

Nehemiah 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

Analysis

And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

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

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Nehemiah 6:3 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

הַמְלָאכָה	לָאמַר	מִלְאָכִים	עָלֶיהָ	וְאֶשְׁלֶחַ	הָ
why should the work	unto them saying	messengers	H5921	And I sent	H7971
H4399	H559	H4397			
לָמָּה	וְיָבֹדֶתִי	אֹכֵל	וְלֹא	עֹשֶׂה	אֲנִי
come down	so that I cannot	H3808	I am doing	a great	H589
H4100	H3201		H6213	H1419	
אֵלֵיכֶם:	וְיָבֹדֶתִי	אֶרְפֶּה	כְּאֶשֶׁר	הַמְלָאכָה	תִּשְׁבּוּ
come down	I leave	whilst	why should the work	cease	H413
H3381	H7503	H834	H4399	H7673	

Additional Cross-References

John 9:4 (Parallel theme): I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Matthew 10:16 (Parallel theme): Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Proverbs 14:15 (Parallel theme): The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Luke 14:30 (Parallel theme): Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (Parallel theme): Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.