

**Story Time - Read the story to the children**  
**Lesson 125: REBUILDING AND COMPLETION OF THE WALL**  
**NEHEMIAH 4:1-7:3**

**\*\*NOTE\*\* THIS STORY IS EXCESSIVELY LONG - AN  
OPTIONAL WAY IS TO READ THE BOOKLET INSTEAD TO THE  
CHILDREN - IT IS MUCH QUICKER AND THEY CAN COLOR IT AS  
YOU READ.**

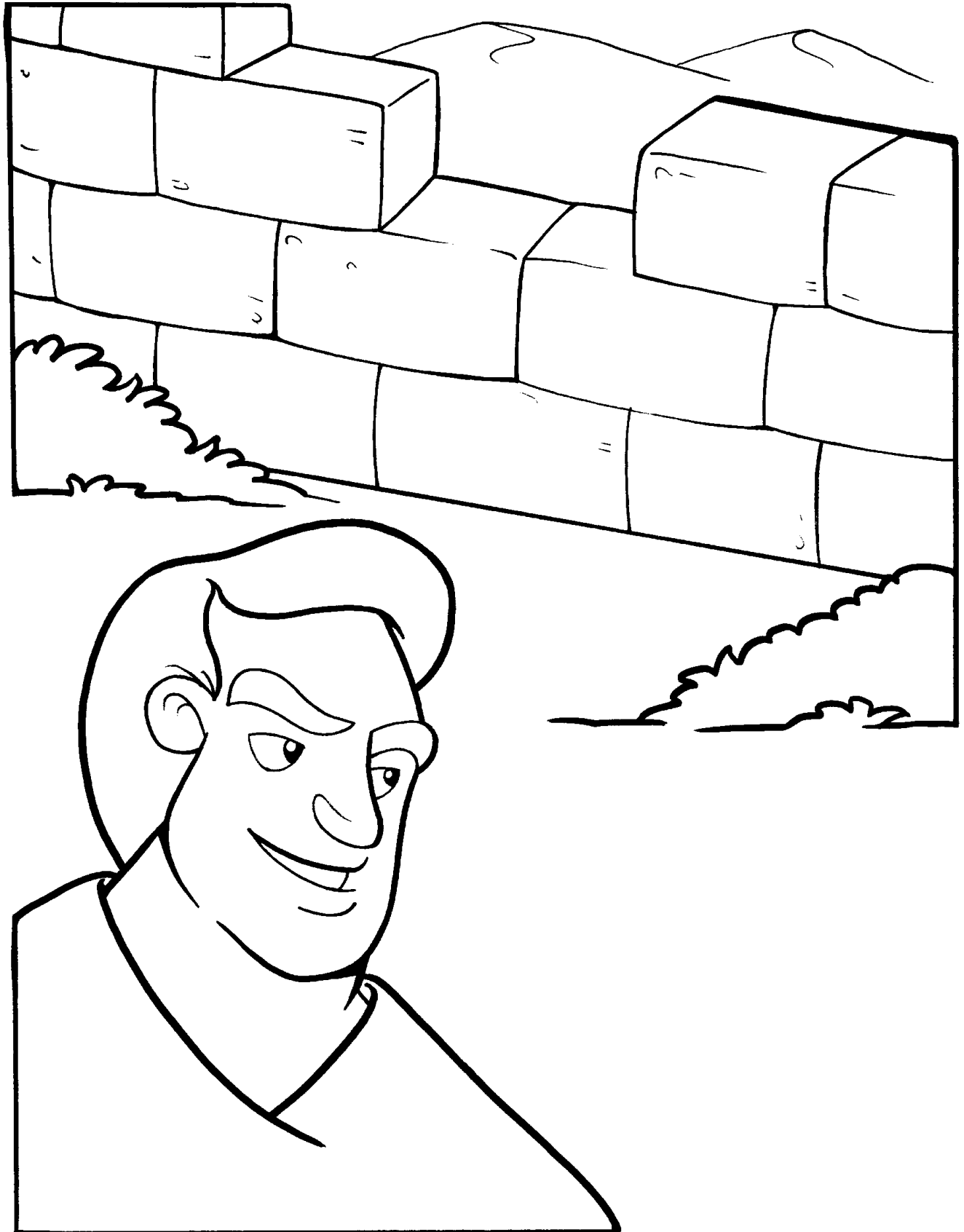
When Sanballat heard that we were building the wall of Jerusalem, he was very angry and upset. He started making fun of the Jews. Sanballat talked with his friends and the army at Samaria and said, "What are these weak Jews doing? Do they think we will leave them alone? Do they think they will offer sacrifices? Maybe they think they can finish building in only one day. They cannot bring stones back to life from these piles of trash and dirt. These are just piles of ashes and dirt!" Tobiah the Ammonite was with Sanballat. Tobiah said, "What do these Jews think they are building? If even a small fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!" Nehemiah prayed and said, "Our God, listen to our prayer. These men hate us. Sanballat and Tobiah are insulting us. Make bad things happen to them. Make them ashamed, like people taken away as prisoners. Don't take away their guilt or forgive the sins they have done in your sight. They have insulted and discouraged the builders." We built the wall of Jerusalem all the way around the city. But it was only half as tall as it should be. We did this much because the people worked with all their heart. But Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men from Ashdod were very angry. They heard that the people continued working on the walls of Jerusalem. They heard the people were repairing the holes in the wall. So all these men got together and made plans against Jerusalem. They planned to stir up trouble against Jerusalem. They planned to come and fight against the city. But we prayed to our God. And we put guards on the walls to watch day and night so that we could be ready to meet them. And so at that time the people of Judah said, "The workers are becoming tired. There is too much dirt and trash in the way. We cannot continue to build the wall. And our enemies are saying, 'Before the Jews know it or see us, we will be right there among them. We will kill them and that will stop the work.'" Then the Jews living among our enemies came and said this to us ten times, "Our enemies are all around us. They are everywhere we turn." So I put some of the people behind the lowest places along the wall, and I put them by the holes in the wall. I put families together, with their swords, spears, and bows. After looking over everything, I stood up and spoke to the important families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, "Don't be afraid of our enemies. Remember the Lord, who is great and powerful! You must fight for your brothers, your sons, and your daughters! You must fight for your wives and your homes!" Then our enemies heard that we knew about

