

July 3rd, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 4 – “Overcome Discouragement & Fear”

- A. If you seek to be godly— to live for the Lord Jesus Christ & His kingdom— you will face opposition.
1. If you deny Christ before men, if you refrain from speaking the truth, if you are all things to all people, you will likely have it somewhat easy in this life yet end up in hell for all eternity.
 2. Yes, **“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Rom 12:18);** however, there will be occasions when you are challenged to either make a stand for your faith or to deny Christ before men.
- B. The Jews living Jerusalem in were in dangerous situation having the walls of their city broken down & their gates burned with fire. This caused Nehemiah a godly sorrow motivating him to action.

Seek God’s help to overcome discouragement & fear.	I. <u>THE RAGE & TACTICS OF GOD’S ENEMIES</u> II. <u>PERSERVERANCE, FAITH, & PRAYER TO OVERCOME</u>
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I. THE RAGE & TACTICS OF GOD’S ENEMIES

- A. Don’t be surprised when Satan & his children rage & fight against you because of Christ.
1. **Psalm 2** says that **“the nations [are] in an uproar... ² The kings of the earth take their stand & the rulers take counsel together against the Lord & against His Anointed [Christ]”** (vv1-2).
 2. We see this plainly in **Neh 4:1**: **“Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews.”**
 3. **v7** speaks again about their anger: → **Look at v7**
 - a. In a like fashion, modern atheists & antichristian apologists rage when they see a victory or some other progress among the people of God.
 - b. Some in America want to rage, pillage, & destroy.
- B. When God’s enemies rage, notice their tactics:
1. They mock & seek to discourage God’s people. → Look at **vv2-3**
 - a. Some people in America will mock you for standing-up for what is right.
 - b. If you are not committed to God & His Word, their words will discourage you from doing what is right & holy.
 2. If words are not enough to cause you to turn from God’s work, Satan’s minions will threaten you & actually seek to harm you. → Look at **v8** & then **vv 11-12**
 - a. The people of God feared that their enemies surrounded them on every side.
 - b. These were not empty threats; these pagans were likely looking for opportunity to attack & kill. **Verse 15** mentions their plan being **“frustrated.”**
 - c. The Jews feared a sudden & unexpected attack at any moment.

II. PERSISTENCE, FAITH, & PRAYER TO OVERCOME

A. What things must you overcome?

1. Primarily in today's text they had to overcome discouragement, fear, doubts, & distraction.
2. Under Nehemiah's leadership, these Jews became overcomers.

B. Perseverance is the 1st key to overcome.

1. Perseverance can also be described as persistence or a stubborn determination.
2. Even when being mocked, they remained steadfast & diligent → Look at **v6**:

C. Faith is the 2nd key to overcome.

1. **Verse 10** recorded how some in Judah were becoming discouraged & needed faith. → **v10**.
 - a. This was said after the wall was already rebuilt to half its height; they were tired.
 - b. **v5** suggests that the mocking of the surrounding pagans had some of the builders demoralized.

2. Nehemiah encouraged the people to have faith in God that He would help them complete the work that they had begun. → Look at **v14**.

- a. Notice that true faith in God does not lead one to be an absolute pacifist. According to the BBC, such a person "believes that it is never right to take part in war, even in self-defence. They think that the value of human life is so high that nothing can justify killing a person deliberately... [they] usually hold this view as a basic moral or spiritual principle"¹ Some may say, "Have faith God will make way to help U avoid violence."
 - b. Under Nehemiah, the people were taught to have faith yet be well-armed & ready to fight to defend their families. They were to have armed guards stationed "**day & night**" (**v9**).

- 1) When there were gaps in the wall, Nehemiah "**stationed the people in families with their swords, spears & bows**" (**v13**).

- 2) Some were instructed to work while being armed & ready to defend.

→ Look at **vv16-20**.

D. Their faith in God led them to seek God's face in prayer.

1. Notice how **v4** is imprecatory. → **v4** "**Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads & give them up for plunder in a land of captivity.**"
2. In **v9**, the Jews prayed to God yet still set up a guard day & night. They were ready to fight while praying for God's help. If a battle broke-out, the trumpet sound & cause the people to rally. If that happened, they had faith in God's abiding presence & help saying, "**Our God will fight for us**" (**v20**).

Review, further application, & conclusion:

Notice what Nehemiah said in **v15**, when their enemies realized God had frustrated their plan, "**then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work.**"

¹ https://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/war/against/pacifism_1.shtml