

Nehemiah 4:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

This verse within Nehemiah 4 addresses themes of opposition, perseverance, prayer and work, spiritual warfare. Opposition intensifies as the work progresses, requiring both spiritual response (prayer) and practical measures (armed defense). The construction work (banah, בָּנָה) symbolizes restoring what sin and judgment destroyed. Jerusalem's wall (chomah, חֹמָה) provided security, dignity, and testimony to God's faithfulness. This passage demonstrates biblical principles applicable across both testaments—God's sovereignty combined with human responsibility, faith expressed through obedient action, and the necessity of both individual and corporate commitment to covenant faithfulness. Nehemiah models leadership that combines vision, prayer, courage, integrity, and perseverance amid sustained opposition.

Historical Context

Nehemiah's account occurs during Persian imperial dominance (539-331 BC), specifically 445-433 BC under Artaxerxes I. The 52-day wall completion represents remarkable achievement given opposition and limited resources. Excavations have confirmed portions of Nehemiah's wall and various gates mentioned in the text. The Persian period was crucial transitional time when Jewish identity shifted from

monarchical nationalism to Torah-centered covenantal community. Without political independence, the people's cohesion depended on shared scripture, temple worship, and covenant obedience. This established patterns persisting through the Second Temple period into New Testament times. Understanding this context illuminates Jesus's ministry among a people shaped by these reforms and challenges.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 4:1 deepen your understanding of God's character and His work in human history?
2. What specific contribution can you make to building up Christ's church in your local community?
3. How does understanding your work as part of God's larger purposes transform your approach to daily responsibilities?

Interlinear Text

אָנָּה חִנּוּ גַּי סְנַבָּל ט שָׁמַע עַכְשָׁוֹר רַיְהָוּ י
H1961 H834 heard But it came to pass that when Sanballat H3588 H587
H8085 H5571

וַיַּכְעַס לֹז וַיַּרְא בְּזָנוּנִים בְּחִוּמָה אֲתָה בְּנָנוּנִים
that we builded H853 the wall he was wroth H0 indignation
H1129 H2346 H2734 H3707

בְּהָזְדִּים: עַל וַיְלַע גַּם וַיְרַב הַ
and took great and mocked H5921 the Jews
H7235 H3932 H3064

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 2:10 (Parallel theme): When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

Hebrews 11:36 (Parallel theme): And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Nehemiah 2:19 (Parallel theme): But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

Acts 5:17 (Parallel theme): Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,
