

ORA ET LABORA

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“Pray and work”

Nehemiah 1:1

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah.

Now it happened in the month of Chislev,
in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital,
that Hanani, one of my brothers,
came with certain men from Judah.

And I asked them concerning the Jews
who escaped, who had survived the exile,
and concerning Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 1:3-4

And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame.

The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire.”

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:5-6a

And I said, “O LORD God of heaven,
the great and awesome God who keeps
covenant and steadfast love with
those who love him and keep his commandments,
let your ear be attentive and your eyes open,
to hear the prayer of your servant
that I now pray before you day and night
for the people of Israel your servants,
confessing the sins of the people of Israel,
which we have sinned against you.”

Nehemiah 1:6b-7

“Even I and my father’s house have sinned.
We have acted very corruptly against you
and have not kept the commandments,
the statutes, and the rules that you commanded
your servant Moses.”

Nehemiah 1:8-9

“Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your dispersed be under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’”

Nehemiah 1:10-11

“They are your servants and your people,
whom you have redeemed by your great power
and by your strong hand.

O Lord, let your ear be attentive
to the prayer of your servant,
and to the prayer of your servants
who delight to fear your name,
and give success to your servant today,
and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Nehemiah 2:1-2

In the month of Nisan,
in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes,
when wine was before him,
I took up the wine and gave it to the king.

Now I had not been sad in his presence.

And the king said to me,
“Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick?
This is nothing but sadness of the heart.”

Then I was very much afraid.

Nehemiah 2:3-4

I said to the king, “Let the king live forever!
Why should not my face be sad, when the city,
the place of my fathers’ graves, lies in ruins,
and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

Then the king said to me,
“What are you requesting?”

So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 2:5-6

And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king,
and if your servant has found favor in your sight,
that you send me to Judah,
to the city of my fathers’ graves,
that I may rebuild it.”

And the king said to me
(the queen sitting beside him),
“How long will you be gone,
and when will you return?”

So it pleased the king to send me
when I had given him a time.

Nehemiah 2:7-8

And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.”

And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Nehemiah 2:9-10

Then I came to the governors of the province
Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters.
Now the king had sent with me
officers of the army and horsemen.

But when Sanballat the Horonite
and Tobiah, the Ammonite servant, heard this,
it displeased them greatly that someone had come
to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

Malice

the enemy is not happy!

Nehemiah 2:17-18

Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.”

And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.

And they said, “Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

Nehemiah 2:19-20

But when Sanballat the Horonite
and Tobiah the Ammonite servant
and Geshem the Arab heard of it,
they jeered at us and despised us and said,
“What is this thing that you are doing?
Are you rebelling against the king?”

Then I replied to them,
“The God of heaven will make us prosper,
and we his servants will arise and build,
but you have no portion or right or claim
in Jerusalem.”

Malice
Misinformation

the enemy not happy!
to sow uncertainty, fear

Nehemiah 4:1-2

Now when Sanballat heard that
we were building the wall, he was angry
and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews.

And he said in the presence of his brothers
and of the army of Samaria,
“What are these feeble Jews doing?
Will they restore it for themselves?
Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day?
Will they revive the stones
out of the heaps of rubbish,
and burned ones at that?”

Nehemiah 4:3-5

Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said,
“Yes, what they are building – if a fox goes up on it
he will break down their stone wall!”



Nehemiah 4:3-5

Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said,
“Yes, what they are building – if a fox goes up on it
he will break down their stone wall!”

Hear, O our God, for we are despised.
Turn back their taunt on their own heads
and give them up to be plundered
in a land where they are captives.
Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin
be blotted out from your sight,
for they have provoked you to anger
in the presence of the builders.

Malice
Misinformation
Mockery

the enemy not happy!
to sow uncertainty, fear
to sow discouragement

Nehemiah 4:6-7

So we built the wall. And all the wall
was joined together to half its height,
for the people had a mind to work.

But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs
and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites
heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem
was going forward and that the breaches
were beginning to be closed,
they were very angry.

Nehemiah 4:8-9

And they all plotted together
to come and fight against Jerusalem
and to cause confusion in it.

And we prayed to our God
and set a guard as a protection
against them day and night.

Malice
Misinformation
Mockery
Might

the enemy not happy!
to sow uncertainty, fear
to sow discouragement
to sow confusion

Nehemiah 4:10-12

In Judah it was said, “The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing.

There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall.”

And our enemies said, “They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work.”

At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, “You must return to us.”

