

September 26 Answers

- 1) Nehemiah's enemies used every dirty trick they could think of to prevent the walls from being rebuilt. They began by **mocking** and ridiculing the work: 'Look at that wall! If a **fox** jumped on it, it would fall down!' Nehemiah responded by turning to God in prayer and asking Him to "turn **back** their taunt on their own heads." This teaches us to look to God, not ourselves, for vindication and to **reject** the world's low opinion of our service to God. Next, they threatened violence against the remnant. Nehemiah responded by asking God for help, and he set up a round-the-clock **guard** to protect the laborers. This teaches us to avoid the pitfalls of **panic** and **paralysis**. We should cast our cares on God in prayer and then take appropriate action to deal with our situation. The next difficulty came, not from their enemies, but from within—many of the people had given in to **fear**. Nehemiah responded by encouraging them: "Remember the Lord, who is great and **awesome**, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes" (Neh 4:14). This teaches us how to encourage ourselves and others in the Lord. We should **meditate** on who God is and then take action knowing that God is on our side. The remnant rallied to Nehemiah, and they worked with their weapons at their sides. Some days later, Nehemiah was made aware of **sin** in the camp. Some of the remnant had exacted **usury** from their fellow Jews, and it had resulted in slavery for some of the people. Nehemiah responded by **exposing** the sin, **rebuking** the sinners, and calling for a return to biblical living. He also sacrificed personally in order to set a good **example** for the people (Neh 5:14–19). This gives us a pattern to follow when dealing with sin in the **church**, and it shows us that there will be times when we need to **sacrifice** in order to lead by example. Shemaiah tried to trick Nehemiah into committing sin by urging him to enter the **temple** which was off limits to everyone except the priests. Nehemiah wisely recognized this as treachery, for when a prophet advises something **contrary** to God's Word, he reveals himself to be a **wolf** in sheep's clothing.