

Let Us Rise Up and Build

by Bryan Gibson

How do you rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days, with opposition of just about every kind? The Book of Nehemiah tells us how—it tells us how they were successful and how we can be successful today in our own “building” efforts.

They had a mind to work.

When Nehemiah first revealed his plans to the people, their response was, “let us rise up and build” (Nehemiah 2:18). And what’s more, they maintained this attitude: “So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a **mind to work**” (Nehemiah 4:6).

The Lord still wants people with a mind to work—to visit the sick, teach a class, invite people to services, show hospitality, encourage weak brethren, labor fervently in prayer, etc.

They worked and they watched...for the enemy.

They knew their enemies had plans to stop their work, so they took this action: “Nevertheless we made our prayer to God, and because of them we set a **watch** against them day and night” (Nehemiah 4:9). The Jews continued to build, but they kept their weapons at their side, ready to fight whenever the enemy invaded (see Nehemiah 4:10-23).

Our enemy, the devil (1 Peter 5:8), is strong and relentless, and so we must watchful at all times. And because we don’t always know when he may attack, we too must keep our weapons at our side (Ephesians 6:10-18), ready to fight (Philippians 1:27-28; Jude 3).

They kept on working, despite considerable opposition.

Nehemiah and his fellow-Jews faced enough opposition to make most people quit. There were efforts to discourage the Jews as a whole (e.g. 2:19-20; 4:1-3), and then there were efforts directed specifically against Nehemiah—efforts to harm him (6:1-4), to slander him (6:5-9), and to entice him to sin (6:10-14). But they kept on working and they completed the job! “So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that **they were very disheartened** in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God” (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

That’s the way it’s supposed to work. We keep working and it’s our enemies who become disheartened. Want to frustrate the devil to no end? “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord...” (1 Cor. 15:58).

They prayed without ceasing.

You can see evidence of this in Nehemiah 1:4; 2:4; 4:4-5, 9. Nehemiah knew that he and his fellow-Jews would have to do their part, but he also understood that they were doomed to failure without God’s help.

It is no different for us today. There is much work that needs to be done, but we will need God to go with us. The apostle Paul was a pretty good builder himself, and here's what he had to say about his labors: "...but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).