

**Nehemiah 6**  
**“The Wall is Finished in 52 Days”**

**Introduction**

Last time we covered Ch. 5, and we looked at an “inward” attack:

**Neh 5:1**

1 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren.

2 For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore **let us get grain, that we may eat and live.**"

3 There were also some who said, "**We have mortgaged** our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain **because of the famine.**"

4 There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money **for the king's tax** on our lands and vineyards.

5 "Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are **forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves**, and **some of our daughters have been brought into slavery.**

It is **not in our power to redeem them**, for other men have our lands and vineyards."

It tells us, “**Against their Jewish brethren**”.

Thus, the work was stopped because of *strife among God’s people*.

**Note:**

The enemy (.i.e. satan) could not stop the work of God by direct attack from “**outside** enemies and attack”, but the enemy (.i.e. satan) could stop the work by fracturing the people of God from the “**inside**”.

**6:1-4 The enemy hears of success and plans various attacks**

**Neh 6:1-4**

1 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates),

2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

**A. Our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall:**

The wall was almost finished – the gaps were closed, but the gates were not yet finished.

The enemies were taken off-guard because of the speed of the work. They thought they had a lot more time to plan and carry out attacks.

They had to act rapidly to hinder, slow down, or stop the work.

**B. Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono:**

Sanballat and Geshem plan of attack was to get Nehemiah by himself in a desolate place and kill him.

Their invitation may have had the sense of reconciliation and rest out on the plain of Ono (i.e. a supposed neutral location), but Nehemiah discerned their true intentions.

**Plain of Ono:**

A town of Benjamin, in the "plain of Ono" (1 Chronicles 8:12; Ezra 2:33); now Kefr `Ana, 5 miles north of Lydda, and **about 30 miles north-west of Jerusalem.**

**Quote:** (Redpath)

"Whether you be a pastor or a teacher or evangelist or Sunday school leader, or whatever your position may be in Christian leadership, let me say that there will always be those who are friendly to your face, but plan your downfall behind your back. Beware of the fawning, flattering Christian who is always fluttering around you, and who behind your back will be the first to rejoice when you go down."

**C. But they thought to do me harm...a leader needs to discern:**

Discernment is the ability to judge matters according to God's view of them, and not according to their outward appearance.

We are often deceived by outward appearances;

**1 Sam 16:7**

*For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*

**1 Cor 12:10a** (One of the gifts of the Spirit)

10a to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, **to another discerning of spirits**, ....

**Important Note:** ( quote by Guzik)

"Many people confuse being discerning with being negative or cynical; but discernment is just as able to see the good where others might miss it as it is at seeing bad where others might see good according to the outward appearance".

**D. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you:**

Nehemiah speaks his reasoning (comes from earlier discernment) out loud.

**Quote:** (Guzik)

"If the enemy can *distract* God's people, then he has won; if we can start majoring on minors, and minoring on majors, we've lost our effectiveness for the work of the LORD".

**E. But they sent me this message FOUR TIMES...and I answered them in the same manner**

They were *persistent*, and each time Nehemiah stood fast and didn't bend to their distractions.

**James 4:7b** ....Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

**Quote:** (Guzik)

“Anyone doing a work for God must contend with a hundred different noble causes, and a hundred things that might look good – and be good – but they are not what they are called to do at that time. Discernment gives us focus”.

**6:5-9 Sanballat sent... an open letter....full of lies**
**Neh 6:5-9**

5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, **the fifth time**, with an open letter in his hand.  
 6 In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.  
 7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "There is a king in Judah!" Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.  
 8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."  
 9 For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

**A. It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says:**

Sanballat's slander began the way many verbal attacks do, as a report of what others have reportedly said.

**The POWER of the "Vague accusations":**

- "Everyone is talking about..."
- "A number of people are saying..."

Such vague words are meant to give the wrong impression and can cause great damage.

- "Did you hear what Nehemiah is doing....?"

**B. A popular lie (i.e. repeated many times) can be very dangerous and damaging.**

Get enough people saying it, it seems more true, even though it is a complete lie.

1. **The Jews plan to rebel...**
2. **...that Nehemiah may be their king...**
3. **Nehemiah has also appointed prophets to proclaim...**

Nehemiah is being accused of the very things he has worked so hard to not fall into!

