

Nehemiah 6 Commentary

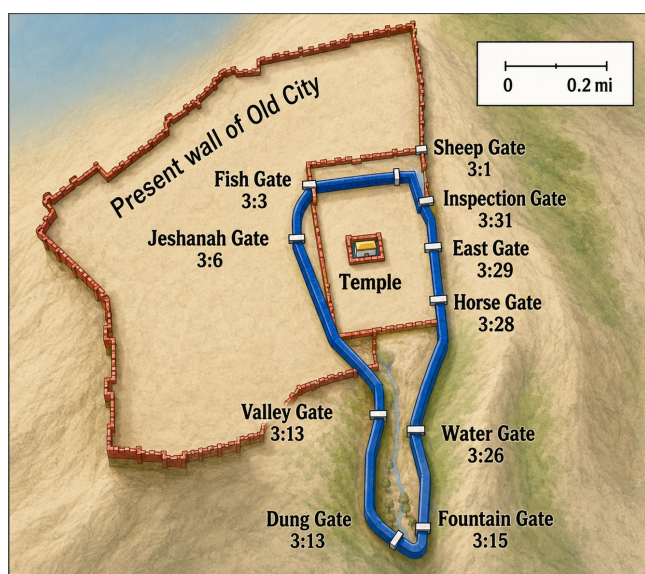
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NEHEMIAH'S JERUSALEM

NEHEMIAH UNDER CONSTRUCTION
JUST A FEW NOTES NOW
WILL FINISH IF THE LORD WILLS

Nehemiah 6:1 Now 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,

- when Sanballat (KJV): Ne 2:10,19+ Ne 4:1,7+
- Geshem (KJV): Ne 6:6+, Gashmu
- no breach (KJV): Ne 4:6,7+ Da 9:25+
- at that time (KJV): Ne 3:1,3,6+

Now 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,

Bob Utley - Geshem the Arab His name is spelled differently in Neh. 6:6+ (BDB 177 I), based on the difference between Arabic grammar and Hebrew pronunciation.. Tradition says that he was the king of Kedar (province of northwest Arabia, cf. R. K. Harrison, *Old Testament Times*, p. 284) or the southern Arabian area. He was a very powerful political person in the Persian empire. For a good brief discussion see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 675-676. ■ **"although at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates"** This seems to be out of chronological order to Neh. 3:1,3,6,13+. Nehemiah 3+ is the summary of the entire period, while chapters 4-6 are special accounts which fit in into this overall summary.

Gene Getz - When ... Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem (cf. 2:19), and other enemies heard that the wall was completed and that the only thing remaining was to set the doors in the gates, those "wall opponents" again attempted to halt the work. This time they were more subtle; their sole object of attack was Nehemiah himself. By removing him from the scene or by at least destroying his credibility with the Jews, they reasoned that they might be able to defeat the work. Each of their three attacks on him was different, but each was designed to take his life or discredit his effectiveness as a leader. (See page 746 in [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Matthew Henry - Sanballat's plot to hinder Nehemiah - Neh 6:1-9+. Let those who are tempted to idle merry meetings by vain companions, thus answer the temptation, We have work to do, and must not neglect it. We must never suffer ourselves to be overcome, by repeated urgency, to do anything sinful or imprudent; but when attacked with the same temptation, must resist it with the same reason and resolution. It is common for that which is desired only by the malicious, to be falsely represented by them as desired by the many. But Nehemiah knew at what they aimed, he not only denied that such things were true, but that they were reported; he was better known than to be thus suspected. We must never omit any known duty for fear it should be misconstrued; but, while we keep a good conscience, let us trust God with our good name. God's people, though loaded with reproach, are not really fallen so low in reputation as some would have them thought to be. Nehemiah lifted up his heart to Heaven in a short prayer. When, in our Christian work and warfare, we enter upon any service or conflict, this is a good prayer, I have such a duty to do, such a temptation to grapple with; now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. Every temptation to draw us from duty, should quicken us the more to duty.

Bob Utley - The enemies have been listed several times.

1. Neh. 1:10+ – Sanballat and Tobiah
2. Neh. 2:19+ – Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem
3. Neh. 4:1,3+ – Sanballat and Tobiah
4. Neh. 4:7+ – Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites
5. Neh. 6:1+ – Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and "the rest of our enemies"

Steven Cole - Resisting Satan's Schemes (Nehemiah 6:1-19+)

Since September 11, 2001, Americans have had to live under the threat of terrorist attacks. It has changed many aspects of the way we live. We face increased security checks at airports and international borders. We hear of possible attacks at shopping malls and sporting events, although I'm not sure what we're supposed to do about it, other than report suspicious looking characters or abandoned packages. It is difficult and frustrating for our government to fight this enemy, because it is often not visible as other enemy armies have been. This enemy hides and uses surprise attacks to achieve its evil goals.

The threat of terrorist attacks should not be anything new for Christians. Centuries ago, the apostle Paul warned, "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Eph. 6:11+). Our enemy has used deception, trickery, and other schemes to try to destroy or at least neutralize God's people from doing what He has called them to do. If we want to finish our course and accomplish His purpose for our lives, we must learn how to resist Satan's schemes.

In his goal of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah had to stand up to the violent threats of the enemy (chapter 4). He had to deal with internal conflict between the wealthy and poor Jews (chapter 5). He is almost done now. The breaches in the wall have been repaired, and the wall is complete except for the doors in the gates. But the enemy has not given up. In chapter 6, he hits again

with four schemes: intrigue (Neh 6:1-4⁺); innuendo (Neh 6:5-9⁺); intimidation (Neh 6:10-14⁺); and, infiltration (Neh 6:15-19⁺). (The first three headings are from Cyril Barber, cited by Edwin Yamauchi, BORROW [Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) 4:712.) In the first three schemes, Satan moved first and Nehemiah had to respond. In the last situation, Nehemiah won the victory of the completed wall, but Satan responded with his scheme of infiltration. We learn that ...

To complete the work God has given us to do, we must discern and resist Satan's many schemes.

1. Satan's scheme: Intrigue. Nehemiah's response: Firm in his priorities (Neh 6:1-4⁺).

The local *Samaritan Daily Sun* might have reported the incident like this:

Nehemiah Says No to Ono

Samaritan officials have disclosed that Nehemiah, governor of Judah, has again turned down the offer of Governor Sanballat of Samaria to meet at one of the villages in Ono, on the Judah-Samaria border. The proposed conference would include the Big Four of the area: Geshem, leader of the Arabs; Tobiah, leader of the Ammonites; Sanballat, and Nehemiah.

Sanballat issued a statement today in which he sharply criticized Nehemiah for his repeated refusals to cooperate. He reports that the purpose of such a meeting would be to work on a formula for lasting peace in the region. The Samaritan leader said with evident frustration, "This is the fourth time Nehemiah has turned down my invitation to meet and discuss our mutual concerns. These repeated refusals mean that the responsibility for increasing tensions and any violence that may result, rests solely upon Jerusalem." (Adapted from Donald Campbell, BORROW [Nehemiah: Man in Charge](#) [Victor Books], p. 55.)

