

Community Builders 4

Nehemiah 4

Battling Against Opposition



Sunday 1 May 2005

Battling Against Opposition - Nehemiah 4

Identifying the Issue

Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem is:

- More than an issue of change
- It's a matter of Israel's survival and others don't like it.

The opposition - an Unholy Alliance

- It grew, 2.10 opposition disturbed,
2.19 mildly amused
4.1 7 sustained anger
4.1 3 insults
4.2 army approaching
4.8 intent on war.

Characters

Sanballat

Samaritan Governor, possibly with influence of the district surrounding Jerusalem. His problem – losing influence in Jerusalem, he was not welcome, his agenda was not God's. plurality rather than exclusivity was probably his way.

Tobiah

In alliance with Sanballat, probably also a governor, possibly of the Ammonite territory. His name means "Yahweh is good, he had proved untrue to his name and despite being an Israelite his help was not wanted.

Geshum

A very powerful Arab with an extended rule over much of Northern Arabia. It is believed that his fear was that the new Jerusalem would affect his trading in myrrh and frankincense.

Some Key Issues Today

- Plurality of religions, freedom of religion and the exclusive claims of Christ
- Sacred vs the Secular – The rights of the unborn baby, euthanasia, marriage, living for self as opposed to living for others, being a consumer.
- Trade agreements – cheapest prices vs fair trading, tied aid agreements, the power of the multinationals. The need of nations “in our interest”

Battling Through

Nehemiah's response

- Trust - keeping with the vision
 - recognising who God is – harder in a conflict situation. v14
 - Roms 8.31b “If God is for us, who can be against us”?
- Prayer - v4ff, personal prayer
 - V9 united & continued prayer
- Perseverance - Hard work v6 walls at half way point.
- Diligence – v11, 10 warnings of attacks – hyper vigilance was in process, posting guards v9, v13, v16
- Encouragement v14

Small Groups Study – Nehemiah 4

1. Why is there such opposition to rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, identify the protagonists and their reasons. What is the prime opposition to building God's community within our world?
2. Reflect on the issues of
 - The unborn child
 - Those who would like voluntary euthanasia
 - Governing practices for our own nation , eg trading agreements, world debt.Is there a Christian response or variety of responses that are valid?
3. What are the ways in which Nehemiah and the community of Jerusalem overcame opposition?
What principles can we use to help us overcome opposition to God's kingdom building?

Spend time praying to the themes that have emerged from your sharing and discussion.

Be encouraging to one another and pray for one another