

Time to Rebuild  
Part 8: Plots  
February 19, 2017

I **SLIDE** Opposition

A) Previously

- 1) Distraction
- 2) Cooperation that leads to Compromise
- 3) Discouragement
- 4) Deceit or betrayal
- 5) Ridicule

B) Linda Heidler's Dream

- 1) I had a dream about the two of you on Saturday night. In the dream, Robert and I and three other people from church were coming to visit you. We had brought gifts with us. When we got to your building, you had enlarged and had several buildings. We were not sure where to go but you saw us and came outside to direct us.

You had lots of gifts for us. One was a huge teddy bear. It took up almost the whole back of our car. You also had a bag of quilts for us.

We loaded all the gifts into our car, then a man from your church with a clipboard came up. He had a list of all the gifts and went through all of them to make sure we had all of the gifts on the list, then asked us to sign, saying that we had received all of them.

Several times in the dream, the car had to back up and then go forward a different way in order to get in position for a parking place. **SLIDE**

I saw that there are some elements of legalism regarding the gifts that have come into place and that **there are some areas that you need to back up and to go forward a new way to get in the right position.**

- 2) **SLIDE** January 8
  - a) God is taking us back to Mt. Horeb
  - b) He is taking us back to the beginning so that we can strengthen our foundation so we can rebuild
- 3) **SLIDE** from last week - beware of legalism
- 4) **SLIDE** Legalism and Going back
  - a) I realized that my trying to "fix" things was a form of legalism
  - b) We need to do it this way/We need to try this/etc.
  - c) God told us to go back to our roots, to our foundation at the beginning of this year
  - d) He has confirmed that word

## II **SLIDE** Plots

- A) **Nehemiah 4:7-8 (NIV)** <sup>7</sup> But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. <sup>8</sup> They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.
- 1) After all else has failed, the enemies of Israel step up the attack
  - 2) They devised plots to attack, fight, and stir up trouble and physically stop the Israelites
  - 3) Definitions
    - a) Angry - burn, to be kindled - the Jews rebuilding the temple has caused their anger to burn until it is out of control
    - b) Plot - to conspire, to bind up, to control
    - c) Fight - to do battle, to wage war, to close quarters to engage in battle
    - d) Hinder or Stir up trouble - to obstruct
  - 4) **SLIDE** So, the enemies of Israel allowed their opposition to the rebuilding of the temple to burn until it became a raging emotion.
  - 5) Then, they conspired to bind up and control the Israelites by confronting them head on to prevent the building from continuing

## B) Open opposition

- 1) This is an open opposition where battle lines have been drawn, NOT by us but by those who oppose the kingdom
- 2) The opposition will use the law, coercion, plots, taunts, riots, accusations to openly confront those who desire to build the spiritual temple of God and advance the kingdom
- 3) Remember:
  - a) We have focused on what is happening in this nation
  - b) However, Jesus is not limited to a country
  - c) Jesus' kingdom encompasses every tongue, tribe, and nation
  - d) **SLIDE Revelation 7:9 (NIV)** [John said,] After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.
  - e) In this country, we can see an escalation of these attacks, but our lives have not been threatened
  - f) **SLIDE** World Watch List has been tracking the persecution of Christians since 1970
  - g) The United States is not even on their list
  - h) According to reports, 90,000 Christians were killed for their beliefs worldwide LAST YEAR ALONE
  - i) Approximately 500,000,000 Christians are prevented from practicing their faith
  - j) The Christian population in Iraq alone has dropped from 1.5 million in 2003 to estimates of 275,000 today with the possibility that in a few short years, Christianity will disappear from Iraq altogether
  - k) The Director of the Centre for Studies on New Religions stated that Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world

C) **SLIDE** Solution

- 1) **Nehemiah 4:9,13-14, 17 (NIV)** <sup>9</sup> But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. [And when their enemies threatened to kill the Jews, Nehemiah said,]  
<sup>13</sup> Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. <sup>14</sup> After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes."  
<sup>17</sup> .... Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other,
- 2) **SLIDE** Nehemiah's first step was to pray
- 3) We get into trouble when we act and speak without praying
- 4) **James 1:19 (NIV)** <sup>19</sup> My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,
- 5) **Psalms 7:3-5 (NIV)** [King David prayed,] <sup>3</sup> O LORD my God, if I have done this and there is guilt on my hands-- <sup>4</sup> if I have done evil to him who is at peace with me or without cause have robbed my foe-- <sup>5</sup> then let my enemy pursue and overtake me; let him trample my life to the ground and make me sleep in the dust.  
Selah
  - a) Imagine what this nation would be like - what the church would be like - if we looked at our own hearts FIRST?
  - b) David was met with extreme opposition and threats to his life, but here he prays that if God sees any guilt in him, if he has done wrong to a friend or an enemy, then may he be overtaken.
- 6) **SLIDE** Nehemiah knew that they had to be on God's side instead of expecting God to be on their side
- 7) Then, they put watchmen on the walls to sound the alarm against such attacks

- 8) Finally, with their eyes fixed firmly on the LORD, they built with one hand and held a sword in the other
- 9) No matter what opposition came at them, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the people never stopped building the temple of the LORD

D) **SLIDE** Caution!

- 1) Notice, the Israelites never initiated any of these attacks
- 2) They responded to the attacks only after seeking God
- 3) In countries where Christians are being put to death, we need a weapon in one hand and building materials in the other
- 4) However, for us, this is not a call to arms so that we physically or verbally get into fights with those who oppose God's word
- 5) When opposition arises because we are obeying God's word, then we are on God's side
- 6) If the opposition arises because of arrogance, self-righteousness, legalism, or spite, God will not recognize us
- 7) **SLIDE** Our sword is the word of God, and it is never to leave us
- 8) **Ephesians 6:17 (NIV)** <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- 9) **Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- 10) **SLIDE** The word of God is a double-edged sword that strikes both ways
- 11) We are to use to fight the opposition, but, at the same time, it will penetrate our hearts and souls
- 12) It will judge our thoughts and attitudes on all sides
- 13) We are not to use the Bible to beat others into submission, but neither do we abandon it to pacify the opposition
- 14) We do not use the Bible to win an argument but to repeal the attacks of the enemy

15) **Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

E) **SLIDE** All about Truth!

- 1) We demolish the powers and lies of darkness with the Truth
- 2) From that moment in the Garden of Eden, the enemy has been trying to obscure THE TRUTH
- 3) Our battle is to make sure that does not happen
- 4) Therefore, we need to reestablish that foundation and stand firm
- 5) Human power and resolve cannot reveal the truth
- 6) Only those who are led by the Spirit of Truth can shed light on the truth
- 7) It may seem strange, but the fellowship dinner next is part of God's strengthening this body