Sounds like today's news, doesn't it! Note Satan's first scheme:

A. SATAN ESPECIALLY TARGETS LEADERS WITH HIS SCHEMES OF INTRIGUE.

You've probably seen the Gary Larsen "Far Side" cartoon that shows two deer standing upright. One has a huge target on his chest. The other one says, "Bummer of a birthmark, Ernie!" Every Christian leader has that target on his chest. If Satan can bring down the leader, he will cause extensive damage to the flock. But whether you're a leader or not, the enemy uses the same schemes to try to sabotage your walk with God. Note two things:

(1) SATAN USES SUBTLE DECEPTION AND PLAUSIBLE SOUNDING APPEALS, BUT HIS INTENT IS TO DESTROY US.

"Come, let's meet together. We should try to iron out our differences. You're in favor of peace, aren't you? Don't you want good relationships with your neighbors? We just want to foster mutual understanding." It all sounded so good, but Nehemiah rightly perceived that their intent was to ambush him if he went.

Satan still uses all sorts of innocent-sounding appeals to lure believers into a trap. He isn't playing games: he wants to devour you (1 Pet. 5:8⁺). I have seen him repeatedly use the trap of luring a Christian young person (usually a woman) into marriage with an unbeliever. Of course the unbeliever is *always* a nice guy! A drunken, abusive bum wouldn't lure you into the trap! But a nice, good-looking, successful unbeliever who promises to go to church with you, will do the trick just fine!

Many pastors and Christian leaders get lured into Satan's trap of compromising sound doctrine for the cause of unity. I have heard over and over again, "The Bible does not say that the world will know us for our correct doctrine, but for our love. We need to set aside the matters that divide us and come together on the matters we agree on." And so pastors set aside the essentials of the gospel, that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, apart from our merit or works. They join with Roman Catholics, who preach a "gospel" of works, by signing unity documents and attending unity services. Charles Colson, who is a leader in this deception, tells with approval the story of an Evangelical Free pastor who swapped pulpits with a Roman Catholic priest, to show that "what binds us together is stronger than that which divides us" (Borrow [The Body](#) [Word], p. 103).

What Colson fails to see is that what divides us is nothing less than the gospel. The divide means either heaven or hell! The apostle Paul strongly opposed the Judaizers. These men claimed to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. They believed that He is the Jewish Messiah. Why, then, did Paul oppose them? Because they said that in addition to believing in Jesus, you had to be circumcised to be saved. They added this one *biblical* work to faith, that's all. And Paul said, "Let them be damned" (Gal. 1:8, 9⁺). He said that if you add any human work in order to be justified, you are severed from Christ, you have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4⁺). Satan's aim is to destroy you through subtle deception and plausible sounding appeals. "Are you against Christian unity? What's wrong with you?"

(2) SATAN IS RELENTLESSLY PERSISTENT IN HIS SCHEMES.

They sent messengers to Nehemiah four times with the same invitation. Four times he sent back the same answer, "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?" (Neh 6:3⁺). "What part of *no* don't you understand?"

Just because you resist the devil once, don't think that he is going to give up and leave you alone! He will hit you again and again with the same temptation, to wear you down. Look at how Delilah wore Samson out with the same request, to tell her the secret of his strength. Finally, he yielded and the enemy triumphed. His life was a disgrace to the Lord's name. How did Nehemiah resist this scheme of intrigue?

B. NEHEMIAH RESISTED SATAN'S INTRIGUES BY STANDING FIRM IN HIS PRIORITIES.

"I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." He wasn't being arrogant. It was just that he knew that what God had given him to do was important for the Lord's sake and for His people's sake. And it was not quite finished. Walls without gates were as effective as no walls at all. His priority was to finish the wall. He didn't allow an unnecessary meeting with the enemy to distract him from that one aim.

As believers, our chief priority is to glorify God by knowing Jesus Christ and by being conformed to His character beginning at the heart level. Anything that pulls you away from that priority, even if it is a ministry, is a ploy of the devil. Beyond that, we have other priorities in accordance with our gifts. As a pastor-teacher, I must devote myself to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4⁺; 2 Tim. 4:1-4⁺). To get distracted with other things, even good things, would be to yield to the enemy's schemes.

2. Satan's scheme: Innuendo. Nehemiah's response: Fortright rebuttal coupled with prayer (Neh 6:5-9⁺).

After four frustrated attempts to lure Nehemiah into an ambush, the enemy shifted tactics. He sent an open letter to Nehemiah that contained a rumor accusing him of plotting to rebel and become the king. The word was that he had hired prophets to proclaim in Jerusalem that he was the new king. The letter also contained a not-so-veiled threat that if he didn't want these nasty rumors to get back to King Artaxerxes, he needed to agree to a meeting (Neh 6:5-7⁺). This shows us that ...

A. SATAN SPREADS SLANDEROUS FALSE RUMORS AGAINST GODLY LEADERS.

Normally letters between officials were sealed and private. Sanballat knew that the servant who delivered this letter would read it, and so would countless other people along the way. The nice thing about a rumor is, you only have to launch it with one gossip, and it will spread like a virus from person to person, growing more malicious as it travels. Invariably, such rumors attack the character and the motives of a godly leader. "Did you know what Nehemiah was planning?" "No, but I had wondered why he was working so hard on that wall. It sure makes sense!"

Since I have been at this church, I have heard through the rumor mill that I was leading the church into a cult. The reason I was doing this was that I am psychologically unstable and I need counseling to deal with some deep issues that I may not even be aware of. Also, I've heard that I'm trying to lead the church away from our Baptist roots because I preach that God is sovereign in the matter of our salvation. Never mind that the solid Baptists John Bunyan and Charles Spurgeon, not to mention the old Baptist Confessions of Faith, all uphold God's sovereign grace! Those who spread such falsehoods never asked me what my goals are. They just dropped the germs of rumors, and let the virus spread. How did Nehemiah respond to this scheme of the devil?

B. NEHEMIAH RESISTED SATAN'S INNUENDOES WITH THE TRUTH AND WITH PRAYER.

In his [*Lectures to My Students*](#), Spurgeon has a chapter titled "[The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear](#)" (SEE PAGE 408). He is right in saying that in most cases, pastors should let such rumors die a natural death. He said,

Falsehoods usually carry their own refutation somewhere about them, and sting themselves to death. Some lies especially have a peculiar smell, which betrays their rottenness to every honest nose.... Your blameless life will be your best defence, and those who have seen it will not allow you to be condemned so readily as your slanderers expect.

But he adds,

Yet there are exceptions to this general rule. When distinct, definite, public charges are made against a man he is bound to answer them, and answer them in the clearest and most open manner. To decline all

investigation is in such a case practically to plead guilty, and ... the general public ordinarily regard a refusal to reply as a proof of guilt.

