

The Israelites had been released from exile in Babylon as God impressed upon His people to reestablish a place to worship Him in Jerusalem. Ezra led the rebuilding of the temple and then Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls. Today we are in Nehemiah 6 with the rehangings of the gates.

Let's hear 3 ways that the enemy attacks.

1. Compromise. Nehemiah 6:2-4 *Sanballat and Geshem sent a message to me, saying, "Come, let's meet together at Chephirim in the plain of Ono." But they were plotting to harm me. So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and am unable to come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" Then they sent messages to me four times worded in this way, and I answered them with the same wording.*

Ono was located half way - a neutral place - a compromise. It seemed to be a safe place for Nehemiah to go to meet those calling to him. God called Nehemiah to rebuild the walls, not to make peace with those people. While it made sense to step away from the work on the walls, he was not called to build peace. Nehemiah didn't deviate from his purpose and priority. Later, he finds out that they had different motives than they said as they wanted to harm him.

We also need to set our priorities right; right priorities will protect us from the enemy's distraction. So many times we surrender things in the church for the sake of peace. From the beginning of our walk or during the depths of our brokenness, have we compromised God's call? How long have we waited to change things in our walk with the Lord? How much do we allow distractions to get us off track or to make us compromise? The enemy knows that he can keep us ineffective if we stay off course, even with little compromises in marriages, with parents, with friends... compromising with valuable time spent. Nehemiah conquered this spirit of compromise.

2. Slander. Nehemiah 6:5-7 *Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same way a fifth time with an open letter in his hand. In it was written: "It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; for that reason you are rebuilding the wall. And you are to be their king, according to these reports. 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's consult together."*

As an open letter, it would have been read between many people and so the rumors would spread quickly. The enemy also wants to ruin our reputation today. Even things said, though false, cannot be unsaid. The enemy wants to slander, mess up relationships, etc. Look at Nehemiah's response... **Nehemiah 6:8-9** *Then I sent a message to him saying, "Nothing like these things that you are saying has been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind." 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, God, strengthen my hands. Nehemiah denied the rumor. Then he prayed for strength. Nehemiah always turns to God's Word and to prayer, and then he gets back to work. Have you prayed about your problem or just staying in a defensive mode? Is God your defender? Don't let slander get us away from what God called us to do. Jesus continued in His priorities and purpose while on the Earth.*

3. Threats. Nehemiah 6:10-14 *When I entered the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined at home, he said, "Let's meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let's close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night." But I said, "Should a man like me flee? And who is there like me who would go into the temple to save his own life? I will not go in." Then I realized that God certainly had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. He was hired for this reason, that I would become frightened and act accordingly and sin, so that they might have an evil report in order that they could taunt me. Remember, my God, Tobiah and Sanballat in accordance with these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets, who were trying to frighten me.*

Shemaiah was a false prophet talking for the Lord. If someone gives us a word from the Lord, we must ask if it is really the Lord. We give too much value to others that give advice. Nehemiah doesn't rely on how he feels or what seems good, but relies on the Word of God. Shemaiah was a wolf in sheep's clothing; he was using deception. Deception often includes a little truth. In this case, it was true that there were people trying to kill Nehemiah. God's Word says to test everything. God will not contradict Himself in His Word. We don't need to pray about something that is in His Word. God's Word does not change. Nehemiah asks God to take care of the threats. Then he gets back to his work of rebuilding - the right priority.

The results are in **verse 15...** *So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.* 52 days to complete something that had been lying in ruins for over 90 years. Can you imagine the rejoicing on the day of finishing? They recognized God's help (**verse 16**). It was not the result of individuals' effort but it was individuals with a single priority. **Verse 17-19** The enemy is not going to quit just because of a victory. Now the enemy was within the camp spreading lies. We are in a constant battle for souls in this world. Do we see this tactic in churches today? Do not give place to the enemy to sow seeds of discord in our homes, families, churches, and communities... The enemy wants us to stop our work, but let's set our priority to obey God no matter what comes. The enemy wants us to stop praying. Do you want to stop forgiving? Don't - have the right priority and commit to what God wants for us. Pick up what we've ignored or put off.

Weapons of the enemy can be mental confusion, contradictions, feelings, indecisiveness, panic, etc. Turn to the Lord; seek counsel; read the Word; pray; work on our own character as we trust God with our reputation.

Where have you experienced compromise that got you off track from God's will?

How have you faced or dealt with slander or threats?

What do you want to change in behavior after applying one of Nehemiah's responses?