

## The Danger of Compromise

**Text:** Nehemiah 6:1-9

### Introduction:

1. This chapter: The opposition from the enemy resumes but in a more subtle and dangerous form. Having failed to stop the progress of the work of God through open, frontal attack, the enemy now resorts to an under-cover operation to disrupt the work of God.
2. The enemy tries every crafty tactic he can come up with to get Nehemiah to compromise.
3. 'compromise' = an amicable agreement between parties in controversy, to settle their differences by mutual concessions.
4. The enemy uses four weapons against Nehemiah to try and get him to compromise: 1. The Lure of **Friendship** 2. The Lips of **Falsehood** 3. The Leadership of **Fear** 4. The Links of **Family**

### I. The Lure of Friendship (Vs. 1-4)

#### A. The Enemies Proposal (Vs. 1-2)

1. The prompting of the proposal (Vs. 1).
  - a. Progress in the work of God will always arouse the interest and attention of the enemy.
  - b. The breaches were being repaired. Breaches were gaps or holes in the wall that had been punched through by enemy battering rams. Word is translated 'gap' in Ez. 22:30. The compromised Christian who has multiple cracks and weak points in his spiritual fortifications does not bother the enemy. But let him take steps to close those gaps of compromise and the wrath and fury of the enemy will be aroused.
  - c. The gates were soon to be hung.
2. The presentation of the proposal (Vs. 2)
  - a. Deceptive – appeared to be the extending of the hands of cooperation.
  - b. Dangerous – the real intent of the enemy was destruction. If the leader could be eliminated, the work of God and the people of God would be easy pickings for the enemy.
    - i. Ono = located approx. 40 km North-west of Jerusalem in hostile enemy territory.
    - ii. The invitation, now matter how nice on the surface, would require Nehemiah to leave the place of safety and victory.

#### B. Nehemiah's Refusal (Vs. 3-4)

Learn to say **NO** to invitations that lead to compromise!

1. Nehemiah's Perspective (3a)

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- a. Nehemiah held the work of God in high regard.
  - b. The work they were doing was indeed of great historical and spiritual importance for the nation of Israel. Close to 150 years have elapsed since the walls were destroyed by the Babylonians.
2. Nehemiah's Priorities (3b)
- a. Nehemiah was absolute – "I **cannot** come down"
  - b. Nehemiah left no room for further negotiation or dialogue. To him it wasn't even an option. His allegiance to God and His work made it impossible for him to accept such an invitation
  - c. Nehemiah knew that his absence would mean the demise of the work
3. Nehemiah's Position (3c)
- a. To accept this invitation would require Nehemiah to "come down"
  - b. Accepting an invitation to compromise is always a step down from the high ground of faith.
4. Nehemiah's Persistence (Vs. 4)
- a. Nehemiah demonstrated more persistence than the enemy. The enemy came a further four times and Nehemiah gave them the same answer every time.
  - b. The enemy does not give up at the first refusal! Many stand for the truth initially, only to eventually buckle to the enemy's pressure.
  - c. What about love and grace?
    - i. John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
    - ii. Titus 2:11-12 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;"
    - iii. Ernest Pickering:

One young man who had been for years a member of a fundamentalist church suddenly left it to join a New Evangelical congregation. Upon enquiring as to the reason, the pastor was told that the New Evangelicals were more loving than the fundamentalists and that the young man was attracted to them for this reason. None of us can claim a corner on love, and no doubt it is true that many fundamentalist congregations could greatly improve in their love toward the Lord, toward one another, and toward the world in which they live. However, what some perceive of as love is, in reality, compromise. Many confuse a broad acceptance of various doctrinal positions, lifestyles, musical tastes, and methodologies as a demonstration of Christian love. In other words, if one is broader and more lenient, one is more loving. But this concept is not grounded in Scripture. Truth and love are not to be divorced. They walk together and are in perfect agreement. Some believe that if one is truly loving, one will not denounce error nor evaluate in a negative way the positions of others. Since the New Evangelicals do not do this, they are perceived to be more loving than fundamentalists, to be kinder, more gracious, and more tolerant. But divine love is capable of hatred, strange as that may seem. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." (Psalm 97:10). We are to "love in the truth" (2 John 1). One who is truly filled with divine love will rebuke evil and expose error. Many have erroneously equated a refusal to speak forthrightly as a demonstration of love.

- d. Note: If Christ were to preach in many of our churches today, He

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would likely be thrown out for not being Christ-like enough, for not being loving and gracious enough! We should note Christ's true perspective on error in Rev. 2:14-16 where He rebukes the church at Pergamos for their slackness in dealing with false doctrine in their midst.

### II. The Lips of Falsehood (Vs. 5-9)

#### A. The Report (Vs. 5-7)

1. The format of the report (Vs. 5)
  - a. An open letter. Intended to be read and spread!
  - b. Letters are powerful tools, for good or evil.
2. The contents of the report (Vs. 6-7a)
  - a. Hearsay – gossip and idle tales. How often do Christians make conclusions based on “I heard such and such from so and so” Some Christians are Gossip Garbage trucks – they go from one house to another, collecting wheelie bins full of slander and gossip! Prov. 18:8; 26:22 – Words of talebearers are as wounds.
  - b. Slander – false accusation. In our day, the culture has become such that if you simply make up enough ugly sounding stories about someone's character, it almost gets treated like evidence in itself.
    - i. Falsely accused them of planning to rebel against the king. Note: It is interesting how often the people who want to charge a godly leader with wrongdoing are rebels themselves!
    - ii. Falsely accused Nehemiah of selfish ambition for power
    - iii. Falsely accused Nehemiah of self-promotion
    - iv. John Butler

Those who rebel against the will of God are generally and ironically the first to charge others with rebellion of one sort or another when the accusers do not like the way others are acting. The Jews' enemies had been rebelling against the king's orders about the walls ever since Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, yet they make this charge of rebellion against Nehemiah. This hypocritical habit of sinners in charging others with the sins they themselves are guilty of is also seen in the charge of lack of love often made against pastors and other church leaders. The ones who lack love the most are generally the first to charge others with lack of love. Check out the lives of those making absurd charges, and you will likely find it is a hypocrite pointing the finger.

- c. Threats – this slander had strong political overtones. To rebel against the king of Babylon was a most serious offense, punishable by death.
3. The aim of the report
  - a. They wanted to force Nehemiah off the wall to come and discuss the accusations against him. But falsehood, slander and hear say are not basis for any meeting!

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- b. They wanted to cause fear, thus weakening the resolve of the builders so that the work would stop (Vs. 9)

### **B. The Response (Vs. 8-9)**

1. Nehemiah stayed on the wall (Vs. 8) – We are not to leave the work of God to chase every slanderous rumor we hear!
2. Nehemiah exposed the lies (Vs. 8) – Nehemiah did not directly address the specifics of the accusation. He simply called them out for what they were – lies!
3. Nehemiah sought the Lord (Vs. 9) – Take slander and false accusation to the Lord and seek His strength to press on with service God.

**Conclusion:** Are you a supporter or detractor of God's work? Are you responding in a spiritual manner to spiritual attacks?