Since this open letter was serious a public accusation against Nehemiah, he did not remain silent. First, he sent a message back to Sanballat stating the truth and firmly denying the charges: "Such things as you are saying have not been done, but you are inventing them in your own mind" (Neh 6:8⁺). Then, he shot up another of his sentence prayers, "But now, O God, strengthen my hands." (The translators have supplied the words "O God" to reflect the sense of the Hebrew imperative verb.)

Leaders must pray for God's wisdom as to whether to remain silent or to reply to false accusations. But however we respond, prayer and keeping on with the work that God has given us to do are always right.

The enemy checked Nehemiah with his schemes of intrigue and innuendo. Nehemiah resisted by standing firm in his priorities and with forthright truth and prayer. But Satan didn't give up.

3. Satan's scheme: Intimidation. Nehemiah's response: Fearlessly obey God (Neh 6:10-14⁺).

A. SATAN USES RELIGIOUS PEOPLE TO SCARE US INTO WRONG BEHAVIOR THAT WOULD RUIN OUR REPUTATION.

Here the enemy combines deception with intimidation and fear. A prophet named Shemaiah was confined at home. We do not know if he was ill or if he was doing this as a prophetic drama, as the prophets commonly did. He was not outwardly with the enemy, although Nehemiah would later discern that Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him (Neh 6:12⁺). Apparently they had also hired or at least influenced a prophetess named Noadiah and other Jewish prophets to try to frighten Nehemiah (Neh 6:14⁺). But Shemaiah called for Nehemiah and then suggested that the two of them meet within the temple and close the doors, adding "for they are coming to kill you, and they are coming to kill you at night" (Neh 6:10⁺).

Here was a man claiming to have a word from God that could save Nehemiah's life! "Hide in the temple while you can, because the enemy is going to kill you some night while you are asleep!" If Nehemiah had followed this counsel, he would not have been a good leader, and even more, he would have sinned. If he had gone into hiding, his example of fear would have spread fear among the workers on the wall. And, not being a priest, Nehemiah would have disobeyed God's law by going into the temple (Num. 18:7⁺). Non-priests could flee for protection to the horns of the altar in the temple courtyard (1 Kings 1:50⁺; 1 Kings 2:28⁺; Exod. 21:14⁺), but they could not enter the temple itself. If Nehemiah had acted in fear and fled to the temple, his enemies would spread the evil report to ruin his reputation (Neh. 6:13⁺).

Be careful when someone claiming to be a Christian invites you to do something that you know is wrong. He may use scare tactics to get you to go along with whatever it is: "Everyone does this. If you don't join in, nobody will like you. You won't get invited to any more parties if you don't drink and do drugs with everyone else." It is the enemy, trying to scare you into sinful behavior to ruin your testimony. Don't yield! How did Nehemiah respond?

B. NEHEMIAH RESISTED SATAN'S INTIMIDATION WITH FEARLESS OBEDIENCE AND PRAYER.

"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" (Neh 6:11⁺). Nehemiah didn't perceive until this point that God had not sent Shemaiah, but that Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him (Neh 6:12⁺). One thing that gave Nehemiah this insight was that he knew God's Word and that a true prophet would never counsel someone to do something against God's Word. It is always right to obey God's Word no matter what the threatened consequences may be. It is always wrong to disobey God's Word, even if it looks like your disobedience will gain you something good. It is better to lose your life, if it so happens, in the path of obedience to God than to save your life through disobedience.

So Nehemiah refused Shemaiah's counsel and he then reverted to his common practice of lifting up his situation to God in prayer, asking God to take care of his enemies (Neh 6:14⁺). When Satan sends people to intimidate you to disobedience, respond with fearless obedience and prayer.

The result of Nehemiah's staying the course is almost anticlimactic: "So the wall was completed ... in fifty-two days" (Neh 6:15⁺). So the final section leads off with Nehemiah's victory, followed by the enemy's rejoinder:

4. Nehemiah's victory: The finished wall. Satan's scheme: Infiltration (Neh 6:15-19⁺).

A. NEHEMIAH'S PERSISTENT RESISTANCE GAINED THE VICTORY FOR THE LORD.

When the enemies and surrounding nations saw that the wall was completed, they lost their confidence. They had to admit that this work had been accomplished because of God (Neh 6:15⁺). All of the enemies that Sanballat had drawn into his plots against the Jews only widened the circle of God's glory when the wall was finished. Even though Nehemiah and the workers on the wall had worked hard, not even their enemies attributed their success to their hard work. Rather, they knew that it was from God.

That should be a model for us. We should work as hard as if the success depended on us, but all the while we should lean totally upon the Lord, remembering that unless He builds the house and guards the city, we labor in vain (Ps. 127:1). We want even God's enemies to glorify Him (1 Pet. 2:12⁺).

Then we read, "So Satan gave up the battle and went home, and Nehemiah and the Jews lived happily ever after." Not exactly!

B. SATAN LOST THE BATTLE, BUT HE DIDN'T GIVE UP. HE INFILTRATED THE RANKS.

Tobiah, the governor of the Ammonites, was probably a nominal half-Jew (his name is Jewish, meaning "Yah is good"). Furthermore, he was related by marriage to at least two influential Jews ("nobles," Neh 6:17⁺), and he had business contracts ("bound by oath," Neh 6:18⁺) with these men. They were not only in frequent contact by mail, but they often told Nehemiah about Tobiah's "good deeds," and they reported to Tobiah things that Nehemiah said in their presence. But Tobiah showed his true colors by writing threatening letters to Nehemiah.

Satan often uses such espionage. He infiltrates the ranks of the church with secret agents that profess to be believers. But their hearts are in the world, and they oppose godly men like Nehemiah who expose their spiritual indifference and sin.

This section gives us three practical lessons:

(1) DO NOT EXPECT PERFECTION IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

We can expect God to accomplish significant advances for His kingdom through our labors, even as Nehemiah did by rebuilding the wall. But until Jesus comes back, there are no endings that go, "And they lived happily ever after." Even after the wall was built, the enemy infiltrated the ranks and stirred up further trouble. We will never see a perfect church in this fallen world, and if we expect such, we will quit in frustration. Trust God to use you to advance His cause, but don't fall into the trap of perfectionism.

(2) WE MUST NEVER PUT CONFIDENCE IN OUR WORK, BUT ONLY IN THE GOD WHO ENABLES US TO WORK.

Nehemiah couldn't kick back and admire the wall because these ongoing problems forced him to keep on fighting the battle and trusting in the Lord. Sometimes we mistakenly think that some program or building project or other accomplishment will solve all our problems at the church. But we no sooner achieve our goal than other problems erupt. The Lord uses these things to keep us looking to Him rather than kicking back and trusting our work.

(3) WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE COMPROMISE WITH THE WORLD, IT HINDERS GOD'S WORK.

