

July 31st, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 6 – “Faithfulness in Persecution”

- A. There is an introductory phrase in modern evangelism that does not fit well with the rest of Scripture: “God loves you & has a wonderful plan for your life.”
1. What about those who hear such a well-meaning Christian say this yet reject Christ & die in unbelief?
 2. **2 Tim 3:12** says, “**Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**” Jesus told us to count the costs in **Luke 14:25-33**.
- B. Nehemiah was granted leave from being the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes to travel to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls of the city because they were broken down & her gates were burned with fire.

You are to seek God’s help to be faithful in persecution	I. TACTICS TO AVOID TRAPS II. GOD’S HELP IN PERSECUTION
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I. **TACTICS TO AVOID TRAPS** – There are 3 main traps that the enemy attempted against Nehemiah.

A. The assassination trap. → Look at **vv1-4**

1. He escaped this trap because he refused to meet with wicked men.
2. His answer was true as well, “Why waste my time with you? Rebuilding the wall & the gates was the reason King Artaxerxes granted him leave to return to his home land in the 1st place.”
3. When evil people try to draw you out, like Nehemiah, it may be best for you to avoid any & all contact with such persons.

B. The accusation trap. → Look at **vv5-7**

1. The open letter was to bring this accusation to the attention of others in an attempt for Nehemiah’s fellow jews to put pressure on him out of fear because of the accusation.
2. Toward the end of **v7**, Sanballat sought to use this tactic to get Nehemiah isolated so that he could try his assassination attempt again. → **end of v7**.
3. In **v8**, he put an end to this trap by boldly calling out his opponent as a liar. → **v8**
4. It is inevitable that people will hurl false accusations at you if U seek to live a godly life.
 - a. **Mat 5:11-12**: “**Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, & falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice & be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**”
 - b. Rest in what you know to be true & just & holy. Seek to extinguish false accusations with the truth.

C. The false-prophet trap. → Look at **vv10-11**. There are at least 3 interpretations here:

1. Some say it would have been sin for Nehemiah to enter the temple because he wasn’t a priest. Lay Jews were allowed to enter the temple yet not the holy of holies.
2. Matthew Henry says that Nehemiah’s fleeing into the temple to spare his life would have led to the accusation of his being a coward.
3. M. Henry also said if word spread that he was going to the temple because evil men sought his life, many on the wall would have left to rush to the temple, allowing an attack upon a less defended sections of the wall.

II. GOD'S HELP IN PERSECUTION

A. Nehemiah Prayed.

1. He prayed for help at the end of **v9**: **"But now, O God, strengthen my hands."**
2. God answered Nehemiah's brief prayer by giving him wisdom in the midst of persecution.
 - a. God granted Nehemiah wisdom to perceive the deceit.
 - 1) The assassination attempt was somewhat plain. God gave him good judgment that it was a bad idea to put himself & even a group of armed guard in the isolated, open country of Ono at least 25 miles from his base of operations.
 - 2) God helped Nehemiah perceive the work of the false prophets. → **v12**
 - b. God granted Nehemiah courage rather than giving into fear.
 - 1) God help him flee fear when false accusations of insurrection were hurled at him. → Look at **v9**
 - 2) God helped him avoid fear leading to sin by heeding false prophets. → **v13-14**
3. Nehemiah prayed for God to enact justice upon the wicked. → again **v14**.

B. God answered prayer by granting His people divine intervention that was evident to all. → **vv15-16**.

1. Tobiah said (**4:3**), **"... if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!"**
They weren't repeating these jests nor were they laughing any more because the wall was quite formidable.
2. Perhaps some of them realized they were not merely opposing some Jews, they were fighting against God to no avail. → Turn to **Acts 5:33-39**

C. Just as God delivered Nehemiah from his persecution, God promises to deliver His saints.

1. **1 Pet 3:13** **"Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, & do not be troubled, ..."**
2. Turn to **1 Pet 4:12-16**

Review, further application, & conclusion: