

## THE STORY OF NEHEMIAH (PART THREE)

By Rod

*A retelling of Nehemiah chapter 4 &5. Narrators tell the story while the actors mime the actions.*

### CAST

*Narrator A Main storyteller*

*Narrator B Asks questions. A bit of a joker.*

*Nehemiah*

*Actor 1 In turns plays Sanballat, X factor judge, jew, rich jew*

*Actor 2 In turns plays Tobiah, X factor judge, jew, poor jew*

*[Nehemiah, Actors 1 and 2 are on stage in a line with Nehemiah in the middle]*

A The story of Nehemiah Three.

*[Nehemiah steps forward holding "3"]*

B It's actually Four – as it comes in Chapter 4.

*[1 holds up "4"]*

A Yes, I know that. The story of Nehemiah...

B .. and chapter 5.

*[2 holds up "5"]*

A OK. The continuing story of Nehemiah. *[To B]* Is that all right?

B I suppose that will have to do.

*[Nehemiah, 1 and 2 all throw away their numbers]*

A Thank you. Nehemiah and the Jewish people set about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

*[Nehemiah, 1 and 2 mime building]*

B A big project. They didn't have any mechanical diggers – or cement mixers – or cranes.

A A huge project made even harder by the fact that they faced problems from without and within.

B Without?

A Yes, their enemies who we heard about last week.

B Oh, you mean Sandblaster and To Be Or Not To Be.

*[1 and 2 now become Sanballat and Tobiah]*

A Yes, SANBALLAT and TOBIAH.

*[A holds up BOO]*

*[Type text]*

B What were they without?

A They were without mercy and poked fun at the builders. They said “Even a fox could knock over your wall it’s so feeble.”

*[Tobiah gestures while Sanballat pretends to be a fox]*

B That’s not very nice.

A No, but the people were not deterred. They had a song to sing as they worked.

*[During song Tobiah and Sanballat look angry. Nehemiah walks around them whistling]*

B Oh I know. *[Singing]*  
 “Whistle while you work,  
 Tobiah is a twerp.  
 Sanballat’s barmy,  
 So’s his army.  
 Whistle while you work.”

A No, it went like this.  
 “We grow weak carrying burdens,  
 There’s so much rubble to take away.  
 How can we rebuild the wall today?”

B I don’t think it will get to number one.  
*[Nehemiah 1, and 2 are now panel as in X Factor. They hold up scores of 3,4,5 as before]*

A Maybe not, but it kept their spirits up; and Nehemiah also devised a cunning plan.

*[Nehemiah calls 1 and 2 as Jews now together in a huddle and explains plan]*

B Was it as cunning as one devised by a fox who knocked over the wall and then and then took a degree in cunning at Oxford University?

A It was even more cunning.  
*[1 puts academic gown on Nehemiah, 2 gives him a scroll]*

B Wow! Tell me about it.

A Well Nehemiah arranged for half the people to work and half to stand guard.  
*[1 works. 2 stands guard]*

B That doesn’t sound very cunning.

A It outfoxed Tobiah and Sanballat because they couldn’t catch the Jews by surprise.

[Type text]

B I suppose not.

A And just to be absolutely sure Nehemiah kept a trumpeter beside him at all times ready to sound the alarm, and also told the people to guard the city by night.

*[1 produces trumpet. 2 starts to work]*

B Great teamwork. The Jews were clearly to a man united.

*[All 3 chant, "Here we go, here we go, here we go holding football scarves]*

A There was some unhappiness on the terraces.

*[1 and 2 start to mutter]*

B Is that the problem within you talked about earlier?

A Yes, it appears that some of the rich Jews were exacting usury from the poor ones.

B Eh? They were exactly ... usually? What does that mean?

*[1 and 2 look puzzled]*

A USURY means the rich were lending the poor money, but at very high interest rates. It cost them a lot to borrow.

*[1 becomes a rich person demanding money with menaces from 2, who shows empty pockets]*

B Oh dear. That's a bit rich – of the rich.

A Yes, and the penalty taken for being unable to pay was disastrous for the poor.

*[1 lines up to take penalty against 2 as goalie]*

B The penalty became and own goal?

*[1 turns round and kicks other way past Nehemiah as goalie]*

A Indeed. It caused the people to become disunited.

*[All 3 chant, "Here we don't go, here we don't go, here we don't go"]*

B What did Nehemiah do?

A He gathered all the rich people together and gave them what for.

*[Nehemiah summons 1 as rich person]*

B What for?

*[Nehemiah wags finger at 1]]*

A For being so greedy and heartless.

B I expect that stirred them up.

[Type text]

A     Actually they were shaken not stirred.  
*[2 gives 1 a martini in a cocktail glass]*

B     He frightened The Living Daylights out of them?  
*[Nehemiah produces a gun as Bond- could just point finger up in front of face]*

A     More of a Doctor No. Nehemiah told them there would be no more usury.  
*[2 arrives with cat – as Dr NO]*

B     A Quantum Of Solace then for the poor.

A     More like a Thunderball. It made all the difference.

B     Did they shake on it?  
*[All 3 shake hands]*

A     Indeed they did, and they carried on building united together.  
*[All 3 chant. "Here we go, here we go, here we go" as they march off]*

THE END