Tobiah and his son had intermarried with some of the Jewish nobles. He had convinced them that he was a good guy (Neh 6:19⁺), even though he was militantly opposed to Nehemiah's wall project. Later, during Nehemiah's absence in returning to Persia, Tobiah managed to get personal quarters in the temple. But when Nehemiah returned, he saw this for what it was, compromise with the world, and personally threw his household goods out of the room (13:4-9)! I hope that each of you ponders often the apostle John's warning: "Do not love the world, nor the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15⁺).

Conclusion

There is a story of a lady who never spoke ill of anyone. A friend told her, "I believe that you would say something good even about the devil."

"Well," she replied, "you certainly do have to admire his persistence."

She's right: He is persistent! To finish our course, we must fight the good fight of faith by discerning and resisting his many schemes. When our Lord returns, we will ultimately triumph over this evil terrorist!

Discussion Questions

1. How can a believer grow in discernment so as to avoid Satan's traps?
2. How can we discern when to respond to false rumors about us versus letting them die out on their own?
3. How can we know which doctrines are worth dividing over and which doctrines should be set aside to preserve unity?
4. Since Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14-15), how can we be on guard against his servants in the church?

Brian Bell - Nehemiah 6

1. Intro:

1. *When God's people are sinning against each other then this allows Satan to take a vacation.*
 1. Last chapter Nehemiah was able to convince the Jews not to charge their brethren usury(interest). So Satan has to go back to work.
 2. He then must choose to come back as a **serpent** that deceives, or a **lion** that devours, or an **angel of light** that lights the path of wickedness for any who will follow.
 1. eg: Once in awhile I'll take a flashlight & shine it on the floor & watch our little black cocker Sully **go crazy chasing it**...It's like he falls into a **trance**...& **you can lead him wherever you want him to go**.
 1. Many people are like little Sully easily led around by a *false angel of light*.
2. Title: *Saying Oh No, to Ono*
 1. Outline: A 1/2 Dozen Calculated Strikes. A Dozen Counter Attacks.

2. A ½ DOZEN CALCULATED STRIKES

1. This sounds like the exact same attacks Satan throws at the church today: *Distractions; Nipping at the heels; Rumors; Fear; Death Threats; & Conspiracy.*
2. (Neh 6:1+) Great attacks after great victories.
 1. Frequent tactic of enemy: *Oppose the work, threaten the workers, attack the leader.*
3. DISTRACTIONS (Neh 6:2+)
 1. ONO – *ohhh-nooo* was probably his 1st clue this was a bad area. *ha!*
 2. How about meeting us ½ way?
 1. It's a town about 7m. S/E of Joppa, about 30 miles north-west of Jerusalem.
 2. So Ono was located ½ **way** in between Jerusalem & Samaria.
 3. *"Regarding the sins in which we would **fear to tread**...Satan seems to be kind enough to offer to meet us ½ way."*
3. **Contrast** Eve's folly in discussing the question raised by the serpent. *has God indeed said...Gen.3:1-5+.*
 1. Do you ever **negotiate** questions that should never be allowed consideration?
4. What things or people distract **you** from doing the Lord's work?
5. How can you have a **heads up** on these distractions?
4. ANKLE BITTERS (Neh 6:4+)
 1. The enemy's motto: *If at 1st you don't succeed...try, try, again.*
 1. They actually try to get him to meet **4 times**, to try to harm him.
 2. Our enemy try's to just get a **foot** in...or even a **toe**.
5. RUMORS (Neh 6:6,7+)
 1. (Neh 6:5+) An **official letter** was rolled up & had on it an **official seal** from its bearer.
 1. But this **open letter** meant it either wasn't official (seal was broken) or, they were spreading its contents **for all to see**.
 2. (Neh 6:6+) Rumor Mill said you're doing this, that you may be their King - He tries to drive a wedge between Nehemiah & Artaxerxes.
 3. (Neh 6:7+) Then ends letter with the *childish tattletale technique of, I'm telling*.
 1. I don't know how many times over the years that I heard, when someone didn't like our church policies, some one say, *I'm telling Chuck*.
 4. Here is slander at its finest.
 1. Immanuel Kant, "Have **patience** awhile; **slanders** are not long-lived. **Truth** is the child of time; ere long she shall appear to vindicate thee."
 2. An old Hebrew proverb says, **Slander slays three persons: the speaker, the spoken to, and the spoken of**.
 5. So, what battle tactic do **you** use against rumors against **you**?
 1. It is a **clear conscience** that keeps you from **fear & stopping your work**.

2. This was Paul's course, so, I myself always strive to have a **conscience without offense** toward God and men. Acts 24:16+

6. FEAR (Neh 6:9+)

1. Identify *fear* tactics.

7. DEATH THREATS (Neh 6:10+)

1. Shemaiah - If you lived back in Nehemiah's day you'd see posters around town, *Prophet for hire, w/Shemaiah's picture on it.*

2. *Watch for deceivers who invite you into their house for a cup of fake hospitality*

1. Watch for **whisperers**. Watch for those who bring **fears**.

8. CONSPIRACY (Neh 6:17-19+)

1. Someone has defined **gossip** as... "*News you have to hurry & tell somebody else, before you find out it isn't true!*"

2. (Neh 6:19+) Nehemiah was constantly compelled to listen to their stories concerning how great Tobiah was.

1. Adolph Hitler wrote, "*Mental confusion, contradiction of feeling, indecisiveness, panic; these are our weapons.*"

9. What do we learn about the **persistence** of our enemy?

1. Satan isn't a quitter. He stays on the field even after he loses the battle.

2. "Many a *careless Christian* has **won the war** but afterward **lost the victory**." (Wiersbe pg.78) [His goal? He seeks to turn the **victors** into **victims**]

10. Why is it so hard to remember that behind our **earthly conflicts** is the reality of **true spiritual warfare**?

11. What type of **opposition** are you facing right now?

12. Let's dig in to HOW Nehemiah responded to all of these attacks.

1. The key: **Detect** the enemy's strategy & **Defeat** it.

2. Let's learn *How to respond to Opposition?*

3. A DOZEN COUNTER ATTACKS

1. DON'T BE DISTRACTED (Neh 6:3+)

1. Beware when the enemy seeks to **embrace you**.

2. Say no to invitations that *compromise your witness*.

3. **Leaders**, you are called to be a **guidepost** not a **weather vane**. (ask meaning?)

4. Nehemiah recognized he was doing a **great work** for the Lord.

1. What **great work** does He have **you** doing?

1. You might think... "*I'm not doing anything great*". But isn't **any work** that He asks you to do a **great work**?

5. Phillips Brooks said, Do not pray for **easy** lives. Pray to be **stronger** men. Do not pray for **tasks** equal to your **powers**. Pray for **powers** equal to your **tasks**.

