

# The Wall is Completed

Despite continued plots and intimidation, the wall is finished in just 52 days. The enemies recognize that God has accomplished this work.

Nehemiah 6:1-16

CHARACTERS: Nehemiah, Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, Shemaiah, Noadiah the prophetess

THEMES: Perseverance, Completion, Discernment, Victory, God's help

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WHEN WORD CAME to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of their enemies that Nehemiah had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time he had not set the doors in the gates—Sanballat and Geshem sent word: 'Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.'

But they were scheming to harm Nehemiah. He sent messengers to them with this reply: 'I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?' Four times they sent him the same message, and each time he gave them the same answer.

Persistence marked the opposition. They tried to distract Nehemiah, to pull him away from the work into a trap. But he recognized the tactic and refused. Great leaders don't abandon their calling for lesser things, even when the invitation seems reasonable.

Then Sanballat sent his aide with an open letter—meant to be read publicly to intimidate: 'It is reported among the nations—and Geshem says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king and have even appointed prophets to make this

proclamation about you in Jerusalem: "There is a king in Judah!" Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together.'

It was slander designed to create fear. If the Persian king heard such reports, Nehemiah could be executed for treason.

Nehemiah replied, 'Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.' Then he prayed, 'Now strengthen my hands.' He recognized intimidation for what it was and turned to God rather than yielding to fear.

Then came a more subtle attack. Nehemiah went to the house of Shemaiah, who was shut in at his home. He said, 'Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you.'

But Nehemiah discerned the trap. First, he was not a priest and had no right to enter the temple. Second, hiding would dishonor God and destroy his testimony. He replied, 'Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!'

He realized that Shemaiah had been hired by Tobiah and Sanballat to intimidate him into sin so they could give him a bad name and discredit him. Even some prophets and prophetesses like Noadiah had been recruited to try to intimidate him.

Nehemiah prayed, 'Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet Noadiah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me.'

Then came the victory: So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

Fifty-two days. Less than two months to accomplish what seemed impossible. When all their enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of their God.

The completion testified to God's power. Human opposition, schemes, mockery, threats, and false prophecies all failed. What God purposes, He completes. The wall stood because God stood with His people and their faithful leader who would not be distracted, intimidated, or compromised.

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