



"Expect the Expected" - Sermon Notes - Nehemiah 4:1-9

Introduction

1. Nehemiah and Jews from Jerusalem and other cities and towns, working in the context of their homes and families began work of rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.
 - ⊕ Although the work was finished in 52 days it was arduous and not without opposition.
2. Those in Opposition
 - ⊕ Sanballat, the governor of Samaria to the north (2:10, 2:19, 4:1-2, 7)
 - ⊕ Tobiah, the governor of Ammon to the east (2:10, 2:19, 4:3, 7)
 - ⊕ Geshem, presumably the governor of the Arabs to the south (2:19, 4:7)
 - ⊕ Ashdodites from the west (4:7)
3. Sanballat and Tobiah probably had their doubts as to whether there would be the success that Nehemiah claimed by the power of God back in chapter 2:20.
 - ⊕ Here in chapter 4 they obviously see the potential off the success, hence their response here (4:1-3)
4. Why the Opposition?
 - ⊕ If Jerusalem is rebuilt, much valuable trade that was going to these other provinces, would return to it and these other provinces would diminish proportionately.
5. Sanballat (5 rhetorical mocking questions) and Tobiah (sarcastic statement) trash-talk (4:1-3)
6. How did Nehemiah find out about the mocking/trash-talk?
 - ⊕ Either...
 - Some of the Jews from the surrounding towns that were helping with the wall overheard them, and maybe they unintentionally or intentionally said it loud enough as they were walking by.
 - Sanballat and Tobiah had someone go and tell Nehemiah what he "overheard" as an intimidation factor.
7. Nehemiah responds with prayer. (4:4-5)
8. Prayer results in resolve to work (4:6)
9. The governors from all sides (north, south, east, west) plot and surround Jerusalem with their armies to fight and confuse. (4:7-8)
 - ⊕ Most likely they wouldn't have actually fought due to the King of Persia's edict supporting Nehemiah. Although secretly enemies could try and sneak in and kill Jews one by one undetected.
10. The Jews (not just Nehemiah) prayed and set up a guard day and night.

The Object of Opposition

1. The Glory of God
 - ⊕ David or his sons sitting on their earthly throne, underneath the authority of the Divine King leading the people to love, worship and trust this benevolent, perfect and holy Divine King. (2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 2-9)
 - ⊕ Jerusalem was to be was the seat of Yahweh's perfect and holy government over His world where peace would prevail. His Word would be issued from it, and He would dwell with His people. Yahweh would reign there in the The City of God, The City of the Great King, even a light to the nations, a beacon, and people from all Gentile nations would be drawn to it, to Yahweh for salvation

2. Due to Israel's abandoning of God to worship other gods, God left the temple (Shkinah Glory Cloud – Ezekiel 10)
3. Nehemiah's longing was for God's Glory to return and for His people to worship Him (1:9)
 - ⊕ Is the goal of your life to have every part of your heart and soul, mind and strength surrendered to the reign of God for His glory? What areas of your life are not surrendered to Him for His glory?

The Battle of Opposition

1. External Opposition (the world) and Internal Opposition (flesh) to God's glory in and through you.
 - ⊕ During times of weariness (Ch. 3, 4:10; 4:12)
 - ⊕ Nehemiah expected the opposition (2:7, 2:9, 2:18, 2:20). So should we.
2. Sanballat's rhetorical questions
 - ⊕ "What are these feeble Jews doing?"
 - The external opposition of the world says, "Saying that you need God just shows you how weak you are."
 - The internal opposition of our flesh says, 'Your self-sufficient. You don't need God.'
 - ⊕ "Will they restore it for themselves?"
 - The external opposition of the world says, "God is of no benefit to you. He is useless."
 - The internal opposition of the flesh says, "God isn't enough for you. The cross isn't enough. Jesus isn't enough."
 - ⊕ "Will they sacrifice?"
 - The external opposition of the world says, "If there is a God, He doesn't hear you. He doesn't care. The Bible isn't true."
 - The internal opposition of the flesh says, "Do you hear me God? Do you care? How can you care? Why are you so distant? Why do you leave me alone?"
 - ⊕ The next question. "Will they finish up in a day?"
 - The external opposition of the world says, "It's a waste of time to follow Christ. Eat, drink, and be merry. It's all about your pleasure."
 - The internal opposition of the flesh says, "Is God working? I never seem to change and struggle with the same sins over and over. It's not worth the fight."
 - ⊕ "Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?" Literally in the Hebrew it means, "heal the wounds". Through excavations there was no evidence of new stones being quarried, which means they used the rubble from the broken wall.
 - The external opposition of the world says, "You don't need healing...you need to accept yourself and believe in yourself."
 - The internal opposition of the flesh says, "You are too broken. Others are too broken."
3. Nehemiah fights these lies through prayer to the God of Heaven (4:4-5)
 - ⊕ Repentance – ***"We are despised..."***
 - ⊕ Belief in God and His Promises (2:8; 2:12; 2:18) – ***"Turn back their taunt..."***
 - ⊕ Surrender to God's work – ***"So we built the wall"***

The Glory of Christ for His people, in His people, through his people

1. John 1:14, ***"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son^{of} from the Father, full of grace and truth."***
2. John 12:23, ***"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."***
3. 1 Peter 1:21, ***"God (the Father), who raised Him from the dead, gave Him glory."***
4. Mark 13:26, ***"And they (we) will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."***

5. Colossians 1:27, ***“Christ (who is) in you, (is) your hope of glory.”***
6. Romans 8:18, ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”***
7. Mark 13:26, ***“And they (we) will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”***
8. Corinthians 10:31, ***“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”***

Discipleship Class Highlight: The Missions Team invites you to join us in room 203 during discipleship hour for ***God's Word, God's World, God's Work***. Each session features a special guest speaker focusing on missions in the 21st century. We conclude on Missions Encounter Weekend, February 28th with Stephen Spencer from Genesis Ministries.