6. *We as God's people often leave the great work God has for us...for lesser things. caution!*

2. DON'T BE DRAINED (Neh 6:4+)

1. What if they keep coming at you...what do you do?

1. The **right response** is always the **right response**.

2. But what if they just **continue**?

1. Then you need to **tirelessly continue**. Avoid at all cost *conferences* with the enemy. Give **no place to the devil**.

3. DON'T REACT TO RUMORS (Neh 6:6-8+)

1. You may deny the slander against you, but don't stop **His work**.

2. How do you normally react to rumors about yourself? friends? family?

4. DON'T RAMBLE (Neh 6:8+)

1. Either respond by not responding...

1. Mark 15:3,4+ And the chief priests accused Him/Jesus of many things, but He **answered nothing**. Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" But Jesus **still answered nothing**, so that Pilate marveled.

2. Or, when you respond to **The enemy** or **an enemy**, be *short, simple, & to the point*...don't ramble.

5. DON'T GO IT ALONE (Neh 6:9b+)

1. Respond by...Praying (Neh 6:9,14+ – these are the 5th & 6th of Nehemiah's quick Voxer prayers) Yet, behind those **quick prayers** was a life of prayer.

1. Take your **rumors** to God.

6. DON'T FLEE (Neh 6:11a+)

1. Stand Firm. Stand strong. Be courageous.

2. When serving the Lord...*don't* leave your post.
 1. I like the story of David being concerned about his small flock of sheep...
 2. So David rose early in the morning, **left the sheep with a keeper**, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. 1 Sam.17:20⁺
 3. Remember when the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to run, On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, **Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You**. And He said to them, Go, tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today & tomorrow, & the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.
 4. Flee **sin**, flee **temptation**, but never flee **your place of duty**.
3. How do we quote...*If God is for us, who can be against us*...& then flee?
4. How do we say, who shall **separate** us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? & then allow ourselves to be separated from Him?
5. Here's why we shouldn't listen to **all** who **dispense religious counsel**.
7. DON'T HIDE (Neh 6:11b⁺)
 1. Always be suspect of the counsel which savors of self.
 2. No man can secure his own safety by **hiding**...*even in the temple of God*.
8. DON'T WAIVER (Neh 6:11c⁺)
 1. I will not go in – Stick to your guns.
9. DON'T LACK DISCERNMENT (Neh 6:12⁺)
 1. I perceived. (Neh 6:2b,9a⁺)
10. DON'T FEAR (Neh 6:13a⁺)
 1. Also in Neh 6:9,14⁺ & 19.
11. DON'T REACT (Neh 6:13b⁺)
 1. Never React to the enemy, always Act according to the Word.
12. DON'T SIN (Neh 6:13c⁺)
 1. Note: to have **fear** would have been to sin.
13. (*blank*) (Neh 6:15⁺) The work was done in a record **52 days**.
14. (Neh 6:16⁺) They perceived that this work was done by our God. *What an incredible compliment*
 1. Ever do something where *even you knew it wasn't you*?
 2. When you complete a project, how do you communicate it?
 1. Nehemiah chooses to share it *through the eyes of his enemies*.
 3. **God** works through **faithful people**, but it is **God** who works.
 1. **Work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who **works in** you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. Phil.2:12,13⁺
15. So how was this wall finished? *2 reasons*:
 1. Divine - This work was done by our God (Neh 6:16⁺)
 1. It was God initiated & God empowered.
 2. We don't need to **initiate** programs...find out what God is doing & simply join Him in His work.
 2. Human - Total unreserved human cooperation (this whole chapter).
16. Notice how Nehemiah's **singleness of purpose** and **loyalty to God** were as a **shield** about him. What may we learn from this?

Nehemiah 6:2 then 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.

- Come (KJV): They wished to get him out of Jerusalem, from his friends, that they might either carry him off or murder him. 2Sa 3:27⁺ 2Sa 20:9⁺ Ps 37:12⁺ Pr 26:24-26 Ec 4:4⁺
- Ono (KJV): Ne 11:35⁺ 1Ch 8:12
- they thought (KJV): Ps 12:2 Ps 37:12,32⁺ Jer 41:2 Eze 33:31 Mic 7:4,5⁺ Lu 20:19-21⁺

then 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

Bob Utley - "Come, let us meet" The first VERB is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE and the second a *Niphal* COHORTATIVE (same appeal as v. 7). The enemies were trying to manipulate Nehemiah. **Chephirim** The inhabitants of this city were part of the conspiracy of the

Gibeonites in tricking Joshua into a peace treaty (cf. Jos. 9:17⁺). They were Hivites (cf. Jos. 9:7⁺). This city was included in the tribal allocation of Benjamin (cf. Jos. 18:26⁺). People from this city (i.e., "Chephirim") are mentioned as returning from Babylonian exile with Zerubbabel and Joshua (cf. Ezra 2:25; Neh. 7:29⁺). It is PLURAL in this verse, and because the same three Hebrew letters kpr (BDB 499) means "villages," some English translations translate it as such (NKJV, NRSV, TEV). It is also possible that the term means "young lion" (BDB 498), which may be literal or figurative for fierce warriors (e.g., Jer. 2:15; Jer 4:7; Jer 50:17). ■ **"in the plain of Ono"** This Benjaminite city was the new home for Lod, Hadid, and Ono (cf. Ezra 2:33; Neh. 7:34⁺), who returned with Zerubbabel. They had established villages and became craftsmen because in Neh. 11:35⁺ Ono is called the valley of craftsmen. It was located on the western boundary of the new province of Judah, about 27 miles northwest of Jerusalem. ■ **"But they were planning to harm me"** This is Nehemiah's estimation of the intentions of these men who had proven themselves to be enemies (cf. Neh. 4:1⁺; Neh 6:8-9⁺). The VERB (BDB 362, KB 359, Qa/ ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) is frequently used of "planning against," "plotting," "scheming" (e.g., 1 Sam. 18:25⁺; Ps. 10:2; Ps 35:4; Jer. 11:19).

Ryrie - Because progress on the wall had lessened the danger of attack, Nehemiah's enemies tried to lure him to the plain of Ono, 19 mi (31 km) N of Jerusalem, where they could more easily assassinate him or attack Jerusalem in his absence.

Nehemiah 6:3 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?"

- And I sent (KJV): Pr 14:15 Mt 10:16⁺
- I am doing (KJV): Ec 9:10⁺ Lu 14:30⁺ Joh 9:4⁺ 1Ti 4:15,16⁺

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"

Henry Morris - cannot come down. In this response also, Nehemiah sets a notable example for Christian leaders. It is counter-productive to allow God's enemies (or even compromising believers) to get them sidetracked into unnecessary activities or arguments.

Believer's Study Bible - The oft-quoted "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down" demonstrates both the importance of the task which God had given Nehemiah, and his shrewdness. Nehemiah refused to be enticed by the deception of Sanballat into exposing himself unnecessarily to attack. Nevertheless, he did not question Sanballat's motives openly. At length, Sanballat's intentions were exposed (vv. 6-9).

