

## Faith Under Fire Study 4: *Brave Builder*

by Lt. Ashley Koebel

### The Story

Nehemiah stood for a moment and thought. The parchment in his hand was worn. The day had been long and hot, and Nehemiah kept setting his heart on the same story. It was the story that began this adventure. It happened only months ago. He could remember it as if he was still there. He had been worlds away from where he was now. He had been standing in a different country, in a different part of the world, with a very different job than he had now.

In the palace preparation room, Nehemiah stood straightening his robes, and calming his nerves. His job was regarded as extremely high risk. He had to be a man trusted by the king. That meant nerves of steel at all times. Nehemiah's job was to protect the king from any poisonous assassination attempts. His job included purchasing the best wines, preparing the king's cup in utter secrecy and then tasting the wine in front of the king. If an assassination attempt had been made, it was not the king's life that would be taken, but the cup-bearer. On that day, as Nehemiah handed the cup to the king after sipping, the king caught his eyes. Nehemiah was shocked to see a look of concerned compassion cross the king's face.

That was it. That was the story of how Nehemiah got here. Thanks to that moment, Nehemiah was now standing here, in this little city, in this war-torn country, holding onto the parchment. The little parchment was a letter from the King. As long as Nehemiah had this letter, no one could stop his work, or the work of the builders. That day that started it all, that day that the king had compassion in his eye was that was the day that God made a way.

Though living in Susa, Nehemiah had remained interested and faithfully loyal to his home country, Judah. He had heard all about the troubles that were there. He had known the situation was desperate, but he had always hoped that it was livable. He had always hoped that there was still some national pride. Until the day that he was visited by a brother from Judah, he had remained faithful to that hope. Judah, he soon learned, was in shambles. There was no pride anywhere. Nehemiah was devastated by the news.

For some reason, at work that day, the king cared enough to notice Nehemiah's silence and to ask. For some reason the king chose to allow Nehemiah to return home to care for the city and for his people. For some reason the king had given guards, building materials, and a promise of safety. Nehemiah knew the reason, and that was why he would rest his heart on the story. It was why he would remember the story again and again, and why he would tell the story to anyone that would listen.

God had made a way for Nehemiah to return home. With a new sense of life and purpose, Nehemiah had set his heart to one thing only: follow God's lead to repair the broken wall of his once great home. Playing with the parchment in his hand, Nehemiah looked either direction down the wall that now was becoming a reality. This small city had set their hearts on something great, and for some Reason, it was happening.

## The Scripture

### *Nehemiah 4:1-6(NIV)*

*4 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 2 and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble-burned as they are?"*

*3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"*

*4 Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.*

*6 So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.*

## For Some Reason

Tune into any of the great reality competition shows, and you'll hear these words: "I want this more than anything." Another phrase that comes out a lot is, "this would mean everything to me." We set our hearts on many things. There tends to be this belief that if you want something bad enough, and you set your heart on it, you'll have it.

It's just not true.

The truth is that things tend to happen for some Reason. Setting our hearts to things is absolutely necessary. In fact, if we want to achieve anything, we will have to set our heart on it. But, setting our heart on something is not enough. Anyone who has had their heart broken by a set-back knows this. Things happen for some Reason.

## Love the Lord Your God: *Mark 12:30-31*

God had his hand in the building of this wall. I do not doubt that if the people had not worked at it with all their heart, it would not be achieved by them. It might have happened in some other way, but it would not have happened through the people. I don't know what you have been setting your heart to, but I'm sure there is something. If you want to achieve anything in this life, it's not enough to set your heart on it. Let's set our hearts on the things God has for us. Then, we might find that things just start falling into place for some Reason.

***So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height,  
for the people worked with all their heart. Nehemiah 4:6***