

# Nehemiah 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

## Analysis

**Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.**

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

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does Nehemiah 4:3 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

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וְטוֹבֵי הָעָם וְאֶצְלָן וְאָמַר וְאָמַר הָמָר

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him and he said

H2900

H5984

H681

H559

H1571

H834

H1992

וְפָבָץ שׂוֹעֵל בָּנֵן יִם

Even that which they build if a fox he shall even break down

H1129

H518

go up

H5927

if a fox

H7776

H6555

חָוֹם תְּאַבְּנִים:

wall

their stone

H2346

H68

## Additional Cross-References

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**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?

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