

Restoring Courage: *Nehemiah 6*



Personal Courage

In chapters four and five Nehemiah dealt with opposition against building the walls of Jerusalem and against the Jewish people. Now the opposition targets Nehemiah personally. It takes godly courage to withstand personal attacks.

Introduction: Having failed to stop the Jews from building the wall the enemy now tries to destroy Nehemiah. Like Nehemiah—we need courage when we come under attack.

A. What We're Up Against

- 1. Deception** :1-2 This seemed like a perfect time for Nehemiah to chat with Sanballat and to make peace. Isn't it always better to talk than to fight? No—not always! The invitation was a trap.
- 2. Repeated attack** Each time Nehemiah succeeded in repelling an attack—another one came.
- 3. Distraction and separation** :2-5 *"Why should the work stop...?"* Distractions are among the greatest weapons of the enemy against the work of God. "The tyranny of the urgent destroys the plans of God." RA Torrey.
- 4. Lies** :6-8 *"Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind."* The purpose of accusation is to cast doubt on the character of the accused. Nehemiah dismissed the charges for what they were and prayed for strength.
- 5. Fear and discouragement** *"For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, 'They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done.'"* 6:9
- 6. Disgrace** :10-14 Test the prophets and prophecies for not all will be of the Lord. Nehemiah would have been accused of hiding to save his own life—a disgrace to his leadership.

B. Restoring Courage

- 1. Know the strategy of the enemy** *"But they were planning to harm me."* :2 *"Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him."* :12 *"Then Tobiah sent letters to frighten me."* :19
- 2. Know who you are** Stay focused on what God has called you to do and to be! *"I am doing a great work and I cannot come down."* :3
- 3. Know how to Pray** *"But now, O God, strengthen my hands."* :9 *Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs..."* :14
- 4. Know that you're not alone** *"And it came about when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding **us** saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God."* :16

Courage

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Deu 31:6

"Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!" **Psa 17:14**

"A man without courage is a knife without an edge."

Benjamin Franklin

"And having thus chosen our course, let us renew our trust in God and go forward without fear and with manly hearts.

Abraham Lincoln

The coward seeks release from pressure. The courageous pray for strength.

Frances J. Roberts

Psalms 119:97-103

Oh, how I love Your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they *are* ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies *are* my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me.

How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Nehemiah Chapter Six

Deception

:1 Now it came about when it was reported to Sanballat, Tobiah, to Geshem the Arab, and to the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall, and that no breach remained in it, although at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates,

:2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono." ***But they were planning to harm me.***

:3 So 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 messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way.

Smear Campaign

:5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand.

:6 In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel; therefore you are rebuilding the wall. And you are to be their king, according to these reports.

:7 "And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem concerning you, 'A king is in Judah!' And now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. So come now, let us take counsel together."

:8 Then I sent a message to him saying, "Such things as you are saying have not been done, ***but you are inventing them in your own mind.***"

:9 For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, "They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done." ***But now, O God, strengthen my hands.***

Setting a Trap

:10 And when I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, 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, and they are coming to kill you at night."

:11 But I said, "***Should a man like me flee? And could one such as I go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.***"

:12 Then I ***perceived*** that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

:13 He was hired for this reason, that I might become frightened and act accordingly and sin, so that they might have an evil report in order that they could reproach me.

:14 ***Remember, O my God,*** Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me.

:15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

:16 ***And it came about when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations surrounding us saw it, they lost their confidence; for they recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.***

Nepotism

:17 Also in those days many letters went from the nobles of Judah 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 married the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

:19 Moreover, they were speaking about his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. Then Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.