

NEHEMIAH

Lesson 6 - Chapter 6

The attacks have come against the people from the outside and from among the people from the inside, and yet the wall was rebuilt with “*no breaks left in it.*” The work continued and was successful, so will the enemy back off? No! The attack will just be aimed in a different direction. As we read this week of the personal attack on Nehemiah, we will see how his character and confidence in the Lord keep him steady and steadfast in the work of the Lord.

As you begin this study, pray for the Lord to reveal the character traits He wants to strengthen in you so that you are ready to face the attacks of the enemy.

Memory Verse – This week’s memory verse is Romans 8:28.

*“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,
to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. Make note of those words and their significance here.

Read Nehemiah 6:1- 9.

1. In Nehemiah 6:1-2 we see that the enemy is keeping watch on the progress of the wall.
 - a. Who are the enemies listed here?
 - b. What did they hear?
 - c. What did they do?
 - d. What was the motive behind their actions?

Note: The plain of Ono may appear to be neutral territory, but was 19 miles outside of Jerusalem and offered Nehemiah no protection against attack.

2. We read of Nehemiah’s reply in verses 3-4.
 - a. What was his answer?

- b. How many times did Sanballat and Geshem send the same message?
- c. How did Nehemiah reply each time?

Nehemiah 6:5 tells us that the fifth message was different in that it was an “open letter”. This means that it was not private, but that anyone might read it. This is significant because the accusations contained in the letter would then be spread among the people.

3. What accusations do you find in the following verses?

a. Nehemiah 6:6

b. Nehemiah 6:7

c. How might these accusations in an *open letter* be an effective weapon against Nehemiah and the work he has been given?

d. Write Nehemiah’s reply in verse 8 below.

4. Nehemiah states the motive behind the open letter in Nehemiah 6:9.

a. What were the enemy trying to do?

b. If they were successful in their motive, write the specific effects they hoped for in their own words.

5. Nehemiah did not respond as the enemy hoped. Instead, look at his response in the last line of verse 9.

a. Where did he turn for help?

b. What did he ask for?

c. What does this reveal about Nehemiah?

6. The strategies of the enemy have not changed and can still be successful in our world.
 - a. How does the enemy use this same strategy of accusations today?

 - b. How can we apply Nehemiah's example to stop the effectiveness of this strategy?

Read Nehemiah 6:10-14.

With the strength and wisdom of God, Nehemiah was not taken in by the false accusations. But the attack continues! Read on to see what happened "*Afterward...*"

1. We read in Nehemiah 6:10 that he came to the house of Shemaiah.
 - a. What are we told about Shemaiah?

 - b. What did he tell Nehemiah to do?

 - c. What was his reason?

Note: The response of Nehemiah in verse 11 is strong and reveals his integrity. His reply came in three parts, so consider each one in questions 2, 3 and 4 below.

2. Write the first question in Nehemiah's reply.
 - a. What did he mean by this?

 - b. What kind of man have we seen him to be?

3. Write the second question in verse 11 that Nehemiah gave in reply.

It helps to understand Nehemiah's reply by remembering the temple was a holy place for God. Some also follow the thinking of David Guzik: "Only priests were allowed in the temple, and Nehemiah was not a priest. He would have been disobeying God if he had done what Shemaiah suggested. In 2 Chronicles 26, King Uzziah - who was not a priest - went into the temple, and God instantly struck him with leprosy." In any case, Nehemiah needed to be an example in the face of these threats.

a. Which character trait of Nehemiah would keep him from doing this?

b. How does Matthew 10:28 apply here?

4. In the final words of his reply in verse 11 Nehemiah made a firm stand. Write his words below.

a. How was Nehemiah able to stand so firmly against the enemy and not let the words of this man cause him to fear for his life?

b. How does Ephesians 6:10 encourage us to stand strong before the enemy?

5. Nehemiah 6:12-13 reveals the truth about Shemaiah, the *secret informer*. But notice that Nehemiah did not perceive this until after he took his stand!

a. What is revealed about Shemaiah in verse 12?

b. What does verse 13 tell us about why?

c. Write out the truth we find in 2 Timothy 1:7 that has so clearly been evident in Nehemiah in Chapter 6.

Chuck Smith said, “It is possible to prophecy what is not of the Lord. Tobiah and Sanballat had hired this man, Shemaiah, to give this statement with a spiritual overtone to cower Nehemiah into submitting. But Nehemiah perceived God had not sent him.”

6. The prayer we read in Nehemiah 6:14 is an Old Testament type prayer, asking God to remember the wrongs of the ones who act against you. At this point, Nehemiah did not take action, but prayed instead. How do we see Nehemiah’s attitude in Romans 12:19?

Read Nehemiah 6:15-19.

1. In spite of the enemy's efforts, the work on the wall did go on. What does Nehemiah 6:15 tell us?

2. The enemies heard and saw the wall completed.

a. What was their response in verse 16?

b. Why?

3. In the last verses of this chapter, Nehemiah 6:17-19, we find a summary of what went on between the nobles and Sanballat after the completion of the wall.

a. Describe what is happening.

b. From verse 18, explain why this communication may be going on.

c. What does 2 Corinthians 6:14 have to say about this?

4. Back in Nehemiah 2:19 we were introduced to Sanballat as a Horonite, a city in Moab, Tobiah was an Ammonite and Geshem an Arab. All three were leaders of regions outside of Jerusalem. One or more of them may have appeared to be practicing Jews, but their behavior is certainly against the Jews. Yet it seems they had a lot of supporters among the nobles of the tribe of Judah. What warnings do you find in the following scriptures about this?

a. Romans 16:17

b. Ephesians 5:11-12

5. How can this association of the nobles with the attackers effect the people and the work of God?

In closing...

1. Nehemiah was not taken in by the tactics of the enemy, but took a stand and held it because he knew his God and knew who he was when God was with him. We need to be able to take the same stand, and we can when we know who we are in Christ.

a. How does 2 Timothy 1:12 encourage you in this?

b. What other scriptures can you think of that give you confidence in your position in the Lord that helps you to stand strong?

2. Realizing that we are in a battle and that attacks will come from all sides, as we have seen in Nehemiah, it is important to remember that the Lord has given us all we need. Read about the Armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18.

a. Write about what you have seen applied in this lesson.

b. Now write of the armor that Nehemiah did not have, but we have now in Christ.

Memory Verse

*“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,
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Romans 8:28