

## STONES & SWORDS. NEH. 4:7-23. 11/10/24. #06.

.....  
7Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, <sup>8</sup>and all of them conspired together to come *and* attack Jerusalem and create confusion. <sup>9</sup>Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night. <sup>10</sup>Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and *there is* so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall." <sup>11</sup>And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease." <sup>12</sup>So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, *they will be* upon us." <sup>13</sup>Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. <sup>14</sup>And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."  
.....

### 1. Armed threat

- a. The enemy had tried both legal threats & mockery
  - a1. Neither technique worked
  - a2. The wall continued to be built
- b. The enemy now takes up arms to threaten the Jews as they were building
- c. A new enemy appears, the Ashdodites from the west, completing the encirclement
  - a1. Ashdod was one of the 5 Philistine cities
  - a2. Ashdod had been overrun in turn by the Assyrians, Babylonians, & Persians
- d. To counter the threat Nehemiah set a watch & armed the workers
- e. A plan had to be devised to both protect the workers & keep the project going
  - a1. Every worker had a weapon
  - a2. Half the people would work on the wall while half would stand guard in shifts
  - a3. The nobles would direct the project & the defense
  - a4. Each had a trumpet to blow for help

### 2. Weary in well doing

- a. Half way through the project the Jews were becoming weary
  - a1. The higher the building, the harder the lifting & placement of the blocks
  - a2. The full blocks were mostly used up, so the workers had to clear much rubble to find usable building material
- b. Nehemiah had to both encourage his workers to continue to build, though weary, & to stay alert to fend off attacks

### 3. A call to heaven & a pressing forward on earth (vs. 15-23)

- a. Neh. called upon the Lord to battle for them & expressed confidence that victory was of the Lord
- b. Neh. continued preparations
  - a1. He set guards at every gap in the wall
  - a2. He set up a communication network to rally help where needed
- c. Notice the partnership between heaven & earth
  - a1. Neh. had confidence in God, but knew that he had to do his part as well
  - a2. He availed himself of the resources he had
  - a3. Joseph, David, Gideon, Elijah... all trusted in God, but used what God gave them to accomplish his will
- d. "Waiting on God" means serving the Lord ("waiter") as he directs our way
- e. Even after the threat subsided, Neh. kept his vigilance, guarding against attack
  - a1. Hard verse (23) *the men their weapon water*
  - a2. The meaning seems to be *as they went to the water to wash, they carried their weapon*
  - a3. While the project continued, everyone stayed in Jerusalem for protection
- f. 3 results transpired:
  - a1. The plans of the enemy were thwarted
  - a2. The Jews had to be continually on their guard, for the enemy continues to come
  - a3. The enemy always has a new strategy