

Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls



1 Nehemiah was one of the Jewish exiles who lived in Persia when Artaxerxes was king. He was an important official in the king's house in Susa.



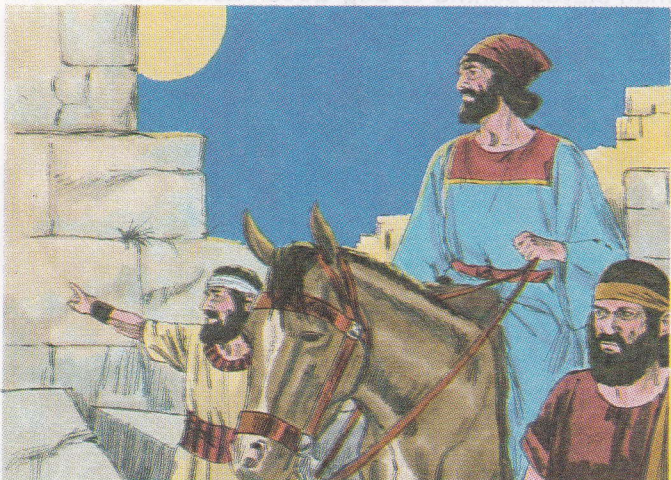
2 One day Nehemiah's brother came to Susa. He described how difficult life was for the Jews now living in Jerusalem. The walls were still in ruins and the gates had not been replaced.



3 This news upset Nehemiah. But he had an idea and prayed for God's help. About four months later the king asked Nehemiah why he looked so sad. He said, "Because Jerusalem still lies in ruins."



4 Then Nehemiah said, "Please let me go back to my country so I can help rebuild Jerusalem." The king granted his request and gave him some letters that would help him when he got there.



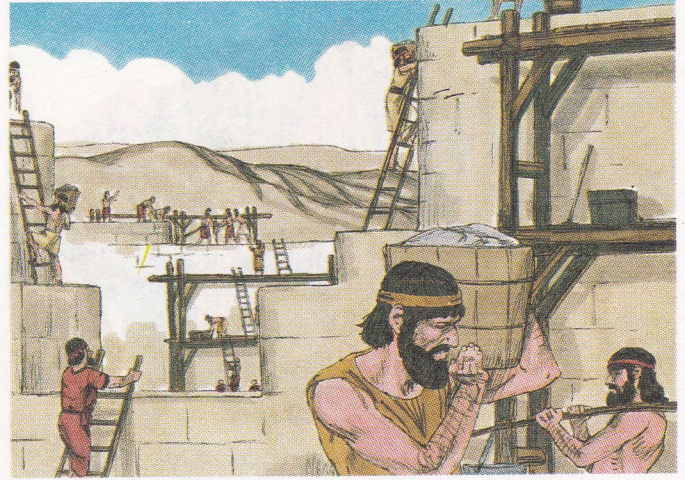
5 Three days after he arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah got up in the middle of the night. He rode around the south part of the city, examining the condition of the walls.



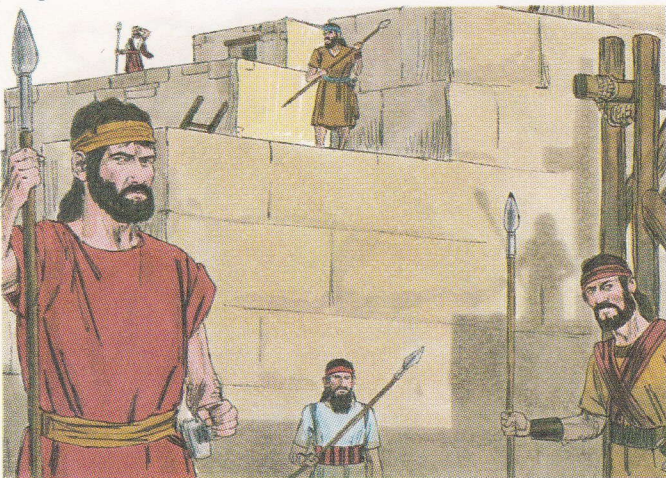
6 Then Nehemiah talked with the Jewish leaders. "Look at how many problems we are having because our city is in ruins. Let's rebuild the walls!" The leaders agreed and said, "Let's get to work."