their plans. They knew that God ruined their plans. So we all went back to work on the wall. Everyone went back to their own place and did their part. From that day on, half of my men worked on the wall. The other half of my men were on guard, ready with spears, shields, bows, and armor. The army officers stood behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. The builders and their helpers had their tools in one hand and a weapon in the other hand. Each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. The man who blew the trumpet to warn the people stayed next to me. Then I spoke to the leading families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, "This is a very big job and we are spread out along the wall. We are far from one another. So if you hear the trumpet, run to that place. We will all meet together there, and our God will fight for us!" So we continued to work on the wall of Jerusalem, and half the men held spears. We worked from the first light of the morning until the stars came out at night. At that time I also said this to the people, "Every builder and his helper must stay inside Jerusalem at night. Then they can be guards at night and workers during the day." So none of us took off our clothes--not me, not my brothers, not my men, and not the guards. Each of us had our weapon ready at all times, even when we went to get water. Many of the poor people began to complain against their fellow Jews. Some of them were saying, "We have many children. We must get some grain if we are going to eat and stay alive." Other people were saying, "This is a time of famine. We have to use our fields, vineyards, and homes to pay for grain." And still other people were saying, "We have to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. But we cannot afford to pay, so we are borrowing money to pay the tax. We are as good as the others. Our sons are as good as their sons. But we will have to sell our sons and daughters as slaves. Some of us have already had to sell our daughters as slaves. There is nothing we can do. We have already lost our fields and vineyards. Other people own them now." When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. I calmed myself down, and then I went to the rich families and the officials. I told them, "You are forcing your own people to pay interest on the money you loan them. You must stop doing that!" Then I called for all the people to meet together and said to them, "Our fellow Jews were sold as slaves to people in other countries. We did our best to buy them back and make them free. And now, you are selling them like slaves again!" The rich people and officials kept quiet. They could not find anything to say. So I continued speaking. I said, "What you people are doing is not right! You know that you should fear and respect our God. You should not do the shameful things other people do! My men, my brothers, and I are also lending money and grain to the people. But let's stop forcing them to pay interest on these loans. You must give their fields, vineyards, olive fields, and houses back to them, right now! And you must give back the interest you charged them. You charged them one percent for the money, grain, new wine, and oil that you loaned them." Then the rich people and the officials said, "We will give it back and not demand anything more from them. Nehemiah, we will do as you say." Then I called the priests. I made the rich

