

Sad news had come from Jerusalem concerning the condition of the people and the city walls! Hanani (*huh-NAY-ni*) and "certain men of Judah" brought word that the people in Jerusalem were "in great affliction and reproach." They said that "the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." When Hanani told his brother Nehemiah the news, Nehemiah "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted." For four months Nehemiah prayed about this.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer to King Artaxerxes (*ahr-tuh-ZUHRK-seez*). (A cupbearer tasted the food and wine before the king did to make sure nothing was poisoned.) When it was Nehemiah's time to take the wine to the king, he could not hide his grief. Artaxerxes had never seen Nehemiah like this.

So, he asked Nehemiah what was wrong. The king realized that this was "sorrow of heart."

Nehemiah was "very sore afraid," for he could have been put to death if he displeased the king. When Nehemiah told the king the reason for his great sadness, the king asked what his request was. Nehemiah prayed to God before answering the king.

Then Nehemiah asked Artaxerxes to send him to Judah to rebuild the city of his fathers. The king asked Nehemiah how long he thought he would be gone, and Nehemiah "set him a time." He asked the king for letters to the governors that would allow him to travel safely to Judah.

Nehemiah also asked for a letter to Asaph (*AY-saf*), who was the keeper of the royal forest. This letter allowed Nehemiah to have trees for the rebuilding of the gates of the temple and the walls of the city. God moved on the king's heart to do as Nehemiah asked. The king sent a company of soldiers to protect Nehemiah.



Church of God Sunday School

THE WALLS ARE REBUILT

Nehemiah 1:1 – 4:23; 6:1-19

But not everyone was glad about Nehemiah's plan to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. When Sanballat and Tobiah heard about it, they were "exceedingly" upset! They would do their best to stop Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah had been in Jerusalem for three days, he alone "arose in the night" to see the condition of the city walls. (He had told no one what God had put in his heart to do.) Nehemiah found that the gates had been burned and the walls were broken down.

After that, Nehemiah went to the rulers, the nobles, and the priests and said, "Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach [disgrace]." They answered Nehemiah, "Let us rise up and build."

"So they strengthened their hands for this good work." Although Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem laughed and despised and made fun, Ne-

miah did not let it stop him. He said, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us."

The priests rebuilt the Sheep Gate. Soon other gates—the Fish Gate, the Old Gate, the Valley Gate, the Fountain Gate, the Dung Gate, the Water Gate, the Horse Gate—were being rebuilt as well. Some people repaired the wall that was next to their homes. Others repaired longer sections of the wall.



Sanballat and Tobiah did their best to hinder this great work. The people trusted God to help them. ". . . and all the wall was joined together . . . for the people had a mind to work." When Sanballat and Tobiah saw the great progress on the work, they were very angry! They conspired to go and fight against the people who were rebuilding the walls.

Nehemiah and the people prayed to God for help. They also set up a watch day and night. The people became discouraged because of the great amount of work yet to be done and because of the threat of a surprise attack from their enemies.

Nehemiah encouraged the people, saying, "Remember the LORD, which is great and terrible." Nehemiah made sure that the people had swords, spears, and bows to defend themselves against the enemy. Some workers held a weapon in one hand while they rebuilt the wall.

When Sanballat and others saw they could not stop the rebuilding by violence, they tried another tactic. Letters were sent to Nehemiah that said, "Come, let us meet together . . . in the plain of Ono." But Nehemiah knew they planned to do something evil.

Nehemiah sent a message to his enemies that said,

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." Four times Sanballat and others sent messages like this to Nehemiah, and four times he answered "after the same manner." The fifth time, Nehemiah received a letter full of false accusations. Nehemiah answered, "There are no such things done as thou sayest." They were lies told to discourage the people from working.

A lying prophet was hired by Sanballat and Tobiah. Nehemiah was not fooled by this prophet, for he knew that God had not sent him. Nehemiah asked God to remember "Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works."

"So the wall was finished," and it only took fifty-two days! When Nehemiah's enemies and all the heathen people saw this, they were very discouraged. They realized that "this work was [accomplished] of our God."

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together . . . for the people had a mind to work."*

—Nehemiah 4:6  
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Circle the Names of the Gates That Were Rebuilt

Gate

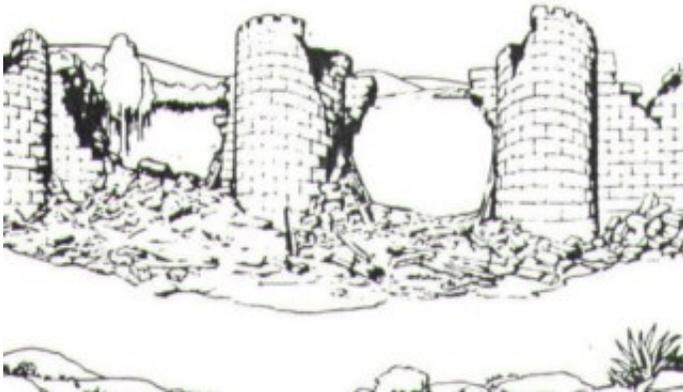
Pig

Valley

Horse
Mountain
Old New

Cow Dung Water Fountain Sheep Fish

Fill in the missing words from the Memory Verse



"So _____ we
the _____; and
all the _____

was _____ ...

for the _____ had a

_____ to _____."

Word Bank

wall built mind work
joined wall people
together

