

Nehemiah 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

Analysis

And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

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). 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 4:2 deepen your understanding of God's character and His work in human history?
2. What specific action or attitude change does this verse call you to make in your walk with God?
3. How can the principles demonstrated in this passage inform your response to current challenges in your life or church?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	לִפְנֵי	אֶתְיוֹ	וְחִיל	שָׁמַר וְ	וַיֹּאמֶר
And he spake	before	his brethren	and the army	of Samaria	And he spake
H559	H6440	H251	H2428	H8111	H559
הָ	הַיְּהוּדִים	הָאֲמֹלִלִים	עַשׂוּ	הַיַּעֲזֹב וְ	לָהֶם
H4100	Jews	these feeble	What do	will they fortify	H1992
	H3064	H537	H6213	H5800	
הֵיזָבְחוּ	הֵיכָל וְ	בֵּי יוֹם	הֵיחִי וְ	אֶת	
themselves will they sacrifice	will they make an end	in a day	will they revive	H853	
H2076	H3615	H3117	H2421		
הָאֲבָנִים	מִמְעַרְמֹת	הָעֵפָר	וְהַמָּה	שְׂרוּפֹת:	
the stones	out of the heaps	of the rubbish	H1992	which are burned	
H68	H6194	H6083		H8313	

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 1:27 (Parallel theme): But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;