people and the officials promise to God that they would do what they said. Then I shook out the folds of my clothes. I said, "God will do the same thing to everyone who does not keep their promise. God will shake them out of their houses and they will lose everything they worked for. They will lose everything!" I finished saying these things and all the people agreed. They all said, "Amen" and praised the LORD. So the people did as they had promised. And also, during the whole time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, neither my brothers nor I ate the food that was allowed for the governor. I never forced the people to pay taxes to buy my food. I was governor from the 20th year until the 32nd year that Artaxerxes was king. I was governor of Judah for twelve years. But the governors who ruled before me made life hard for the people. The governors forced everyone to pay 1 pound of silver. They also made the people give them food and wine. The leaders under these governors also ruled over the people and made life even harder. But I respected and feared God, so I didn't do things like that. I worked hard at building the wall of Jerusalem. All my men gathered there to work on the wall. We didn't take any land from anyone. Also, I regularly fed 150 Jews who were always welcome at my table, and I fed those who came to us from the nations around us. Every day I prepared this much food for the people who ate at my table: one ox, six good sheep, and different kinds of birds. Every ten days all kinds of wine were brought to my table. But I never demanded that they give me the food that was allowed for the governor. I knew that the work the people were doing was very hard. My God, remember all the good I have done for these people. Then Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and our other enemies heard that I had built the wall. We repaired all the holes in the wall, but we had not yet put the doors in the gates. So Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, Nehemiah, let's meet together. We can meet in the town of Kephirim on the plain of Ono." But they were planning to hurt me. So I sent messengers to them with this answer: "I am doing important work, so I cannot come down. I don't want the work to stop just so I can come down and meet with you." Sanballat and Geshem sent the same message to me four times, and I sent the same answer back to them each time. Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his helper to me with the same message. And he had a letter in his hand that was not sealed. This is what the letter said: "There is a rumor going around. People are talking about it everywhere. And, by the way, Geshem says it is true. People are saying that you and the Jews are planning to turn against the king. This is why you are building the wall of Jerusalem. People are also saying that you will be the new king of the Jews. And the rumor is that you have chosen prophets to announce this about you in Jerusalem: 'There is a king in Judah!' "Now I warn you, Nehemiah, King Artaxerxes will hear about this. So come, let's meet and talk about this together." So I sent this answer back to Sanballat: "Nothing you are saying is happening. You are just making all that up in your own head." Our enemies were only trying to make us afraid. They are thinking to themselves, "The Jews will be afraid and too weak to keep on working. Then

the wall will not be finished." But I prayed, "God, make me strong." One day I went to the house of a man named Shemaiah son of Delaiah. Delaiah was the son of Mehetabel. Shemaiah had to stay in his house. He said, "Nehemiah, let's meet in God's Temple. Let's go inside the Holy Place and lock the doors. Men are coming to kill you. Tonight they are coming to kill you." But I said to Shemaiah, "Should a man like me run away? You know that an ordinary man like me cannot go into the Holy Place without being put to death. I will not go!" I knew that God had not sent Shemaiah. I knew that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to do that. They hired Shemaiah to scare me and make me sin by going into that part of the Temple. They were planning those bad things against me so that they could shame me. My God, please remember Tobiah and Sanballat and the bad things they have done. Also remember the woman prophet Noadiah and the other prophets who have been trying to scare me. So the wall of Jerusalem was completed on the 25th day of the month of Elul. It had taken 52 days to finish building the wall. Then all our enemies heard that we had completed the wall, and all the nations around us saw that it was finished. So they lost their courage, because they understood that this work had been done with the help of our God. Also in those days after the wall had been completed, the rich people of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and he was answering their letters. They sent those letters because many people in Judah had promised to be loyal to him. The reason for this is that Tobiah was son-in-law to Shecaniah son of Arah. And Tobiah's son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam. Meshullam is the son of Berekiah. And in the past, those people had made a special promise to Tobiah. So they kept telling me how good Tobiah was. And they kept telling Tobiah what I was doing. Tobiah kept sending me letters to make me afraid. After we finished building the wall and put the doors in the gates, we chose the men who would guard the gates and the men to sing in the Temple and help the priests. Next, I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem. I chose another man named Hananiah to be the commander of the fort. I picked Hanani because he was a very honest man and he feared God more than most people do. Then I said to Hanani and Hananiah, "Each day you must wait until the sun has been up for several hours before you open the gates of Jerusalem. You must shut and lock the gates before the sun goes down. Also choose people who live in Jerusalem as guards. Put some of them at special places to guard the city, and put the other people near their own houses."

## 125. REBUILDING AND COMPLETION OF THE WALL (NEHEMIAH 4:1-7:3)



"So the wall was finished in the twenty fifth *day of the month of Elul*, in fifty two days." **NEHEMIAH 6:15**

# 125. REBUILDING AND COMPLETION OF THE WALL

## NEHEMIAH 4:1-7:3

### MEMORY VERSE:

*"Our God will fight for us."* NEHEMIAH 4:20

### TRUE OR FALSE

1. When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he was very angry and made fun of the Jews. TRUE or FALSE
2. The wall was being rebuilt very quickly because the people wanted to work hard. TRUE or FALSE
3. When Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs and Ammonites all heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt, they were all very happy. TRUE or FALSE
4. Nehemiah prayed to God for help against their enemies. TRUE or FALSE
5. Nehemiah also placed guards by the wall so they wouldn't be taken by surprise. TRUE or FALSE

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. Did Nehemiah try to be a good example to the people?
2. Did king Artaxerxes make Nehemiah a king? Or did he make him governor of Jerusalem?
3. Nehemiah was allowed to force the people to give him food and money, but did he do that?
4. What did Sanballat, Geshem and Tobiah want to do to Nehemiah once they heard that the wall was being rebuilt? Did they want to hurt him or do something bad to him?
5. Did Nehemiah finish the job that God had for him to do? Was the wall rebuilt?

## **Lesson 125**

**Print the last 7 pages of the Nehemiah Coloring Book & Let the children take it home.**

### **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to turn to God with their problems and trust in Him, even in really tough situations. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.