

Nehemiah 4-1-6 – When the World Mocks You

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Handfuls, Gaebelin, JFB, Geneva, Gray, Clarke, Poole, Barnes, Armstrong, Gill, Henry, Delitzsch, INT, Trapp
Beloved in the Lord: **Not only do you have to prepare yourself** for real life, **you have to prepare your children** for real life also. You have to teach them to **worship**, to **eat properly**, to **exercise**, to **be honest**, to **work hard**, to **care for others**, and to **save for the future**. But there is another area in which you must prepare your children: To face bullies...mental, physical, and spiritual bullies.

One of the common forms of bullying is mocking. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

The world will mock you

But you must pray

And you must do your work

Our goals are: **That you will prepare yourself and your children to handle the mocking Christians are receiving by focusing on God's salvation, God's signs, and God's security you have in Jesus Christ.**

The world will mock you

1 But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was **furious and very indignant**, and **mocked the Jews**.

1. As the work of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls progressed, with all kinds of people doing different types of job and making strong walls for the security of the city and to enable worship, those who opposed the Jews started to mock them.
Mocking was simply verbal taunting in order to cause harm.

2. Sanballat, the chief mocker, knew he was speaking lies, but he said it anyway because he was angry and indignant about what the Jews were doing.

He hated the fact that the Jews were rebuilding. **That posed a threat to his power and finances.** So he had to act. Mocking was just his *1st way of trying to make the Jews stop what they were doing.* Things were going to get worse.

2 And he spoke before **his brethren** and the **army of Samaria**, and said, "What are these **feeble Jews** doing? Will they **fortify themselves**? Will they **offer sacrifices**? Will they **complete it in a day**? Will they **revive the stones** from the heaps of rubbish — stones that are burned?" 3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, **if even a fox goes up** on it, he will break down their stone wall."

3. Sanballat did not just mock the Jews to their faces, but he also went and mocked them before his fellow Samaritans and the army of Samaria!

He wanted to get their support against the people of God. **He was fomenting hatred.**

4. Consider the details of Sanballat and Tobiah's mocking.

a. "These Jews are feeble (weak, frail) and are attempting a hopeless project." They were attacking the moral character of the Jews. They thought the Jews were weak in their commitment. They forgot the **feeble Jews had a powerful Father!**

b. "These Jews can't protect themselves with this wall." They assumed that because the Jews were feeble, they couldn't protect themselves. They forgot there were **heavenly forces at the side of the Jews**, given charge to protect them.

c. "These Jews will not be able to make sacrifices and so get the help of God." They forgot **the Lord knew those** who were his and was able to protect **those who trust in the sacrifice of Jesus.**

d. "These Jews will take forever to build this wall." They forgot God had destroyed walls thick enough to build houses on around Jericho just with his people blowing trumpets and shouting, and **he could raise those walls up again by his power.**

e. "These Jews won't be able to use the burnt stones (which could have cracked from fire) from the garbage to rebuild." They forgot **God made man out of mud and could make a strong wall out of burnt and damaged stones.**

f. "These Jews are building a wall so weak that a light fox climbing on the wall would destroy them."
According to Jeremiah there were **many foxes walking around Jerusalem after destruction.** (Lam 5:18)
They forgot the people loved God and were working in unity and building walls to secure God's people.

5. Lessons:

a. The world will attack you and your children by mocking. "Religion is the opiate of the world,"

“Superstition, not science, is what guides Christians.” “You dress like the Middle Ages.”

Matthew 5:11 **“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.**

Jesus said if they would persecute him, they will persecute you! Now children can be unaware of the mocking taking place because of their youth so start making them aware of it now.

b. Know the world hates you. This is the source of their mocking you. Don’t be naïve and think the world likes you. In the heart of the world there is hatred for Christ and his people. They hate the joy and peace you have. Henry: **“The strength and safety of the church are the grief and vexation of its enemies.”**

c. You will never be able to satisfy other religions and peacefully co-exist with them in this world. Other religions can get along, but not Christianity. (You can live with other religions, but they can’t!) They can’t help but attack you. Where are Christians persecuting Roman Catholics, or Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists? But we face persecutions from them!

d. God despises those who despise his people, so don’t fear them! Justice will come to them.
Proverbs 3:34 **Surely He scorns the scornful,** But gives grace to the humble.

