

The Hand of Our God Is Good - Week 6

Nehemiah 6-7

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Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

6 Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), ² Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. ³ And I sent messengers to them, saying, **"I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"** ⁴ **And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner.** ⁵ In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. ⁶ In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. ⁷ And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together." ⁸ Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind." ⁹ **For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen my hands.**

¹⁰ Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." ¹¹ **But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in."** ¹² And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³ For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me. ¹⁴ Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

The Wall Is Finished

¹⁵ **So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.** ¹⁶ **And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.** ¹⁷ Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them. ¹⁸ For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of

Berechiah as his wife. ¹⁹ Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.

⁷ Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, ² I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. ³ And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes." ⁴ **The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.**

Lists of Returned Exiles

⁵ **Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy.** And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:

⁶ These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. ⁷ They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: ⁸ the sons of Parosh, 2,172. ⁹ The sons of Shephatiah, 372. ¹⁰ The sons of Arah, 652. ¹¹ The sons of Pahath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,818. ¹² The sons of Elam, 1,254. ¹³ The sons of Zattu, 845. ¹⁴ The sons of Zaccai, 760. ¹⁵ The sons of Binnui, 648. ¹⁶ The sons of Bebai, 628. ¹⁷ The sons of Azgad, 2,322. ¹⁸ The sons of Adonikam, 667. ¹⁹ The sons of Bigvai, 2,067. ²⁰ The sons of Adin, 655. ²¹ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, 98. ²² The sons of Hashum, 328. ²³ The sons of Bezai, 324. ²⁴ The sons of Hariph, 112. ²⁵ The sons of Gibeon, 95. ²⁶ The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188. ²⁷ The men of Anathoth, 128. ²⁸ The men of Beth-azmaveth, 42. ²⁹ The men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743. ³⁰ The men of Ramah and Geba, 621. ³¹ The men of Michmas, 122. ³² The men of Bethel and Ai, 123. ³³ The men of the other Nebo, 52. ³⁴ The sons of the other Elam, 1,254. ³⁵ The sons of Harim, 320. ³⁶ The sons of Jericho, 345. ³⁷ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 721. ³⁸ The sons of Senaah, 3,930.

³⁹ The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, namely the house of Jeshua, 973. ⁴⁰ The sons of Immer, 1,052. ⁴¹ The sons of Pashhur, 1,247. ⁴² The sons of Harim, 1,017.

⁴³ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, namely of Kadmiel of the sons of Hodevah, 74. ⁴⁴ The singers: the sons of Asaph, 148. ⁴⁵ The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, 138.

⁴⁶ The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, ⁴⁷ the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁸ the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Shalmi, ⁴⁹ the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, ⁵⁰ the sons of Reaiah, the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, ⁵¹ the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, ⁵² the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim, ⁵³ the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the

sons of Harhur, ⁵⁴ the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, ⁵⁵ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah, ⁵⁶ the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha.

⁵⁷ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida, ⁵⁸ the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, ⁵⁹ the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Amon.

⁶⁰ All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were 392.

⁶¹ The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶² the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, ⁶⁴². ⁶³ Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name). ⁶⁴ These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. ⁶⁵ The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

Totals of People and Gifts

⁶⁶ **The whole assembly together was 42,360, ⁶⁷ besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337.** And they had 245 singers, male and female. ⁶⁸ Their horses were 736, their mules 245, ⁶⁹ their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

⁷⁰ Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver. ⁷¹ And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver. ⁷² And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments.

⁷³ **So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns.**

And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Ne 6:1–7:73). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

They intended to do me harm....

I am doing a great work — why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you....

Four times... the threat and distraction — four times the same response.

The fifth time — the report is that you intend to rebel —and that you want to become the king...

“No such thing I have done...”

The intent — was to frighten us and again stop to work...

Nehemiah's response: But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

The next threat — they are coming to kill you at night.

Nehemiah's response: Should such a man as I run away?

I understood and saw this threat was not from God, but from the same people trying to scare me, they hired this guy that I should be afraid, act in this way, and sin — God remember these people who are trying to make me afraid

The wall was finished. And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God

Nehemiah knew his calling — he understood the assignment.

Nehemiah feared God — and he knew the promises of God.

Nehemiah understood what was broken — and resolved in his own soul - to do something.

He did not back down

He did not give in to distraction

He wasn't moved by the threat of death

When fear came his way — his response — what to ask God to strengthen his hands

He was able to discern

When the nations looked in — they could see what God has done.

The wall gets built — and the city of Jerusalem fills with inhabitants.

Nehemiah knew the words from Isaiah — he knew the promises of the Lord for Israel. Nehemiah had the promise of a Messiah... but we know the Messiah: His name is Jesus.

Isaiah 41:8–10 (ESV): 8 But you, Israel, my servant,

Jacob, whom I have chosen,

the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth,

and called from its farthest corners,

saying to you, "You are my servant,

I have chosen you and not cast you off";

10 fear not, for I am with you;

be not dismayed, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Let me ask you today...

What is the focus of your life? What has God called you to?

How are you — as a follower of Christ — representing Jesus in your everyday life?

What can people see if they were to look in to your life?

What would happen if you got distracted?

What is at stake if you give in to fear?

For those of you like Nehemiah “on the wall” — I want to give you courage to stay focused and stay faithful.

For those of you who need direction — your “YES” to God is on the table but you need wisdom, you need clarity, you need confirmation.... Take time to think and pray, to consider the gifts and abilities He has given you, to survey what is broken, to move towards proximity to those in need of the Gospel, to move in proximity towards the broken people and places in your life...

For all of us — there are great and precious promises that must be anchors in our soul... In light of what Jesus has done...

Colossians 3:1-4 (ESV): 3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

What does it mean to “set your minds on things above” — how do we do this? We do this by remembering what Jesus has done. When we live in the reality of God’s grace and our new life in Christ — our perspective changes. Our circumstances may not change, but we can change. Christ is now your life — not just part of your life — He IS your life.

If you face fear — you know the feeling well — if you can quickly identify in your own heart, all the things that cause you that inner dread — hold tight to these promises. We all have fears. Bring those specific fears to God. I know what it means to fear... and you do to. We all understand — and Nehemiah did too. Nehemiah knew the hand of God was good. Do you?

The next time you are afraid — would you bring that to God — would you place those fears in His hands. A few weeks ago, a close pastor friend of mine, who had just led his church through a new building project... reached out to me. He understood the burdens I am facing. The Holy Spirit had prompted him to pray for me. He shared these words — “Matt remember this is all in His hands, and not on your shoulders.” Indeed. The hands of our God are more than capable to carry us...

The good hands of God would be nailed to the Cross — and forever silenced the penalty of our sin, of our shame, of our sickness, of our broken lives — and those same nail-scarred hands — which have always been good and will always be good — those hands are for us... not about us... but for us.

Romans 8:31–39 (ESV): God’s Everlasting Love

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.