

Exposing The Enemy

SPIRIT OF SANBALLAT

Main Text: Nehemiah 4:1-3.

Nehemiah traveled hundreds of miles to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

This was important work, as the wall was Jerusalem's first line of defense.

But Nehemiah's restoration work did not go unopposed.

His first enemies are introduced in Nehemiah 2:19a, "But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously..."

This threesome was joined by more people: the Arabs, Ammonites and the people of Ashdod.

Nehemiah's progress on rebuilding the wall has made them "furious." (Nehemiah 4:7)

They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw them into confusion. (Nehemiah 4:8).

Has Sanballat attacked your life?

Not literally, but perhaps figuratively.

If you have a Sanballat in your life today, he or she wants to stop you spiritual growth.

Sanballat wants to make it look like the job is impossible; in other words create doubt.

He wants to rally opposition against what God is doing in and through you. Just like he did to Nehemiah.

The spirit of Sanballat's goal is to discourage you—to get you to quit what God has called you to do.

The goal is to tear down—not build up—the wall (thing) God is calling you to build.

Sanballat can take the form of discouragement, fatigue and fear.

These are enemies of restoration.

God was the Architect, and Nehemiah was the contractor.

God was at work. It was His will to rebuild the wall and the gates around the city.

Anyone in opposition to that goal was in opposition to God.

Nehemiah was determined that no one but God would stop the work.

Nehemiah finished the wall, not by removing the fear of attack, but by helping the people face their fears, turning their eyes towards God who was their Defender and Shield.

Like Nehemiah, we need to trust God, do our day's work faithfully, and leave the future and the results to Him.

Not everyone is going to be for you, especially when you are telling them something that God has laid on your heart.

Often times, it is never an easy task and always seems to raise eye brows of those who cannot understand why you are doing what you are doing.

It wasn't until after Nehemiah checked everything out that he told them,

“You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste (desolate), and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may not longer be a reproach” (Neh. 2:17). It isn't until now that he tells them of the hand of God being good upon him, and also of the king's words that had been spoken to him (Neh. 2:18).

After knowing this, they are now ready to rise up and build and set their hands to this good work!

Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were enemies of the Jews.

Nehemiah had received instruction to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall about the city; however, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem came against Nehemiah and those who would try to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.

In chapter 4 Sanballat hears that Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall and he was furious, very indignant, and mocked the Jews (Neh. 4:1).

His emotions have been driven straight to anger and mockery – all driven by a secret hatred.

What's fueling this spirit is a secret hatred?

Verse 2 shows us how Sanballat mocked the Jews which came through speaking to his brethren and army asking them what "the feeble Jews are doing", and questioning how they are going to go about doing it.

Verse 3 introduces Sanballat's sidekick Tobiah who comes with the copycat spirit.

He's seated beside Sanballat and joins in on his mockery, adding that "whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall" (Neh. 4:3).

Not only does Tobiah mock the Jews, he takes it to a level of assault.

He joins Sanballat's force to demoralize the workers.

With these two combined, their spirits carry characteristics of: fear, depression, mockery, doubt, discouragement, and unbelief.

We all know from personal experience that these spirits can work together or separate, but both carry the form of trickery by its master carrier Satan.

What's the Attack? The attack that we can see plain and clear is the initial attack to confuse the mind.

These men are trying to discourage Nehemiah and his people by questioning the very work that God had already ordained.

They figured that if they could get into their mind, it would delay or stop the rebuilding of the wall.

You may learn to recognize the accuser by looking at the actions of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.

A. **"When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (2:10).**

The accuser is stirred when you seek to rebuild your life in Christ. He despises any time god tried to restore something. He wants it to fail.

Nehemiah's Response: He ignored their anger and stayed focused on surveying the damage to the wall. Then he spoke to the rulers of the city and told them of his concern for the city and of his commission from God to rebuild the walls.

“Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king’s words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work” (Nehemiah 2:17-18).

B. “But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?” (2:19).

- 1. Laugh at you to make you think that you are doing something wrong or ridiculous.**
- 2. Despise you, that is, look down on you to make you think that you are lower than he is.**
- 3. Question what you are doing and try to get you to raise questions about the legitimacy of what you are doing.**
- 4. Question your authority and suggest that you are in rebellion against the established authority.**

Nehemiah’s Response: “Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 2:20).

Then people worked together, side by side, and went about repairing the walls.

C. “But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall” (Nehemiah 4:1-3).

- 1. Use his anger to make you afraid.**
- 2. Use his anger to belittle you.**
- 3. Mock you and what you are doing.**

4. Accuse you of being too weak or too old or too young or too ignorant to do what God has told you to do.

5. Question if you can protect yourself.

6. Question your depth of commitment.

7. Suggest that you have made a rash decision that you cannot keep.

8. Imply that it is too late to change because of your past experiences.

9. Suggest that even if you start to rebuild your life, that it won't do any good.

10. Declare that you will be overcome by the smallest enemy.

11. State that the least pressure will cause you to fall again.

Nehemiah's Response: He prayed and then went about the business of rebuilding the walls. "Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:4-6).