

Nehemiah 6:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Analysis

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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. 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 6:16 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

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 5:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

Psalms 126:2 (Parallel theme): Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

Nehemiah 4:7 (Parallel theme): But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

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.

Acts 5:38 (Parallel theme): And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

Numbers 23:23 (References God): Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

Exodus 14:25 (Parallel theme): And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians.