

“Let Us Rise Up and Build”

Scene one – In Shushan

Stage – Room with Nehemiah –

Nar: Eight years had passed since Esther’s successful intervention on behalf of her people. She was now firmly established as queen in Persia, and Jews were everywhere high in favour. Among their number was one called Nehemiah, who had risen to the honoured position of one of the King’s cupbearers.

Nehemiah had a kinsmen names Hanani. Hanani had visited Jerusalem in order that he might see how the people were faring, and having recently returned to Persia again, was anxious to tell Nehemiah of his experiences.

Sign – The Month Chisleu - carried across the stage.

Hanani and men of Judah come on stage and knock on Nehemiah’s door. He answers

Nehemiah: “Hanani, it is good to see you – how are the people in Jerusalem doing

Hanani: - “They are in great affliction Nehemiah.”

Man of Judah: “The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and the gates are burned with fire.”

Nehemiah: “Oh, No!”

Nehemiah to hug Hanani and they all walk off stage – set up thrones for king and queen.

Nar: Nehemiah so greatly loved Jerusalem and so deeply felt their misery that he could not restrain his emotion, he sat down and wept. For almost 4 months he thought deeply and earnestly about the problem, preparing his mind to seek God that he might overshadow the affairs of Judah for good. He prayed to God, recognizing their sin, and petitioning Him for His help.

Four months passed and it was once again Nehemiah’s turn to act as cupbearer for the king.

Sign - “The month Nisan” to be carried across the stage

King: Why are you so sad, Nehemiah

Neh: Oh king the place of my fathers is in ruins and the gates are burned with fire!

King: What is your request?

Nehemiah pauses and looks like he is offering a short prayer to heaven

Neh: Send me to Jerusalem that I may build it again.

King: How long will you need?

Nehemiah to look like he is talking to the King

Narator: So Nehemiah set the king a time, and asked for letters to give to the governors beyond the river, and letters for Asaph the keeper of the forest so that timber might be used for the gates and for the wall and for Nehemiah's own house. So the king and queen sent Nehemiah on his mission.

Scene 2 – Building the wall

Stage – outdoors – the stage full of boxes as part of the wall broken down.

All children enter with Nehemiah – look like they are speaking together.

Nar: Nehemiah was a born leader. He generated enthusiasm among the people for the work he was about to undertake. He first carefully surveyed what was required, and then quietly planned out his methods without telling anybody about them, then secured adequate co-operation from those who could help him.

Neh: Look at Jerusalem and the gates burned with fire. Come let us rise up and build.

All: "Let us rise up and build!"

(All work on the wall while Nehemiah inspects – talk among themselves)

Nar: "All were pressed into the work, priests, Levites, nobles, common people, tradesmen, women, merchants and doctors. All in one great act of service. Nehemiah kept careful account of the workers and the places where they were building.

(Lydia, Leah and Esther working together)

Leah: "We are Shallum's daughters"

Lydia: "We are working with our father"

Esther: “We are fixing a large part of the wall on the west.”

Person 1: “I am working near the valley gate”

Person 2: “I am helping near the horse gate with the priests”

Nar: “And so all of Judah were united in a wonderful work of service to God. The city of Jerusalem hummed with activity as the people built and Nehemiah supervised the work. **But...** The Jews had many enemies and they were not happy with what they saw going on in Jerusalem. The chief troublemaker was Sanballat. With the help of his friends he was determined to stop the work on the walls of Jerusalem. So together they came up with a plan that would help them get rid of Nehemiah – the leader behind the project.

(Nehemiah continued to work on stage with girls and Person 1&2. Sanballat to enter on stage right with Tobiah)

Sanballat: “What do you Jews think you are doing”

Tobiah: “If a fox got on this wall he could break it down” **Both Laugh mocking and leave stage.**

Nar: No amount of mocking would stop the Jews from building the wall together. Nehemiah took the matter to God in prayer and then continued this very important work. Sanballat realized that he would have to change tactics if he wanted to stop the work. They planned to come against the Jews and fight. When the Jews heard of this they prayed to God for help. But they were getting very discouraged so Nehemiah had a plan.

(Nehemiah gathers the people together)

Neh: “I want every family to have their sword with them while they work. Some will watch for our enemies and others will work. If there is any trouble we will blow the trumpet and gather together. Don’t be afraid, God is with us and he will fight for us”

Nar: “So the people worked together on the wall. Sanballat could tell that things were going well for the Jews. He needed to try something different. He decided to try and get Nehemiah. Maybe if they could kill Nehemiah the work would stop. So Sanballat sent a message to Nehemiah.

Messenger: (Read Message) “I have a message from Sanballat: “Come and meet with me in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.”

Neh: (looks to the audience): Hmmm I think they want to hurt me. **(Looks at Messenger)** You tell Sanballat that I cannot leave this great work.

Nar: Sanballat sent the same message 4 times and each time he got the same answer from Nehemiah. Meanwhile the building continued. Sanballat then sent an open letter to Nehemiah that was full of false accusations.

(Messenger to bring open letter in. Nehemiah to read the letter and give a message back)

Neh: “You tell Sanballat these are lies – his own inventions!”

Nar: Nehemiah prayed that God would strengthen his hands for the work of building. He was able to see through all of Sanballat’s efforts to stop the building of the wall. Despite the scheming and plotting within and without the city, the work went on until the wall was finished.

(All children come to the front, hold hands)

All: “We finished the wall in 52 days – praise God for being with us in the work”