Nehemiah had worked hard and trusted God greatly, so this work would be done with the blessing of the king;  
 and he had embraced great personal sacrifice to demonstrate that he was not in this for himself.

We should not be surprised that the Devil's accusations are accusations speaking the most "opposite" of the truth.

**Example:** (Jesus)

- He was a drunkard
- He was a glutton
- He was possessed with the head demon of Galilee and through that demon is doing all His miracles to deceive the multitudes.

**Rev 12:10b**

10b .... **for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.**

**Quote:** (Guzik)

“We may as well accept it: the devil knows our hot buttons. He knows those lies, those accusations, which really get to you – and he knows how to throw them in your face. We can’t stop it, so we have to learn how to deal with it!”

**C. These matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.**

They were trying to manipulate Nehemiah to give in and meet with them. But, Nehemiah wouldn’t be deceived into going to meet them.

**D. Nehemiah simply states the truth....NOT TRUE!**

Nehemiah simply said, “not true”, “you’re making it up” and in the process revealing your own heart.

Nehemiah did not mount an elaborate defense, trying to prove Sanballat wrong point by point.

**Note:** (trying to defend yourself)

Don’t waste your time trying to defend yourself. Such enemies (*whether they know they are enemies or not*) don’t care about the truth or facts, they simply want you to worry and be preoccupied.

And they also trust that if they can throw enough dirt, mud, and dust in the air, things will look and feel dirty, and that is enough for them to hurt the leader. Many innocent people will believe that something must be wrong with the Leader, because he has people who are against him.

**E. Nehemiah saw through their tactic.....They are trying to make us afraid:**

Nehemiah had the discernment that their strategy was all about causing him to have fear, and to act out of fear.

**Note:** (fear)

No enemy can make us afraid; all they can do is try to make us choose fear – but it is up to us to choose it. (Guzik)

- Many people live paralyzed by the fear of what others are saying about them.

- People will repeat lies and rumors and there is little you can do about it.

**F. Nehemiah throws up a quick prayer....“Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands”:**

We cannot overcome the slander and fear of our enemies in our own strength.

We must all learn this important lesson from Nehemiah– pray for God’s strength, His power in our lives.

**Zech 4:6**

6 So he answered and said to me:

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel:

**'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.**

**6:10-14 Shemaiah a false prophet who is on Sanballat’s payroll...tries to hurt Nehemiah**

**Neh 6:10-14**

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!"

12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

13 For this reason he was hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so that they might have cause for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

**A. Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah:**

This man **Shemaiah** was said to be a prophet of God, but he was not.

The Bible says,

**1 Thes 5:20** Do not despise prophecies.

Interesting the very next verse says,

**1 Thes 5:21** Test all things; hold fast what is good.

- Shemaiah offered Nehemiah a safe haven in the temple.
- Nehemiah’s life was being threatened, so he could find refuge in the temple.
- It sure must have sounded reasonable.
- One could find Scriptural support for such action. In **Psalms 61:4** it says, *I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings.*

Nehemiah needed discernment now more than ever.

**B. Nehemiah discerned this was a false word from God...Should a man such as I flee?**

Nehemiah, knowing the heart of God and the whole counsel of scripture, had discernment. Shemaiah tried to create fear in Nehemiah and tried to get him to disobey God based on fear.

**Important note:** (Only Levites/Priests were allowed in the Temple; remember Uzziah)  
Only priests were allowed in the temple, and Nehemiah was not a priest. He would have been disobeying God if he had done what Shemaiah suggested.

**Num 1:51**

51 "And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. **The outsider who comes near shall be put to death.**

**Num 18:7**

7 "Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, **but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.**"

**Example:** (2 Chronicles 26 - Uzziah)

King Uzziah – who was a King and not a priest – went into the temple to burn incense, only that which those of the Tribe of Levite (Jewish Priest) were to do and God instantly struck him with leprosy.

**C. Let us meet together in the house of God:**

Trying to set Nehemiah up to violate God's will and word.

**Isaiah 8:20** (Isaiah speaks about identifying false prophets)

20 To the law and to the testimony!

If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Had Nehemiah listened to the lie of this false prophet, it would have given Nehemiah's enemies away to find fault with him and discredit him.

**D. And who is there such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in:**

Nehemiah stood brave against this religious deception.

In his commitment to obedience, God revealed to him the heart of Shemaiah – who was no true prophet.

Instead, he was on Sanballat's payroll.

