

What's the Plan

Nehemiah 4:9-16

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I. Pray vs. 9-21

a. Pray vs. 9-10

a. **Pray - to make intercession for, act as an intercessor**

1. The earliest biblical prayers stem from a conversational intimacy with Yahweh and include spontaneous and unfiltered requests.

b. *intercessory prayer, this verb connotes one person advocating on behalf on another.*

- c. Nehemiah responded to the threat in his customary spiritual way; he prayed to the Lord for guidance and protection.

b. Threat 10-12

a. **Burden bearers failing**

1. **There is much rubbish**

2. Unfortunately, many among the laborers were losing their enthusiasm for the project. These men were beginning to doubt their ability to complete the walls. They realized that their strength was fading, yet the walls were only halfway built.

b. **The rumors of impending surprise attack added to the discouragement caused by the natural hardships. Of course, that is what the enemies intended. External pressure amplifies internal weakness.**

c. **Apparently, the enemies were spreading rumors of attack to dishearten the people (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.175). "Ten times over" would suggest that these enemies constantly reiterated the rumors so the people in the villages would pass them on to their friends in Jerusalem.**

1. The singing of the lament described in v. 10 [Heb. 4] surely served to instill confidence in the minds of the opposition alliance. They decided to ambush the workers at a time unknown to them. Their plan was to kill those who worked on the walls, thereby putting an end to the project.

II. Plan vs. 9;13

a. Set up a Guard

a. Set- Set in position

1. Watch and Lookout

2. Nehemiah responded to the threat by positioning men behind the lowest sections of the wall. These spots were particularly vulnerable to attack. Nehemiah also positioned warriors close to

their families, evidently anticipating that they would fight hard to protect their loved ones. The weapons of the defenders consisted of swords, spears, and bows

III. Proceed v. 14

- a. Do not fear man- Fear- Dread and feared v.14 Gal 1:10
 - a. Fear God - God is Great – remarkable or out of the ordinary
 - 1. The governor encouraged the Jews to refrain from fear, reminding them of their relationship with their גָּדוֹל (“great”) and אֲרֵא (“awesome”) God (cf. 1:5; 9:32), a clear allusion to Deut 7:21. The Lord was certainly capable of protecting His people. Nehemiah also appealed to the remnant’s sense of comradery. The Jewish warriors must fight to defend their families, including their wives and children. They must also defend their אֶחָיו (“brothers”), their fellow countrymen. All Jews were related in some fashion since all were descended from Jacob. Nehemiah motivated his listeners by appealing to their two great loves: their God and their nation
 - i. Proverbs 29:25 Fear of Man brings a snare
 - ii. Ezekiel 2:6- Tells the prophet not to fear men
 - iii. Matthew 10:28 Fear man kill the body but not the soul
 - b. Awesome- fear, honored sense of awe
 - b. God will fight for us ...
 - i. God Frustrated them
 - 1. **shows the results of Nehemiah’s prayer and action. When the enemies realized they could not surprise the Jews, their plot withered away because “God had frustrated it.” Again, Nehemiah gave God the credit.**
 - 2. Nehemiah’s strategy had the desired effect; the opposition alliance quickly lost its confidence. They no doubt realized that the Jewish remnant was unified, alert, and prepared to fight if necessary. It is relatively easy to attack a victim when he is unaware of the danger. It is quite another task to attack when the target fully expects it. Once again, Nehemiah is careful to credit God for the success; it was the Lord who had “frustrated their plan” (cf. Ezra 4:5).