Nehemiah 6:4 They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way.

- four times (KJV): Judges 16:6,10,15-20⁺ Pr 7:21⁺ Lu 18:5⁺ 1Co 15:58⁺ Ga 2:5⁺
- and I answered (KJV): Pr 14:15

They sent messages to me four times in this manner, and I answered them in the same way.

Nehemiah 6:5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me in the same manner a fifth time with an open letter in his hand.

- with an open letter (KJV): This was a gross insult to a person of Nehemiah's quality; as the letters sent to chiefs and governors in the East are always carefully folded up, put in silk bags, and then sealed. 2Ki 18:26-28⁺ 2Co 2:11⁺ 2Co 11:13-15⁺ Eph 6:11⁺ 2Th 2:10⁺

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

Ryrie - Neh 6:5-6⁺ Having failed to draw Nehemiah outside Jerusalem, Sanballat sent an open letter, which was either posted or read publicly, accusing Nehemiah of wanting to be king.

Bob Utley - **"Then Sanballat sent his servant to"** This was the same old trick of accusing Nehemiah of treason. However, the repeated request (four times) and an open letter (brought by Sanballat's servant, cf. Neh. 6:2⁺; Neh 2:19⁺) showed that it was a political threat. **6:5 "an open letter"** The implication of the personal, governmental letter not being officially sealed was to make the

contents known to all. The purpose was political intimidation. It had worked before (Ezra 4), maybe it would work again.

Nehemiah 6:6 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.

- It is reported (KJV): Jer 9:3-6 Jer 20:10 Mt 5:11+ Ro 3:8+ 2Co 6:8+ 1Pe 2:12,13+ 1Pe 3:16+
- Gashmu (KJV): Ne 6:1,2+, Geshem
- that thou and (KJV): Ne 2:19+ Ezr 4:12,15
- that thou mayest (KJV): Lu 23:2+ Joh 19:13+

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

Bob Utley - "the Jews are planning to rebel" This is the same accusation as Neh. 2:19+ and Ezra 4 and is a litany of charges of political plotting and rebellion.

Nehemiah 6:7 “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.”

- appointed (KJV): Ne 6:12,13+
- a king (KJV): 2Sa 15:10-12+ 1Ki 1:7,18,25,34+
- Come now (KJV): Pr 26:24-26 Ac 23:15+

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

Bob Utley - "You have also appointed prophets" Another means of threatening Nehemiah was claiming that he had political or even Messianic pretensions (cf. 2 Samuel 7+). This shows that Sanballat was somewhat familiar with Jewish Scriptures. ■ "now it will be reported to the king according to these reports. . .let us take" The king in this phrase refers to Artaxerxes I. This is the same rumor game that these enemies had used before. Here, it is just the threat of sending a report (i.e., "So come now, let us. . .take counsel together"), because now the Persian king had ruled in favor of the rebuilding of the city's wall (cf. Neh. 2:1-8,9+).

Nehemiah 6:8 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.”

- There are (KJV): Ac 24:12,13+ Ac 25:7,10+
- thou feignest (KJV): Job 13:4 Ps 36:3 Ps 38:12 Ps 52:2 Isa 59:4 Da 11:27+ Mt 12:34+ Joh 8:44+

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

Bob Utley - "you are inventing them in your own mind" The VERB (BDB 94, KB 109, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) is from an Aramaic root. It is used only twice in the OT and means "to devise" or "to invent or make up" in a negative sense (cf. 1 Kgs. 12:33). The related two letter Hebrew root (BDB 95) means "empty" or "idle talk." The BDB adds "especially collective idea of imaginary pretensions or claims" (cf. Isa. 16:6; Isa 44:25+; Jer. 48:30).

Henry Morris - God's enemies will even resort to lying and slander against those who are faithfully accomplishing an important work for Him. Nehemiah's appropriate response was simply to deny the charges and keep on with the work.

Nehemiah 6:9 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.

- For they (KJV): Ne 6:14+ Ne 4:10-14+ 2Ch 32:18+
- Their hands (KJV): 2Ch 15:7+ Ezr 4:1-24 Isa 35:3,4+ Jer 38:4+ Heb 12:12+
- Now therefore (KJV): 1Sa 30:6+ Ps 56:3 Ps 71:1 Ps 68:35 Ps 138:3 Isa 41:10 Zec 10:12 2Co 12:9+ Eph 3:16+ Eph 6:10+ Php 4:13+ 1Pe 5:10+

For all of them were trying to frighten us, thinking, “They will become discouraged with the work and it will not be done.” Discouragement is one of the devil's most effective weapons.

But now, O God, strengthen my hands

Bob Utley - "But now, *O God*, strengthen my hands" Notice in NASB 1970 and 1995 translations, both have the term "O God" in italics (assumed to be a prayer, as does KJV), which means that it is not in the original text but is supplied for English readers. This book is filled with Nehemiah's prayers (cf. Neh. 6:14,16+). See note at Neh. 4:9+. However, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Peshitta, and the Arabic, followed by the NJB, NAB, NEB, NET, have "I strengthen my hands all the more." The VERB (BDB 304, KB 302) is a *Piel* IMPERATIVE, MASCULINE, SINGULAR, which could address YHWH or refer to Nehemiah

Matthew Henry - **False prophets try to frighten Nehemiah** - Neh 6:10-14+. The greatest mischief our enemies can do us, is, to frighten us from our duty, and to lead us to do what is sinful. Let us never decline a good work, never do a bad one. We ought to try all advice, and to reject what is contrary to the word of God. Every man should study to be consistent. Should I, a professed Christian, called to be a saint, a child of God, a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, should I be covetous, sensual, proud, or envious? Should I yield to impatience, discontent, or anger? Should I be slothful, unbelieving, or unmerciful? What effects will such conduct have upon others? All that God has done for us, or by us, or given to us, should lead us to watchfulness, self-denial, and diligence. Next to the sinfulness of sin, we should dread the scandal.

Nehemiah 6:10 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.”

