

Vision and Opposition Nehemiah 6

Recap

- God's people have disobeyed God and now find themselves in captivity in Babylon.
- After almost 70 years they are allowed to go back to Jerusalem and begin to rebuild their torn down city.
- They start with the Altar and the temple so they can re-establish proper worship.
- Nehemiah arrives 160 years later and begins to rebuild the wall.
- Last week we talked about the importance of walls and how they protect us.
- **Before you rebuild you need to repent.**
- **While you rebuild expect resistance** (opposition).
- Have to have grit (perseverance).

This week we are looking at what the Israelites did to **defend** themselves from the opposition they were facing.

Nehemiah 4:1-20 (NLT) Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, ² saying in front of his friends and the Samaritan army officers, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they're doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices? Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?" ³ Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!" ⁴ Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land!" ⁵ Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of the builders." ⁶ At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm. ⁷ But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, **they were furious.** ⁸ They all made plans to come and **fight against Jerusalem** and throw us into confusion. ⁹ But we prayed to our God and guarded the city day and night to protect ourselves.

1) To defend against opposition, you need to Pray

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT) ¹⁴ Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

We can't pray and ask God to send a national revival unless we are willing to ask God for a personal revival.

Philippians 4:6 (NLT) Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT); Matthew 5:44 (NIV)

Nehemiah 4: 10-20 (NLT) ¹⁰ Then the people of Judah began to complain, "The workers are getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will never be able to build the wall by ourselves." ¹¹ Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, "Before they know what's happening, **we will swoop down on them and kill them and end their work.**" ¹² The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and again, "They will come from all directions and attack us!" ¹³ So I placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families, armed with swords, spears, and bows. ¹⁴ Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!" ¹⁵ When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall. ¹⁶ But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah ¹⁷ who

were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon.¹⁸ All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.¹⁹ Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.²⁰ When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!”

2) To defend against opposition, you need to **Be unified (together)**

He prays and then rallies people. If there is a problem, blow the trumpet and we will all rally there. We need each other.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Nehemiah 6:1-9 (NLT) Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates.² So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But I realized they were plotting to harm me,³ so I replied by sending this message to them: “I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”⁴ Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the same reply.⁵ The fifth time, Sanballat’s servant came with an open letter in his hand,⁶ and this is what it said: “There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king.⁷ He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, ‘Look! There is a king in Judah!’ “You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me.”⁸ I replied, “There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing.”⁹ They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So I continued the work with even greater determination.

3) To defend against opposition, you need to **Keep at the work God gave us**

Galatians 6:9 (NIV); Matthew 28:19-20a (NIV)

They defended themselves but they never went out and attacked the enemy. There is a time and a place to take up arms..

It starts with the spiritual battle that we fight with spiritual weapons.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NIV)³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

In order to fight the spiritual battles, we need to fight with spiritual weapons.

Ephesians 6:11-18 (NIV); Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