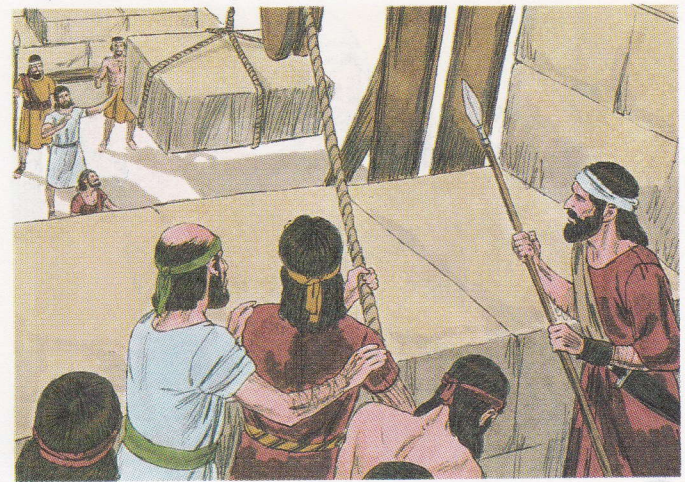
7 But the enemies of the Jews were angry when they heard of this. Sanballat and Tobiah made fun and said, "Are you going to rebel against the king?" Nehemiah just said, "God will help us."



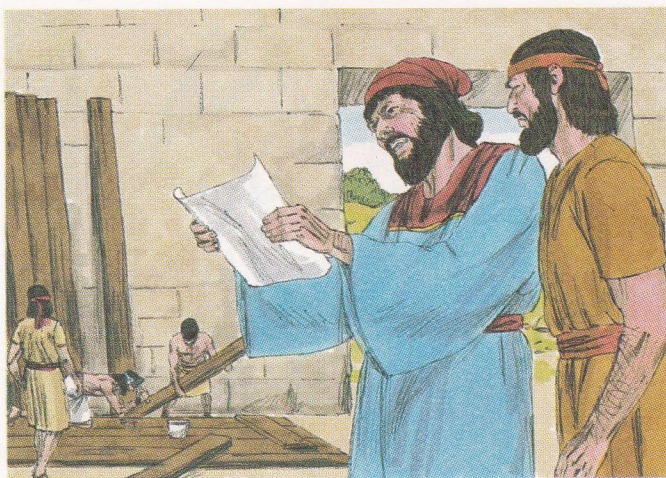
8 Each part of the wall and each gate was assigned to a certain group of workers. Priests, metal workers, merchants—all kinds of people helped. Even people from other towns helped.



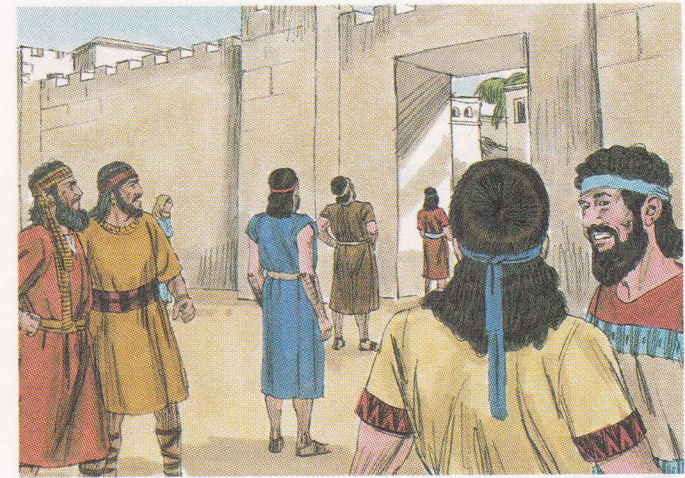
9 When the walls were almost half finished, Sanballat made plans to attack the Jews. However, Nehemiah heard about it and posted guards both day and night. Sanballat had to give up his plans.



10 But from then on, half of the Jews stood guard while the others worked. Even the ones who were working carried weapons. At night everyone stayed in the city to guard it from attack.



11 Sanballat next tried to blackmail Nehemiah with false rumors that would get him in trouble with the king of Persia. But Nehemiah was not frightened. He just prayed and kept the work going.



12 After fifty-two days the work was finished. The walls and gates had been completely rebuilt. Everyone, even the enemies of the Jews, knew that this could not have been done without God's help.