

Nehemiah 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

Analysis

Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

This verse within Nehemiah 6 addresses themes of deception, completing the work, steadfastness, discernment. Enemies shift tactics from open opposition to subtle deception, requiring spiritual discernment to complete the wall in 52 days. 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. City gates were strategic both defensively and administratively, controlling access and serving as centers of commerce and justice. 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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 6:1 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

נִשְׁמַת עַכְשָׁוִיל רַיִם	לְסַבְּלָל ט	וְצֹבְיהָ וְתוֹבְיהָ
H1961 H834 H8085	heard Now it came to pass when Sanballat	H5571
		H2900
וְגֵשֵׁם הַעֲרָבִים וְלִגְשָׁם	וְלִלְתָּר אֶיבָנָנוּ	בֶּן יְתִי
and Geshem the Arabian and the rest of our enemies	H3499 H341	H3588 H1129
H1654 H6163		that I had builded
		H1129
אֶת הַחִוָּם הַלְאֵת בְּהַנְּוֹתָר	בְּזֶה וְזֶה	פְּרַץ
H853 the wall H3808 H2346	left H0 H3498	and that there was no breach
		H6556
בְּשַׁעֲרֵים:		
upon the gates		
H8179		

Additional Cross-References

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?

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.

Nehemiah 4:1 (Parallel theme): 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.

Nehemiah 3:3 (Parallel theme): But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

Nehemiah 3:1 (Parallel theme): Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

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