- Shemaiah (KJV): Ne 6:12+ Ezr 8:16 Ezr 10:31 Pr 11:9 Mt 7:15+
- shut up (KJV): 2Ki 9:8+ Jer 36:5 Eze 3:24+
- Let us meet (KJV): Ps 12:2 Ps 37:12+ Ps 120:2,3
- the house (KJV): 1Ki 6:5+ 2Ki 11:3+
- let us shut (KJV): 2Ch 28:24+ 2Ch 29:3,7+ Mal 1:10+ Ac 21:30+
- in the night (KJV): Job 24:13-17 Joh 3:20+

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

Bob Utley - "Shemaiah" He is called "the son of Delaiah," who is mentioned in Ezra 2:59-60 as a family of priests who could not document their ancestry. Apparently this was a false prophet (cf. Neh. 6:12,14+) who was hired by the surrounding nations (cf. Neh. 6:12-13+) to intimidate Nehemiah. Why he was confined to his home has been the subject of great debate: (1) it is related to Num. 19+: 11-22 (2) he had advocated anointing Nehemiah as Davidic king and, therefore, caused him to be treasonous to Persia (cf. Neh. 6:7+) (3) it was a symbolic act showing what Nehemiah should do. With Shemaiah restricted to his house Nehemiah would have to come to him, appearing to seek divine information and guidance. This may have been part of the premeditated plan to trick and destroy him. Shemaiah even delivers the message in typical prophetic poetry. ■ **"Let us meet together. . .let us close the doors"** The first VERB (BDB 416, KB 419) is a *Niphal* IMPERFECT used in a COHORTATIVE sense. The second (BDB 688, KB 742) is a *Qal* COHORTATIVE. It was a trick; see note below. ■ **"within the temple"** Nehemiah was not only a layman (Num. 18:7+), but may have been a eunuch (Lev. 21:17-24+; Deut. 23:1+), both of which disqualified him from going into the inner parts of the temple. This was a way to discredit Nehemiah. There is a provision in Moses' writings for someone to flee to the sacrificial altar for safety (cf. Exod. 21:13, 14; 1+ Kgs. 1:50-53; 2:28ff) but this was a trick, not true compassion (vv. 12,13).

Believer's Study Bible - With the prompting of Tobiah and Sanballat (v. 12), a prophet named Shemaiah encouraged Nehemiah to seek refuge "within the temple" from unnamed persons who planned to kill him. For Nehemiah, such an expedient would have run contrary to his nature and office (6:11a). As a layman, he was unqualified to enter in any case (v. 11b). Such an act would mark him as a rebel against divine commands, undermining his authority with the people (Neh. 6:13+).

Ryrie - Neh 6:10-14⁺ Shemaiah claimed to have a special revelation about a plot against Nehemiah's life and suggested that the Holy Place in the Temple would be the only safe place for Nehemiah. But the suggestion unmasked Shemaiah's treachery, for only the priests could enter the Holy Place (Num. 18:7⁺). If Nehemiah had done so, his testimony would have been ruined.

Nehemiah 6:11 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."

- Should such (KJV): Ne 6:3⁺ 1Sa 19:5⁺ Job 4:3-6 Ps 11:1,2 Ps 112:6,8 Pr 28:1 Isa 10:18⁺ Lu 13:31-33⁺ Ac 8:1⁺ Ac 20:24⁺ Ac 21:13⁺ Heb 11:27⁺
- would go (KJV): Ne 6:9⁺ Nu 32:7-9⁺ Ec 10:1⁺ Php 2:17,30⁺

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

Bob Utley - The words of Nehemiah express the feelings of every generation of godly leadership; not an audacity, but a confidence of God's call, God's will, God's presence! Faith issues in confidence not in ourselves, but in our God and His purposes (e.g., Dan. 3:16-18⁺; Dan 4:20-22⁺).

Henry Morris - Not even the threat of personal assassination could deter Nehemiah. Carried by an ostensibly well-meaning (but actually traitorous) Jew hired by Sanballat, Nehemiah had to take the threat seriously. However, he would rather die than commit the sacrilege (as well as cowardly act) of hiding in the temple where he had no right, as a non-priest, to enter. This would have so compromised his testimony that his leadership would have been destroyed even if his life had been spared. Christian leaders cannot afford to be swayed by such threats.

Nehemiah 6:12 Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him, but he uttered his prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

- I perceived (KJV): Eze 13:22⁺ 1Co 2:15⁺ 1Co 12:10⁺
- God had (KJV): Jer 14:14 Jer 23:16,25⁺ Jer 28:15⁺ Eze 13:7⁺ 1Jn 4:1⁺
- hired him (KJV): Isa 56:11 Eze 13:19⁺ Mic 3:11⁺ Ac 20:33⁺ 1Ti 3:3⁺ Tit 1:7⁺ 1Pe 5:2⁺ 2Pe 2:3⁺ Rev 18:13⁺

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

Bob Utley - "Then I perceived that surely God had not sent him" Nehemiah's personal relationship with God and his knowledge of God's will and word allowed him to evaluate the content of Shemaiah's words. God wants to equip all of His children to do the same thing!

Nehemiah 6:13 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.

- that I should (KJV): Pr 29:5 Isa 51:7,12,13 Isa 57:11 Jer 1:17 Eze 2:6⁺ Eze 13:17-23⁺ Mt 10:28⁺ 2Ti 1:7⁺ Rev 21:8⁺
- and sin (KJV): Jas 4:17⁺
- and that they (KJV): Ne 6:6⁺ Pr 22:1 Ec 7:1⁺
- that (KJV): Jer 18:18 Jer 20:10 Da 6:4,5⁺ Mt 22:15⁺ Mt 26:59⁺ Ac 6:13⁺ 2Co 11:12⁺ 1Ti 5:14⁺ Tit 2:8⁺

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.

Bob Utley - Nehemiah associates "fear" with inappropriate actions, which he labels as "sin" (BDB 306, *Qal* PERFECT, "to miss the mark"). Notice that fear can lead to sinful acts! Faith and trust in God's presence, promises, and provision are crucial!

Nehemiah 6:14 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.

- My God (KJV): Ne 5:19⁺ Ps 22:1 Ps 63:1
- think thou (KJV): Ne 4:4,5⁺ Ne 13:29⁺ Ps 36:11,12 Ps 140:5-11 Jer 11:20-23 Jer 18:20-23 2Ti 4:14,15⁺ 1Jn 5:16⁺
- on the prophetess (KJV): 1Ki 22:22-24⁺ Isa 9:14,15⁺ Jer 14:15,18 Jer 28:1,10,15⁺ Eze 13:16,17⁺ Mt 7:15⁺ Mt 24:11,24⁺ 2Ti 3:8⁺ Rev 19:20⁺

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.

Bob Utley - "**Remember**" Nehemiah called on God to remember (BDB 269, KB 269, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) (1) His word, Neh. 1:8⁺, (2) him (i.e., Nehemiah), 5:19; 13:14,22,31 and (3) his enemies (i.e., Nehemiah), Neh. 6:14⁺; Neh 13:29⁺. And God's people are to remember that God is a great and awesome God, Neh. 4:14⁺. ■ "**according to these works of theirs**" Nehemiah lived under the first covenant of performance-based fellowship. The "two ways" of Wisdom Literature (e.g., Psalm 1; Pro. 4:10-19⁺) characterize his theological understanding. He would have readily agreed with Matthew 7 or the book of James. The goal of our relationship with a Holy God is a holy life! The problem is how does sinful humanity achieve this goal? The New Covenant of Jer. 31:31-34⁺; Ezek. 36:22-36⁺, shows the new pattern of grace-based faith, faith-received righteousness, which should issue in obedience (cf. Luke 6:46⁺). The goal is the same, the means has changed. ■ "**Noadiah**" This is a feminine name (BDB 418, although there is a masculine usage in Ezra 8:33) and shows the acceptability of female prophets. She happened to be a false prophetess. She was one of several false prophets active in Judah in Nehemiah's day. [Special Topic: Women in the Bible](#)

Henry Morris - prophetess Noadiah. God's enemies may even hire--or Satan himself may raise up--false prophets to try to convince Christians that they are not in God's will in what they are doing for God. The answer is for them to verify all such prophets and their supposed prophecies by God's Word (Isaiah 8:20⁺). Sadly, there always seem to be compromisers--or even traitors--among those who profess to be God's people (Nehemiah 6:17-19⁺). These people will (whether intentionally or in ignorance) encourage Christian witnesses, especially key leaders, off the track of true fidelity to Scripture.

