THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

"Much Rubbish"
Nehemiah 4:10 12

Introduction

1. The work of the Lord requires dedication. The call of Nehemiah and his motivation of the nation for rebuilding is an outstanding example of this (cf. 1:1-4:9). Read and reread the story. It will put strong fibre into your soul for the Lord.

2. But where there is dedication to serve the Lord, there is also severe opposition from the enemy. It is recorded time and again in the text (cf. 2:10, 19; 4:1, 3, 7). This is to be expected (Acts 14:22).

3. Nehemiah's answer to the devices of the enemy was prayer (4:9). He was not complacent, however, as is evidenced by his watchfulness (4:9). But the opposition did not cease. Check out for yourself the continual agonizing experience:-

1. OF DISCOURAGEMENT v. 10

a. Who? Discouragement is spoken by Judah. This is rather surprising. One would have thought that this special tribe would not register problems about rebuilding the temple city! It is sad when you hear depression coming from men and women upon whom you really depend! Even the best of His servants get in the dumps (cf. Elijah).

b. What? Careful study of the verse shows that there are two problems: 1) the people and 2) the project. The men who bore the burdens (cf. 3:1-32) became feeble and began to falter. The verb "bearers of burdens" is the same used of our Lord (Isa. 53:4, 11). The "loins" is the basic meaning of the term "decayed." Here weakness developed! What it really means is they lost heart. Furthermore, the project ran into trouble. The word "rubbish" means "dust". So much accumulation was there that it was difficult to rebuild. They had to remove before rebuilding. This got to the people. Circumstances overweighed the situation and discouragement really piled up like the dirt.

c. Why? Here is the nub of the matter. Using the emphatic personal pronoun, it is noted that the

wall could not be rebuilt (cf. 4:6). Strengthless people and rubbish-filled building area filled the vision of Judah. They became the sour apples for Israel's urgent reguilding project!
NOTE: It is rubbish filled lives which hinder the spiritual building of believer's lives. It is the attendant loss of strength which grinds much spiritual growth to a screeching halt. God help us to combat discouragement with a Spirit controlled life and witness.

2. OF PRONOUNCEMENT v. 11
a. Who? Here are the adversaries speaking again. The former opposition came from within--Judah. This comes from without. These "adversaries" are the same as mentioned earlier (2:10, 19; 4:1,3,7). The enemy never gives up. The end will come eschatologically for him (cf. Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12, 19).
b. What? Two items are mentioned: 1) a sneak attack and 2) a brutal slaughter. Israel would neither know the attack nor be able to see it. Furthermore, they would be killed before they knew it! Remember: the enemy of the work of God has this ultimate goal in his mind. Never underestimate the enemy nor his intentions.
c. Why? The work of God must cease! Interestingly, the word used here for "work" is used of Levitical service (1 Chron. 9:13; 28:13,20) and of a king's business (Dan. 8:27).

3. OF WORRIMENT v. 12
a. Who? Jews who lived near those who worked on the walls joined in internal opposition like those of Judah. They caused fear to rise amongst Israel. Friends turned to foes.
b. What? They predicted all kinds of doom. They said it ten times over! The enemy would come in from all sides and surround the workers. Defeat was certain. They were prophets of doom indeed.

Conclusion The dedication of Nehemiah and the people was met head on with both internal and external opposition. No work attempted for God will lack such opposition. It is for those involved in the Lord's work to be ready for the attacks and respond to them in the power of the Spirit. The rest of this chapter tells how Nehemiah did just that. The only answer is "Remember the Lord" (v. 14). Amen.