

Character Study: Nehemiah

Part 3 – Handling Opposition

Nehemiah 4:1-6:14

What's happening?

- It did not take long before Nehemiah began to face opposition in his plan to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem had mocked the Israelites in the early planning stages (2:19-20), and now as the work was underway, they decided to attack the city in hopes of causing confusion among the workers. (4:1-8)
- The Israelites prayed for God's protection. With swords, spears and bows in hand, the people were prepared to defend their city. Those causing trouble retreated once their plot was found out, but the Israelites remained cautious, even doing work while holding weapons. (4:9-23)
- Before long, the Israelites themselves began to complain. They began getting aggravated with each other, and complaining of food shortages and money problems. Nehemiah recognized that their problems were brought on by their own greed. Nehemiah criticized the people for how they were mistreating and taking advantage of each other. (5:1-13)
- As the work was getting closer to being finished, Nehemiah faced more opposition. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem stirred up trouble once again, this time by trying to ruin Nehemiah's reputation and by starting rumors about him. Nehemiah stood strong and ignored their attacks. (6:1-14)

What's God doing?

> Despite all the ways people were interfering with the rebuilding project, God was at work accomplishing His will. He was protecting His people, while giving Nehemiah wisdom to handle the opposition.

What's to learn?

→ Doing big things for God does not come without opposition.

→ Nehemiah faced all sorts of opposition. He faced opposition from people outside the camp and internal opposition from his own people. He also had to endure many personal attacks. But Nehemiah knew what God wanted him to do, so he did not allow the trouble to discourage him.

→ Nehemiah used prayer and wisdom to handle the opposition. His patience and boldness revealed that His confidence was in God.