

# They Had a Mind to Work

Nehemiah 4:6

## Introduction

1. In the book of Nehemiah Israel had spent the last seventy years in captivity and have now returned to Jerusalem and were in the process of rebuilding the wall around the city.
2. This task was given them by God, led by Nehemiah and accomplished by those who returned from captivity.
3. Let us note the devotion of this people who succeeded even in the midst of trials because “*they had a mind to work*” (Neh. 4:6).

## Discussion

### I. While Being Mocked (Neh. 4:1)

- A. Their enemies were saying they were too weak to build the wall (Neh. 4:2; 6:9).
  1. Today men scoff at the idea of not being a part of a denomination or having a governing head located on earth.
  2. Even members of a congregation might scoff at other members who diligently strive to uphold God’s truth.
  3. Brethren, let us remember throughout this lesson the words of Paul, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*” (Phil. 4:13).
- B. Their enemies cursed them (Neh. 4:3).
  1. Jesus promised that if we are practicing truth then men will curse us (John 15:20; Matt. 5:44).
  2. People in the world will curse us and try to discourage us because we are “too strict,” “arrogant,” and “close-minded.”
  3. The denominations will curse us because we do not join in their human innovations and are not tolerant of their false doctrine.
  4. But brethren, we must stand fast in the truth like Nehemiah.
- C. Like Satan their enemies were spreading doubt and confusion.
  1. Satan works in this same way through men inside and outside of the church (Tit. 1:10-11).
  2. God’s truth is clearly revealed in the scriptures, but there are men who ridicule those who are teaching the whole truth.
    - a. Some are teaching that we only need half of God’s word (The New Testament only).
    - b. Some are teaching that we cannot all understand the Bible alike, and will therefore never truly understand.
  3. In spite of this Israel succeeded because they had a mind to work and trusted in God. Let us also have a mind to work!

### II. In Tribulation

- A. There were threats of war all around them (Neh. 4:11-12).
- B. Secret attacks were being planned (Neh. 4:8).

1. Even Paul warned that there would be raging wolves who would come in amongst the flock (Acts 20:29).
  2. But brethren, rather than being afraid and discourage, we must gird ourselves with truth and be ready.
- C. Therefore people girded themselves with armor (4:12-18).
1. What an excellent picture for God's people today!
  2. We are commanded to put on the armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17).
  3. Like Israel, we are at war! Therefore, we must not only work to build the Lord's house, which is the church, we must also be ready to battle the evil forces that seek to turn us from our faith and deter the work of the Lord.
  4. To this we are called (2 Cor. 10:4-6).
- D. Therefore the people succeeded because they had a mind to work. So must we have the mind to work, even in tribulation.

### III. With Disappointments.

- A. The nobles would not put their shoulders to work (Neh. 3:5).
1. At times it can be frustrating when some people in a congregation refuse to do the work.
  2. It can be hard on the individuals who are working and it can hinder the progress that the whole congregation is able to make.
  3. Paul reminds us that the church can grow up in all things into Christ, but only when every joint does its share.
  4. Are you doing your share?
- B. Their own brethren were charging them usury for their debts (Neh. 5:1-11; c.f. Lev. 25:35-37).
1. Some of the Nobles were binding on their brethren the same bondage with which they were bound in the world (5:6-8).
  2. We must also watch for this type of character in the church.
  3. Sometimes it is easy to bind the standards of the world upon our own brethren so that they are no longer free from the devises which Christ gave His life to free us from.
  4. Consider Col. 2:16-3:4.
- C. Some of the Jews valued family connections as more important than God's righteousness (Neh. 6:17-18; 13:4-9; c.f. 4:3, 7-8).
1. At times the commandment in scripture will step on our toes or the toes of our relatives. Some are withdrawn from because of this.
  2. In spite of this there may be some who give extra attention to those who walk disorderly, and as with Tobiah, some might go as far as to make special considerations for such a person.
  3. As with Israel, it is a great hindrance to the work of the Lord when we allow our family connections to take preeminence over God's truth.
  4. We must understand that our spiritual connection is far greater than any blood connection (1 John 3:1; Matt. 12:48-50).
  5. Therefore like Israel we can succeed in spite of disappointments, but only if we are willing to cast off our sins and put on a mind to do the work!

### IV. In Deception

- A. Men were sent to cause Nehemiah to stumble (Neh. 6:10-14).
1. The world is filled with people such as this.

2. Heart wrenching, emotion filled and often impossible stories are used to justify sinning in extreme situations.
3. Yet, we must notice then even when Nehemiah's life might have been in danger he still refused to run and hide, and he certainly was not about to sin just because he was in danger.
- 4.
- B. Men were sent to deceive Nehemiah to enter into a trap (Neh. 6:1-8).
- C. Men were saying good things about the enemy (Neh. 6:19).

#### V. **But God's Faithful People Prevailed**

- A. The people, along with Nehemiah realized that what they were doing was a God given task.
  1. Nehemiah refers to it as a "great work" (Neh. 6:3).
  2. He thought it such a great work that he was unwilling to be distracted from fulfilling the work.
  3. How do you view the work of the Lord's church today?
    - a. She is the Pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
    - b. How strongly are you standing up for the truth?
    - c. What about loving your neighbors? This too is the work of the Lord (Mark. 12:31; John 13:35; 1 John 3:16-17).
- B. The people were willing to change whatever they needed in order to be right with God.
  1. They also understood that their success and their spiritual condition were directly related.
  2. They were even willing to put away their foreign wives and children when they realized that constituted unscriptural marriages (Ezra 10:9-12, 18-20).
  3. Even when Nehemiah may have seemed "too harsh" (Neh. 13:25-27, 30-31).
  4. Because of their diligent attitude Nehemiah was able to write, "So the wall was finished" (Neh. 6:15). "Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan" (Neh. 13:30).

#### **Conclusion**

1. Do you have the mind to work? Are you repenting of your sins as Israel did?
2. Are you living as the workers or the Nobles who would not put their shoulders to the work?
3. If you need to repent, will you come?

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