



BATTLE OVER THE WALLS



KEY VERSE FROM THE ARTICLES OF WAR:

Then answered I them, and said unto them, the God of Heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 2:20)



INTRODUCTION

The book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament relates the story of a battle to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by an enemy. Walls were an important defense in cities in ancient Israel. They protected against enemy invasion. The natural walls of Jerusalem are symbolic of our spiritual walls:

...thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise.

(Isaiah 60:18)

The natural gates of Jerusalem mentioned in Nehemiah 3 each have symbolic meaning which apply to your spiritual walls:

The Sheep Gate represents the work of the cross in your life, the foundation of spiritual construction: 3:1; John 10:11

The Fish Gate represents Christian witness: 3:3; Matthew 4:19

The Old Gate represents the old nature changing to the new: 3:6; Romans 6:1-23

The Valley Gate speaks of suffering and testing: 3:13; II Corinthians 1:3-5

The Dung Gate represents the works of the flesh which must be eliminated: 3:14; Galatians 5:16-21

The Fountain Gate represents the work of the Holy Spirit: 3:15; John 7:37-39

The Water Gate represents the Word of God: 3:26; John 4:10-14

The Horse Gate represents the believer's warfare: 3:28; Ephesians 6:10-17

The Eastern Gate speaks of the believer's hope in the return of Jesus: 3:29; Ezekiel 43:1-2

The Miphkad Gate speaks of self-examination and the judgment seat of Jesus: 3:31; I Corinthians 3:9-15; II Corinthians 5:10

- So your spiritual walls include:*
- Walls of salvation, gates of praise*
 - Work of the cross in your life*
 - Christian witness*
 - The old nature changed to the new nature*
 - Suffering and testing*
 - Elimination of works of the flesh*
 - Work of the Holy Spirit*
 - The Word of God*
 - Spiritual warfare*
 - The hope of the return of Jesus*
 - Self-examination*

These are the spiritual walls Satan has targeted to destroy in your life. He wants to destroy your praise and Christian witness. He wants to destroy the work of the cross, suffering, and the Holy Spirit in your life. He tries to keep you from studying God's Word and acting upon its truths.

Satan wants to defeat you in spiritual warfare, prevent self-examination, and entrap you in the works of the flesh and the old sinful nature. He wants to destroy your hope in the return of Jesus. These are your spiritual walls, and Satan attacks them with strategies identical to those used in the battle over the walls in Jerusalem. This message

focuses on the battle over the walls of your spiritual life. It uses the story of Nehemiah to draw powerful parallels of spiritual warfare.



THE SITUATION IN JERUSALEM

Before continuing with this message, read Nehemiah chapters 1 through 7:3. Chapters 1 and 2 of Nehemiah describe the condition of the walls around Jerusalem. They were in ruin, destroyed by enemy invasion, and the gates had been burned with fire. Without walls and gates, a city was open to invasion on every side from enemy forces. If your spiritual walls are destroyed, you too are open to attack by the enemy.



THE REASON FOR THE PROBLEM

Nehemiah recognized the walls had been destroyed and the city was in its present condition because of sin. (Nehemiah 1:5-7) When your spiritual walls are in ruin it is also because of sin. Either by commission or omission. Nehemiah felt an intense burden from God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem to provide protection for the inhabitants. His preparation and plan are described in chapters 1 and 2. He and his workers were determined to "arise and build" the walls (Nehemiah 2:18).



STRATEGIES OF SATAN: THE BATTLE OVER THE WALLS

When Nehemiah determined to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, he met powerful opposition from his enemies.

When you determine to rebuild spiritual walls, you will face similar opposition from your enemy, Satan. The strategies of the enemies of Nehemiah are identical to the strategies Satan uses to attack spiritual walls. The attacks are divided into two main categories: External attacks and internal attacks.



EXTERNAL ATTACKS:

These are attacks the enemy launches from without through others who are not part of the body of Christ.

Such attacks include:

1. Direct criticism: Nehemiah 2:19

The enemies criticized, "What do you think you are doing?" They were against the reconstruction project and tried in every way to prevent it.

2. Mocking and scorn: Nehemiah 4:1-3

Nehemiah became a "target for tongues." The enemy tried to defeat him through the mocking and scorn of others. Satan will use the tongue of others to discourage and defeat you.

3. False accusations: Nehemiah 6:5-7

The enemy attacked Nehemiah personally with false accusations. They accused him of being a rebel. Satan is called "the accuser of the brethren." He will use others to accuse you as well as putting accusing thoughts in your mind.

