# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
## "What Do These Feeble Jews?"
### Nehemiah 4:1-9

Introduction

1. The magnificent work of the Spirit of God among the people has been demonstrated (chapter 3). All kinds of people and all sorts of efforts were employed to accomplish a monumental task (cf. 6:15).

2. The present chapter gives some insights into what took place before the completion of the work was reached! Earlier this opposition is noted and here it is elaborated (cf. 2:10, 19). The enemy not only seeks to stop work but hinders its successful completion! The enemy never gives up! Study:-

1. THE OPPOSITION OF THE ENEMY

a. It was scornful. This is evidenced by the word "mocked" which is so clearly marked by the questions raised (vv. 1, 2). The verb means to speak in a stammering tongue and hence to use vile language towards one. With contempt, the enemy raised 5 questions: they leveled their thoughts against the Jew's 1) strength, 2)permission (Hebrew for "fortify"), 3) sacrifice, 4) intentions 5) and resourcefulness. Questions of this nature are not only designed mockery, but contempt. They also arouse doubts in the minds of those who are not of faith.

b. It was powerful. Line them up and you have an awesome number of figures: Sanballat, Tobiah, Arabians, Ammonites, Ashododites, and the Samaritans (vv. 2, 7). One Arabian has been named (Geshem, 2:19). This is a formidable crowd! Too often the enemy is looked at rather than the Lord (cf. Num. 13:33). We need men who keep their eyes on the Lord (cf. Matt. 14:29, 30). If God be for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?

c. It was wrathful. Two verbs are used to describe this spirit expressed: "angry," which means burning or inflamed. The other is "great indignation" and this means to be vexed (vv. 1, 7). This puts it bluntly: the enemy was mad because something was being done for the Lord and His people! Beloved, the world has not changed (John 16:33).

The threats against fundamental witnesses today are on sharp increase!

II. THE DEDICATION OF THE NATION.

a. Through supplication. What a glorious response to all the threats and varied emotional outrages against Nehemiah and the people--PRAYER (vv. 4, 5)! The best thing in the world for opposition is not retaliation, but a commitment of the need to the LORD (2 Kings 19:14; Psa. 37:5). Four big requests are made in the prayer, after admission that Israel was despised by the enemy. These are taken in a good sense because Nehemiah was certain that the enemy opposed God and not just people (cf. "thee" in v. 5 and see Psa. 28:3-5). If ever there was a demonstration of a man and his people who turned their problems over to the Lord and let Him fight for them, here is the man!

b. Through concentration. Whereas prayer (vv. 4, 5) shows that Nehemiah and the people believed their cause belonged to the Lord, they knew also they had a personal responsibility to perform (v. 6). They had a "mind" to work. This is a glorious expression. They built the wall and they joined it half way up. This work was done because the people had a mind to do it! It is right to say that all the prayer in the world is useless unless the "mind" is with it. Much of God's work suffers today because men "pray" but their "heart" is not with it! All the descriptions of the people (one exception, 3:5) is of those who wanted to do something unto the Lord (2:17-20; 3:1-32). It is the committed believer who will prosper!

c. Through occupation. Prayer moves toward God. The mind is that which is personal. Here the emphasis is upon the enemy. It is watchfulness (v. 9). The "against them" is not to be taken lightly (cf. Eph. 6:11). It is rather foolish to pray without a "mind." Similarly, it is ridiculous to have the mind without the "watch." Spiritual alertness is not a luxury, it is a necessity. To ignore the enemy is to compromise (cf. 2:20).

Conclusion God's work done in God's way will never lack God's provision. Opposition is bound to come, but so what? Victory is in sight with the Lord! Hallelujah!