

Nehemiah 4

BUILDING WITH SWORD AND TROWEL

- I. Devilish opposition.
 - A. Trouble came first from without, in the form of mockery, threats and plots.
 - 1. Sanballat (sin gives life) a governor in Samaria; Tobiah (an Ammonite from the east) a false prophet become enraged.
 - 2. Also they conspire (8) with others (Arabians from the south and Ashdodites from the west) to create terrorists acts (11).
 - B. Behind such rage is Satan, who inspired men to hate God, His work and Word, and His people.
 - C. Another threat to the work is discouragement in the ranks (10), which results from the mockery and threats.
 - 1. Those who lived in outlying villages were repeatedly threatened: their families would be attacked in their absence (12).
 - 2. Pessimism and fear sapped their strength and led to some despair.
- II. There were responses to the mockery and threats.
 - A. Nehemiah responded by praying (so immediate that he breaks right out,4,5), and had the people pray (9).
 - 1. Prayer (awareness of God's relationship to us) fortifies us to plan a defense with two elements.
 - 2. Nehemiah prayed that God would judge the wicked for their sins against Himself and His people.
 - B. Second, Nehemiah's prayer led to the action of setting a watch (9,13).
 - C. Third, Nehemiah equipped everyone with a sword strapped to their side (18), but kept them working (a trowel).
- III. The wonderful result.
 - A. The enemies were deflated: their plans have been detected and saw the Jews renewed commitment to work.
 - B. The Jews were united in their determination to resist their threat.
 - 1. We are given to see our victory by prayer and continued commitment to the building up of the church.
 - 2. The more we apply the full armor of God, the greater our protection and the less likely of our being attacked.