### Nehemiah

## Chapter 4

1Well, when SanBalLat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he thought this was a bad thing and he was extremely angry. He also laughed out loud about the Judeans 2when he spoke before his people and the army of the Samaritans.  
  
For he said:  
  
 ‘What do these men of Judah – these Jews – think they’re doing? Do they think we’ll just leave them alone?  
  
 ‘Do they think that they’ll be able to offer sacrifices there, and do they think that they’ll be able to finish the job?  
  
 ‘For today they’re making their repairs with stones that they find in heaps of rubbish that should have been burned!’  
  
3Then TobiJah the AmMonite (who was standing next to him) said:  
  
 ‘Even if they do build, won’t a fox go there and demolish their wall of rocks?’  
  
4[So I prayed:]  
  
 ‘Listen, O our God, to the people who are sneering at us, and bring their scorn down upon their own heads! Make them do their sneering as captives in [faraway] lands.  
  
 5‘Don’t cover over their lawlessness, and may their sins never be wiped away from before Your face, because they’re taunting You in front of those who are doing the rebuilding!’  
  
6[not present in LXX source]  
  
7So, when SanBalLat, TobiJah, the Arabians, the AmMonites, and the AshDodites heard that the gaps in the walls of JeruSalem were being repaired, this appeared wrong to them, 8and they all gathered to distract us and to undo our work on JeruSalem.  
  
9So, we prayed to our God and we posted guards [outside the walls] both day and night.  
  
10But then the Judeans said:  
  
 ‘Our enemies have broken our resolve, and now there’s so much dust that we just can’t finish building the wall!’  
  
11And thereafter, those who were oppressing us said:  
  
 ‘They won’t know and they won’t see us when we come among them to murder them and make them stop the work!’  
  
12But the Judeans who lived in their midst came to us and told us what they were saying, and they warned us that our enemies were all around us!  
  
13So I posted men in fortified trenches behind the walls whom I armed with broadswords, wooden spears, and bows. 14And after looking the situation over, I got up and spoke to the leaders, generals, and the rest of the people, and said:  
  
 ‘When you face them, don’t be afraid… You must remember that our God is great and someone to be feared!  
  
 ‘So, prepare yourselves to fight in order to protect your relatives, sons, daughters, wives, and your homes!’  
  
  
15Well, when our enemies found out that we’d learned about their plans and that God had blocked their schemes, we were all able to start rebuilding the walls once again... Therefore, everyone went back to doing their jobs!  
  
16But from that day on, half of us did the work while the other half stood armed and ready for battle with their lances, shields, bows, and armor.  
So, the rulers and the whole house of Judah 17protected those who were building the wall... And those who carried things on their shoulders did their work with one hand, while they held arrows in the other. 18Also, all the workers – every man – had his broadsword tied to his waist as he built.  
  
Meanwhile, I kept the trumpeters next to me, 19and I told the rulers, generals, and the rest of the people (since the work covers a vast area and we were spread all along the walls with each man working some distance from his brother) that 20whenever they heard the trumpets being blown, everyone was to gather here with me, and we would allow our God to fight the war for us.  
  
21Well, that’s how we did it… With half of us [ready for battle] as we worked from sunrise until we could see the stars.  
  
22Then I told the people:  
  
 ‘All those with children should sleep in the middle of JeruSalem, and we’ll keep guards posted all night long.  
  
 ‘However, during the day, everyone must work!’  
  
So I stood there with my brothers and the younger men flanked by guards, and nobody took off their clothes or removed their swords, even when they went to draw water.