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4 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. <sup>2</sup>And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—*stones* that are burned?" <sup>3</sup>Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up *on it*, he will break down their stone wall." <sup>4</sup>Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! <sup>5</sup>Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked *You* to anger before the builders. <sup>6</sup>So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

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1. Sanballat's wrath

- a. When Nehemiah 1<sup>st</sup> arrived, Sanballat & Tobiah attempted to join them in building the wall
  - a1. The pagans worshipped Yahweh as one their gods (the god of the land of Israel)
  - a2. Neh. rejected their help for they were neither Jews nor true believers
- b. The enemy next tried to intimidate the Jews by accusing them of rebelling against the king
  - a1. This tactic worked against Ezra
  - a2. Neh. had the king's confidence
- c. San. is now angry, indignant, & disdainful
  - a1. He sees that the wall is beginning to be repaired & the Jews are united to do it
  - a2. He saw the Jews as a threat to his power

2. Verbal barrage

- a. San. & Tobiah resort to ridicule
  - a1. Mockery doesn't need to be backed up with facts to be effective
  - a2. Typically, in political rhetoric candidates invent lies to try to taint their opponents
  - a3. Tries to discourage the builders

- b. Many ways the foes of the gospel try to discourage believers from serving the Lord
  - c. San. asks a series of disparaging questions
    - a1. He shows up with his military contingent
    - a2. What are these feeble Jews doing? – too weak to take on such a grand project
    - a3. Will they fortify themselves? – too weak to make a defense against anyone
    - a4. Will they offer sacrifices? – can Jerusalem really return to the state of their kings?
    - a5. Will they complete the wall in a day? – this is far too long of a project for them (they have no idea what they are in for)
    - a6. Will they revive the burnt stones from the rubbish? (the stones are ruined & useless)
  - d. Tobiah adds that even what they build would fall under the weight of a fox
  - e. The mockery did not stand up to reality
    - a1. Only the gates were burned in Neb.'s attack & the stones were pulled down
    - a2. Much of the material was still useful
    - a3. There was enough willing workers to complete the project
3. Trial of trowels
- a. Neh. prays an imprecatory prayer
    - a1. Bring reproach on the enemy's head
    - a2. May they be taken captive
    - a3. Do not blot out their sins
  - b. David also prayed against enemies (Ps. 66, 109...)
    - a1. Mt. 5 goes against NT teaching
    - a2. Enemies of God needed to be destroyed
  - c. The builders continued their work
    - a1. Opposition is not a signal to quit serving
    - a2. We are to expect opposition from unsaved
    - a3. The wall was quickly joined all around to half its projected height
    - a4. The people didn't allow enemy to stop them
  - d. The enemy was not going to give up – they would develop new tactics (opposition is part of serving)