

Nehemiah 4:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

Analysis

So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 4:21 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

וְאֵנִי חֲנוּיִ	עָשָׂה יָם	בַּמְלָאכָה	וְחֵצִי מִ	מִחֲזִיקִים	בְּרִמָּה יָם
H587	So we laboured	in the work	and half	of them held	the spears
	H6213	H4399	H2677	H2388	H7420
מִמָּעַל	הַשֶּׁחֶר	עָד	צִי אֶת	הַכּוֹכָבִים:	
from the rising	of the morning	H5704	appeared	till the stars	
H5927	H7837		H3318	H3556	