But you must pray

4 Hear, O **our God,** for **we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads,** and give them as **plunder to a land of captivity!** 5 **Do not cover their iniquity,** and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have **provoked You to anger** before the builders.

1. Nehemiah’s response to the mocking and taunting was not to respond in petulance but in prayer for justice – as we do in the Lord’s Prayer when we say, “Your kingdom come.”

Psalms 38:13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth. 15 For in You, O LORD, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God.

2. Consider the details of his prayer; and it was not a wimpy prayer.

a. Nehemiah addressed his prayer to his God, the true and living God, showing a distinction between his God and Sanballat’s god.

b. Nehemiah acknowledged these men hated Jews. The Jews were God’s chosen people and they were doing what God commanded them to do, but they were hated for it and were hindered from their work.

c. Nehemiah asked God to turn Sanballat’s shame on his own head, to make him be conquered and taken captive (as the Jews had been), to expose his sins so the world and heaven could see.

Psalm 69:24 Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. 25 **Let their dwelling place be desolate;** Let no one live in their tents. 26 For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. 27 Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness. 28 **Let them be blotted out of the book of the living,** And not be written with the righteous.

Psalm 79: 12 And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom Their reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord.

Nehemiah was not against God “covering their sins if they repented through Jesus.” He wasn’t against forgiveness. He simply wanted God to take note of their sins.

d. Nehemiah reminded God that Sanballat was making God angry by attacking his people!

e. Nehemiah was not being vindictive and revengeful. Sanballat was opposing God and **trying to stop the worship of God!** So Sanballat was not Nehemiah’s personal enemies, **but the enemy of God and his people.** He deserved worse judgment because he opposed the worship and kingdom of God!

3. Lessons:

- a. Your first instinct when attacked is to attack, but *your first response must be to pray for God's help.***
- b. Pray that *God will protect you, his children, from the mocking of the world.***
- c. Pray God will *punish his enemies, those who are bent on harm against God's children and hindering their ability to worship him.***

And you must do your work

6 **So we built the wall**, and the **entire wall was joined together** up to half its height, for the people had a **mind to work**.

1. Acknowledging the mocking, and praying for God's help, Nehemiah and the people set out to continue the work of rebuilding the walls to protect the people and promote the worship of God.

2. The people then worked until the entire repairing of the wall was completed.

3. They did this because they were really committed to the task; they had a mind to work.

4. Lessons:

a. Prayer is necessary, but don't pray when you should be working. If you want a wife, don't just pray for one, go out and meet those young ladies and talk to them. Dress nicely. Work hard. Let them see a godly life. You want a husband? Live godly. Dress well. Present yourself well. Start talking to godly men!

b. Specific to this passage, play your part in rebuilding the kingdom of Jesus, a kingdom that has fallen on hard times – with broken down walls. Identify what your calling is. Fulfill your calling!

c. Don't mope about how much people don't like you. Don't allow your enemies to distract you from the work the Lord has called you to do. If they **criticize your parenting**, keep doing what God says regarding your children. If they **criticize how you worship**, keep worshipping how God says. If they **criticize you for allowing God's Word to direct your whole life**, let God's Word direct everything in your life.

Conclusion:

Sanballat and Tobiah mocked God's people, insulting them in personal ways. (But to mock God's people is to mock God.) Instead of going in the mud with the animals, Nehemiah committed himself to **pray to God's justice** on the wicked and pray for protection for the godly. He then urged the Jews to **focus on the work** before them.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You know what kind of world Jameson is going to be raised in...a world that mocks serving God... a world that would **accuse him of being brainwashed**... a world where **he will lose opportunities** because of his faith... He will **not be invited to people's homes when he stands up for truth**. That's the reality.

2. How do you prepare your children to deal with these inevitable attacks and keep working for Christ?

Don't argue with fools. They can't discern spiritual things. **Focus on whose you are!** A child of God. Loved by God in Jesus. With a family that loves you. Saved. Rich, now and for eternity. Righteous. Wanted by God.

3. Pray for God to save those who attack you...that their eyes will be turned to their own sins and they would trust in Jesus for their salvation. And if they refuse to turn and want to attack God's children, **pray God would bring his heavy hand of judgment on them.**

Finally, all who oppose God's kingdom will die...die without hope and spend eternity in hell. If you don't want to die that way, ask God to make you his children through Jesus. He will do so. He promised. Jesus died to make those estranged from God come near.