

EPISODE NO. 209

Neh. 4:1-18

The Wall Was Guarded

1 Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. He was very angry. In fact, he was furious! He made fun of the Jews. 2 He said to his friends and the army of Samaria: “What are these wimpy Jews doing!? They actually believe that they can rebuild the wall {of Jerusalem}! They think they will offer sacrifices again! Perhaps they think they can finish it in only one day!? They cannot bring stones back to life. Those are only piles of trash and ashes!”

3 Tobiah the Ammonite was next to Sanballat. Tobiah said, “Yes, if a fox were to climb up on what they are building, it would knock down their stone wall!”

4 I (Nehemiah) prayed: “Listen to us, O our God! We are despised. Turn the curses of Sanballat and Tobiah back on their own heads! Let them be captured and taken away like valuables that are stolen. 5 Do not cover up their guilt. Don’t blot out their sins from Your sight. Why? Because they have made You angry in front of the builders!”

6 So, we rebuilt the wall all the way around, half-way up. The people were willing to work hard.

7 But Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men from Ashdod were very angry. They heard that the repairs to the walls of Jerusalem were going forward. They also heard that the gaps in the wall were being closed up. 8 So, all of them made plans to go and fight against Jerusalem. They wanted to stir up trouble. 9 Nevertheless, we prayed to our God. And, we posted guards to watch out for them day and night.

10 The people of Judah said, “The haulers are getting too tired! There is so much rubble! We CANNOT rebuild this wall!”

11 Our enemies have said: ‘Let’s go among them and kill those Jews! They won’t even suspect us or see us. We’re going to stop that work!’ ”

12 Then the Jews who lived near our enemies came. They informed us again and again: “The enemy is about to attack us from every direction!” 13 So, I stationed some of the armed men behind the lowest places of the wall, on the inside. And, I positioned some at the open spaces. I put families together with their swords, their spears, and their

bows. 14 Then I looked around. I got up and spoke to the important men, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people. I said, “Don’t be afraid of your enemies! Remember our Lord! He is great and awesome. Fight for your Jewish brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives, and your homes!”

15 Then our enemies heard that we knew about their plot. The one true God had ruined their plans. So, we all went back to the wall. Each individual went back to his own job.

16 From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction. And, the other half were holding the spears, the shields, the bows, and the armor. The officers positioned themselves behind all the people of Judah, 17 all those who were building the wall. Those who carried building materials did their work with one hand, and they carried a weapon in the other hand. 18 Each of the builders tied his sword to his waist, while he was working. The man who would blow the warning trumpet was right beside me.