Nehemiah 4:13-14

So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall,
in open places, I stationed the people by their clans,
with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles
and to the officials and to the rest of the people,
“Do not be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome,
and fight for your brothers, your sons,
your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

Malice
Misinformation
Mockery
Might

the enemy not happy!
to sow uncertainty, fear
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Nehemiah 4:15-16

When our enemies heard that it was known to us
and that God had frustrated their plan,
we all returned to the wall, each to his work.

From that day on, half of my servants
worked on construction, and half held the spears,
shields, bows, and coats of mail.

And the leaders stood behind
the whole house of Judah,
who were building on the wall.

Nehemiah 4:17-18

Those who carried burdens were loaded
in such a way that each labored on the work
with one hand and held his weapon with the other.
And each of the builders had his sword
strapped at his side while he built.

The man who sounded the trumpet
was beside me.

Nehemiah 4:19-20

And I said to the nobles and to the officials
and to the rest of the people:

“The work is great and widely spread,
and we are separated on the wall,
far from one another.

In the place where you hear
the sound of the trumpet,
rally to us there.

Our God will fight for us.”

Nehemiah 4:21-23

So we labored at the work, and half of them
held the spears from the break of dawn
until the stars came out.

I also said to the people at that time,
“Let every man and his servant
pass the night within Jerusalem,
that they may be a guard for us by night
and may labor by day.”

So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants
nor the men of the guard who followed me,
none of us took off our clothes;
each kept his weapon at his right hand.

Nehemiah 6:1-2

Now when Sanballat and Tobiah
and Geshem the Arab
and the rest of our enemies
heard that I had built the wall
and that there was no breach left in it
(although up to that time I had not
set up the doors in the gates),
Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying,
“Come and let us meet together
at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.”

But they intended to do me harm.

Malice	the enemy not happy!
Misinformation	to sow uncertainty, fear
Mockery	to sow discouragement
Might	to sow confusion
Missives	to sow division; take out leader

Nehemiah 6:3:4

And I sent messengers to them, saying,

“I am doing a great work
and I cannot come down.

Why should the work stop while I leave it
and come down to you?”

And they sent to me four times in this way,
and I answered them in the same manner.

Malice	the enemy not happy!
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Mockery	to sow discouragement
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Missives	to sow division; take out leader

Nehemiah 6:5

In the same way
Sanballat for the fifth time
sent his servant to me
with an open letter in his hand.

Nehemiah 6:6-7

In it was written, “It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall.

And according to these reports you wish to become their king.

And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem,

‘There is a king in Judah.’

“And now the king will hear of these reports.

So now come and let us take counsel together.”

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Missives	to sow division; take out leader
Motives	to sow doubt, dissention

Nehemiah 6:8-9

Then I sent to him, saying,
“No such things as you say have been done,
for you are inventing them
out of your own mind.”

For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking,
“Their hands will drop from the work,
and it will not be done.”

But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

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Nehemiah 6:10

Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said:

“Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.”

Nehemiah 6:11

But I said,
“Should such a man as I run away?
And what man such as I
could go into the temple and live?
I will not go in.”

Nehemiah 6:12-13

And I understood and saw
that God had not sent him,
but he had pronounced the prophecy against me
because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

For this purpose he was hired,
that I should be afraid
and act in this way and sin,
and so they could give me a bad name
in order to taunt me.

Nehemiah 6:14

Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God,
according to these things that they did,
and also the prophetess Noadiah
and the rest of the prophets
who wanted to make me afraid.

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Misinformation	to sow uncertainty, fear
Mockery	to sow discouragement
Might	to sow confusion
Missives	to sow division; take out leader
Motives	to sow doubt, dissention
Misdirection	to betray; undermine witness

Nehemiah 6:15-16

So the wall was finished
on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul,
in fifty-two days.

And when all our enemies heard of it,
all the nations around us were afraid
and fell greatly in their own esteem,
for they perceived that
this work had been accomplished
with the help of our God.



Nehemiah 8:10

Then he said to them,

“Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine
and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready,
for this day is holy to our Lord.

And do not be grieved.”

Nehemiah 8:10

“For the joy of the LORD is your strength.”



Nehemiah 6:17-18

Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.

For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as his wife.

Nehemiah 6:19

Also they spoke of his good deeds
in my presence
and reported my words to him.

And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.

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Malaise: deep discouragement; futility!

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Malaise: deep discouragement; futility!

“The joy of the LORD is your strength!”

Hebrews 3:14

For we share in Christ,
if indeed we hold our original confidence firm
to the end.

Hebrews 3:14

For we share in Christ,
if indeed we hold our original confidence firm
to the end.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, my beloved brothers,
be steadfast, immovable, always abounding
in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord
your labor is not in vain.

Nehemiah 8:10

“For the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus!