemiah meet in the Temple since there was a plot to kill him.
- Nehemiah recognized that this would lead to defiling the Temple and discrediting him.
- Nehemiah prayed against Sanballat and Tobiah as well as the prophets who tried to scare him.

IV. The Completion of the Walls (Nehemiah 6:15-19)

- The walls of Jerusalem were completed in fifty-two days.

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- When their enemies heard of the walls' completion, they were dishearten.
- This was due to the fact that they recognized that the rebuilding was done by God.
- Some of the nobles were aligned with Tobiah the Ammonite.
- This was because of his familial connection to two of Jerusalem's families.
- They reported good reports of Tobiah to Nehemiah as they spied for him.
- This was happening as Tobiah was sending threatening letters to him.