**E. Nehemiah has another quick prayer...My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat:**

Best of all, instead of lashing out against Shemaiah and those who instigated this scenario. Nehemiah simply committed these wicked men to God.

<b>6:15-16 The wall was finished in 52 days....this was done by God!!!</b>
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**Neh 6:15-16**

15 So the **wall was finished** on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, **in fifty-two days**.

16 And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; **for they perceived that this work was done by our God**.

**A. So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days:**

The amount of time it took to finish the job was remarkably short.

The walls were in ruins for more than 100 years, and then they were set right in a period of only 52 days.

Daniel prophesied correctly about this season of the “building of the wall”:

**Dan 9:25d** .... **shall be built** again, and the wall, **Even in troublesome times**.

**Why was the job NOT done years earlier?**

- It wasn't that no one saw the problem;
- it wasn't that walls were not wanted.
- Many people saw broken walls, knew how they ruined the lives of the people of Jerusalem, but it seems that no one got past the place of just “*wishing*” there were walls.

**Why did the job get done?**

- Finally, there came a “Spiritual Leader” who would actually lead.
- There was someone who did more than wish Jerusalem had walls;
- He traveled the road of leadership: he grieved, he ached, he prayed, he planned, he asked boldly, he went, he fought, he encouraged, he stood strong, he saw the job through to completion.

**Important final note:**

But, he also had people around him with the same kind of heart.

**Quote:** (Guzik)

We have such small ideas of how God can use us. God used a man named Nehemiah to set right a 100-year-old problem in less than two months – and the same God sits on a throne in heaven and works through you today.

**B. In fifty-two days:**

At the beginning, when he saw the need, Nehemiah prayed for **four months** (the difference in time between (Neh 1:1 to 2:1).

- But the work itself took **less than two months**.
- Nehemiah worked longer in prayer than they needed to work to do the job.
- This shows the spiritual battle was actually greater than the material battle.

**C. And all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes:**

It is a glorious thing to dishearten the enemies of God's people, and to let them be discouraged for a while.

**Quote:** (Guzik)

The battles were hard; the work was big; there were challenges from within and without. But the job was now finished, and victory was sweet.

**D. They perceived that this work was done by our God !!!!!!!**

Their enemies were disheartened not just because the wall was finished, but especially because **it was evident that God did the work.**

**Quote:** (Guzik)

"When something has the fingerprints of God on it, all our enemies notice it also".

**Quote:** (Guzik)

The enemy is *only* disheartened when God does the work. If it is the product of man's efforts, they just laugh. Men might be fooled, and see a work of man and be impressed, but angels in heaven and every demon in hell know what has been done by man and what has been done by God.

**But the enemies never STOP!**

**6:17-19 Tobiah had deep ties in the tribe of Judah and continues his attack on Nehemiah**

**Neh 6:17-19**

17 Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them.

18 For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

**A. Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah:**

Tobiah was the man who had opposed the rebuilding work with Sanballat.

**Let's not forget:**

- In Neh 2:10 **he was disturbed that Nehemiah came to rebuild the walls.**
- In Neh 2:19 and In Neh 4:5 he **mocked Nehemiah's work.**
- In Neh 4:7 **he was angry that the work was being done.**
- In Neh 6:1 **he was one of the men who tried to get Nehemiah to stop the work and come to the plain of Ono where he could be attacked.**

**B. For many in Judah were pledged to him:**

We will discover that Tobiah had family ties to many in the tribe of Judah.

Also, in the case of these nobles, there was self-interest at work.

They had financial dealings with Tobiah they wanted to protect.



**Quote:** (Kidner)

“His numerous binding agreements (**pledged to him**) within the Jewish community were probably trading contracts, facilitated by marriage connections.”

**C. They reported his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him:**

How is it that they could not see the evil doings of these men?

It appears that these Jewish brothers of Nehemiah could not see what was so plain to Nehemiah.

**Why?**

1. **Perhaps they did not see much of the evil work of Tobiah first-hand**, so they had a hard time believing it.
2. It is also possible they just didn't have the shepherd's heart, and **shepherd's eyes** that Nehemiah had.

**D. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me:**

Nehemiah wrote no more about this situation.

Nehemiah wasn't going to demand the nobles change their minds about Tobiah.

Nehemiah seems willing to let it go and let God take care of it.

<b>Conclusion</b>
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