

## A Mind to Work

### Introduction

- As a result of King Solomon's sins, the kingdom of Israel was divided into the northern & southern kingdoms (935 BC).
- The northern kingdom (10 tribes called Israel) was conquered by Assyria in 722 BC.
- The southern kingdom (Judah) was conquered by Babylon in 587 BC.
- In 538 BC the Persian King Cyrus sent some exiles from Judah back to their homeland to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
- The rebuilders finished the temple, but did very little to rebuild Jerusalem & Nehemiah is burdened to finish the work (1:3,4,11).

### I. Progress in Spite of External Ridicule (v. 1-6)

- A. Progress prompts opponents' words of anger (v. 1-3)  
*The enemies & opponents of the kingdom of God do not want to see any progress or improvement with the people of God. Progress stirs up an attitude of anger & words of anger – ridicule (v. 1). Expressing anger & ridicule publically is designed to solidify & motivate the opposition (v. 2-3). Opponents strategically emphasize believers' apparent weaknesses & deficiencies to build their own pride & arrogance – lack of money, resources, people, etc.*
- B. Opponents' words of anger prompt prayer (v. 4-6)  
*The enemies & opponents of God's people are often more numerous with more natural resources & worldly power. Therefore the people of God turn to Him in prayer as a first resort & primary weapon against opponents (v. 4-5; 2Co. 10:4; Eph. 6:18). Praying believers have **a mind to work** & God gives them the necessary success (v. 6).*

### II. Progress in Spite of External Plots (v. 7-9)

- A. Progress prompts opponents' actions of anger (v. 7-8)  
*When words of anger cannot impede or stop a believers' progress, opponents resort to plans for fear & violence. They plan to attack from the N, S, E & W = hopelessness. The plan is for fear & violence to create confusion among the people of God – confusion always impedes progress!*

- B. Opponents' plots prompt prayer & precaution (v. 9)  
*When opponents are overwhelming in power & resources, believers turn to God in prayer to do the impossible – *ask God for help when we need a miracle*. Believers also use wisdom from God to respond with practical actions & available resources.*

### III. Progress in Spite of Internal Challenges (v. 10-14)

- A. Progress reveals internal weaknesses (v. 10-12)  
*In difficult ministry efforts, believers often get physically & emotionally weary (v. 10). Constant rumors of the opponents' schemes also create discouragement & weariness – *believers focusing on the enemy, weaknesses & problems rather than on the Lord* (v. 11-12)!*
- B. Internal weaknesses demands reassurance (v. 13-14)  
*Believers are encouraged & motivated when they can serve in difficult ministry efforts with their family members (v. 13). *The family members working together – companionship, conversation, ideas; helping, providing & protecting in close proximity*. Believers need to be reminded that they are serving the Almighty God first & serving people likewise (v. 14; Mt. 22:37-39).*

## CONCLUSION

So then my beloved brother or sister, can you detect opposition to the ministry efforts the Lord has called you to do? Can you discern the strategies, plots & schemes of your opponents; maybe even the devil himself? Are you surprised at the intensity of your troubles or the length of time that the difficulties have lasted? Do you find yourself discouraged, confused, fearful, physically & emotionally weary? Well I hope that you can see that we are not the first believers to face these kinds of problems and the same remedies that worked 2,500 years ago are effective today. We must be **praying believers**, not simply believers who pray; we must pray w/o ceasing, all kinds of prayer, pray in faith & with persistence. . . . **Praying believers** have a mind to complete the Lord's work; receive wisdom, provision, protection, hope, encouragement, guidance, strength, mighty miracles, etc. Watch & pray; work & pray; plan & pray – God who began this good work will ensure that you finish it!

And if you are not a Christian, you must pray too. You can be forgiven today, saved & prepared to do your work for the Lord. But you must first believe in Jesus, pray & ask God to forgive your sins. Will you trust Him & believe today?

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