Believer's Study Bible - Nowhere else is the prophetess "Noadiah" mentioned. The text clearly indicates that she is to be classified with the false prophets who were attempting to supplant Nehemiah in the congregation and seeking to distract the people from hearing the true word of God through His godly prophets.

Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

- wall (KJV): Ezr 6:15 Ps 1:3⁺ Da 9:25⁺
- fifty (KJV): Ne 4:1,2⁺

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

Bob Utley - "**the wall was completed**" This VERB (BDB 1022, KB 1532, *Qal* IMPERFECT) has two distinct meanings in *Qal*. (1) have satisfaction (2) be completed (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:25). This term is an Akkadian word for "the act or state of well-being, of being intact, safe, or complete (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 130). This is the root *slm* from which the famous Hebrew greeting, *shalom*, is derived. The wall was finished, complete, and it was good; it provided safety; it provided peace of mind. ■ "**Elul**" This would be October. ■ "**in fifty-two days**" Josephus tells us in his book, *The Antiquities of the Jews* 11.5.8, that it took two years and four months. It is possible from archaeological evidence and historical precedence that a city's walls could be built in this short a time period in a functional way, but not with normal construction. We learn from Kathleen Kenyon's archaeological discoveries in Jerusalem that the nine foot wall on the eastern side was done with rough construction as if it were done rapidly.

Believer's Study Bible - Elul corresponds to September-October. There is no difficulty in supposing that the wall could have been repaired within "fifty-two days," considering the urgency which prompted zealous workmen to labor without rest from dawn to dusk (4:21), except during the Sabbath.

Ryrie - To finish in 52 days was a tremendous accomplishment, and one that was recognized as due to the power of God (v. 16). Elul was Aug.-Sept. The wall was completed on Sept. 21, 444 B.C.

Matthew Henry - **The wall finished, Treachery of some among the Jews** - Neh 6:15-19⁺. The wall was begun and finished in fifty-two days, though they rested on the sabbaths. A great deal of work may be done in a little time, if we set about it in earnest, and

keep close to it. See the mischief of marrying with strangers. When men once became akin to Tobiah, they soon became sworn to him. A sinful love leads to a sinful league. The enemy of souls employs many instruments, and forms many projects, to bring reproach on the active servants of God, or to take them from their work. But we should follow the example of Him who laid down his life for the sheep. Those that simply cleave to the Lord and his work will be supported.

Nehemiah 6:16 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.

- when all our enemies (KJV): Ne 2:10⁺ Ne 4:1,7⁺ Ne 6:1,2⁺
- for they perceived (KJV): Ex 14:25⁺ Nu 23:23⁺ Jos 5:1⁺ Ps 126:2 Ac 5:38⁺

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.

Bob Utley - "**saw it**" This is italicized in the NASB (1970), but the textual problem is that the MT has a word that can be understood as *yr'* (afraid, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, by John Joseph Owens, vol. 3, p. 69) *orr'h* (see *The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament*, edited by John R. Kohlenberger III, vol. 3, p. 231). The MT, the Septuagint, and the Vulgate have "were afraid" (BDB 431, *Qal* IMPERFECT). As Nehemiah prayed in Neh. 4:4⁺, the fear that they used to influence the Jews was now returned to them because they saw the hand of God helping the Jews in this amazingly rapid rebuilding of the walls. ■ **they lost their confidence** - The VERB (BDB 656, KB 709, *Qal* IMPERFECT) has such a wide semantic field. Notice the difference between the NASB, NKJV, and NJB. The NJB involved a textual emendation (i.e., replaces *npl* [to fall] with *kl'* [to be wonderful]). The context demands a negative response. The second part of the phrase is literally "in eyes of them." "Eyes" here is an idiom of self perception. This is the Oriental concept of "lost face" (TEV).

Nehemiah 6:17 Also in those days many letters went from the nobles of Judah to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.

- the nobles (KJV): Ne 3:5⁺ Ne 5:7⁺ Ne 13:28⁺ Mic 7:1-6⁺ Mt 24:10-12⁺
- sent many letters unto Tobiah (KJV): Heb. multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah

Also in those days many letters went from the nobles of Judah to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them

Bob Utley - "**Tobiah**" His name is Jewish and he is one of the major antagonists of Nehemiah. His technique was to infiltrate the Jewish wealthy class ("nobles") through marriages (cf. Neh. 6:18⁺) so as to influence Nehemiah's plans.

Ryrie - Both through his wife and his daughter-in-law, Tobiah had links with influential families in Jerusalem (cf. Ezra 2:5 for Arah and Neh. 3:4, 30⁺ for Meshullam). Nehemiah had to face opposition within his own ranks!

Nehemiah 6:18 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.

- Arah (KJV): Ne 7:10⁺ Ezr 2:5
- Meshullam (KJV): Ne 3:4,30⁺

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

Bob Utley - "**Arah**" He is mentioned in Ezra 2:5; Neh. 7:10⁺; and I Esdras 5:10. ■ "**Meshullam**" This name refers to twenty different people in the OT. He is mentioned in Neh. 3:4,30⁺ as someone who worked on two sections of the wall. Here we are told his daughter marries Jehohanan, who was Tobiah's son (IDB, vol. 2, p. 811).

Nehemiah 6:19 Moreover, they were speaking about his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. Then Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

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- they reported (KJV): Pr 28:4 Joh 7:7[±] Joh 15:19[±] 1Jn 4:5[±]
 - words (KJV): or, matters
 - to put (KJV): Ne 6:9,13[±] Isa 37:10-14[±] Ac 4:18-21[±]

Bob Utley - **"Then Tobiah sent letters to frighten me"** The Jewish leaders tried to make Tobiah look good in the eyes of Nehemiah, but his true self is seen in this verse. Even the high priest was involved in this conspiracy (cf. Neh. 13:4[±]). He (cf. Neh. 6:18[±]) was the son-in-law to Shechaniah, possibly the priest of Neh. 3:29[±] or 12:3, but uncertain because the name was so common during this period (cf. Ezra 8:3,5).