4. Diversion: Nehemiah 6:2

The enemy tried to get Nehemiah to join them for a meeting. This meeting was a diversion tactic to call Nehemiah away from the work of rebuilding the wall. Diversion from the things of God and the work He has given you to do is still a chief strategy of Satan.

5. Popular influence: Nehemiah 6:2

The enemy said let "us" meet together, trying to influence Nehemiah with popular opinion. Popular opinion said Nehemiah was a rebel and the wall could not be built. Trying to get believers to conform to popular opinion, majority rule, and the principles of the world is a key strategy of Satan. A false prophet claiming to be of God was even used by the enemy to attack Nehemiah (Nehemiah 6:10-13). Popular opinion would say to listen to a "prophet of God." We are warned of false prophets who would divert us from God.

6. Compromise: Nehemiah 5:14-19

Nehemiah refused to compromise. He did not conform to wrong life styles and principles around him. His motto was, "So did not I, because of the fear of God" (Nehemiah 5:15). Satan promotes compromise. He tries to convince believers that something is all right because

others are doing it or that such things really are not wrong.

7. Threats and fear: Nehemiah 6:5-9

The enemy made fearful threats against Nehemiah and his workers. Satan knows that fear paralyzes but faith energizes believers to be effective for God. When Nehemiah was offered a way to escape from the enemy, he refused to be fearful and retreat (Nehemiah 6:10-13). He did not take the easy way out. Satan tries to make believers flee in the face of opposition. When you are running you are retreating, and when you retreat you do not gain or hold spiritual ground. When you walk by faith you will encounter opposition of those who walk by sight.

8. Fighting and hindering: Nehemiah 4:8

Open tactics of fighting and hindering were also used. The enemy is not always subtle in his attacks. Sometimes he comes right out in the open to fight and hinder.

9. Conspiracy: Nehemiah 4:8; 6:2

A conspiracy or plot was made against Nehemiah by the enemy. The enemy plots against your life also:

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...

(John 10:10)

10. Attacks at vulnerable times: Nehemiah 4:6

The greatest attack of the enemy came when the wall was

half finished because this was a strategic (important) time. The enemy invades at strategic times when you are vulnerable (most open and affected by his attacks).

-The Prophet Jonah became despondent after the greatest revival ever experienced (Jonah 3-4).

-David fell into sin at a time of great victory in his life. Up until that time he had not known military defeat.

-Samson fell into sin when he "began" to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

When you are being effective for God, you are vulnerable to enemy attack. Satan is concerned most with those who are advancing in the spirit world.



INTERNAL ATTACKS:

Internal attacks of Satan are those made from within the Body of Christ. They include:

1. Discouragement: Nehemiah 4:10-11

The workers became discouraged which resulted in:

-Loss of strength.

-Loss of vision because of "too much rubbish."

-Loss of confidence

2. Dissension: Nehemiah 5

Nehemiah 5 opens with dissension among God's people. If Satan divides the Body of Christ, he makes us ineffective. We are busy battling each other instead of building. Wrong motives are always behind dissension. In Nehemiah chapter 5 the wrong motive was greed.

3. Weak believers: Nehemiah 4:12

The enemy used weak workers (symbolic of weak believers in the Body of Christ) to try to defeat the construction project.



SPIRITUAL COUNTER STRATEGIES: VICTORY AT THE WALL

The following strategies were used by Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. You can use the same strategies to assure victory at your spiritual walls:

EXAMINE THE WALLS:

As Nehemiah did in the natural world, examine the walls of your spiritual life. (Nehemiah 2) Has the enemy crept into your personal life, your home, church fellowship, business, etc.?

But let a man examine himself... (I Corinthians 11:28)

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves... (II Corinthians 13:5)

Remember that self-examination is one of the symbolic gates of your wall in the spirit world. Satan will try to

prevent you from self-examination because it will result in recognition of areas in your life where you have let him destroy the walls and invade.

CONFESS YOUR SIN:

As Nehemiah, recognize that the reason walls are destroyed is because of sin. Then like he did (Nehemiah 1:5-7), confess your sin and ask forgiveness:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:8-9)

RECOGNIZE THAT YOU CANNOT BUILD ALONE:

When Nehemiah's workers said, "We ourselves are unable to build the wall," it was a true statement. By themselves they were unable. They needed the power of God to equip them for the task...So will you!

ARISE AND BUILD:

As Nehemiah, determine to rise and rebuild your spiritual walls:

Then answered I them, and said unto them, the God of Heaven, He will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 2:20)

Be prepared...You will face opposition from the enemy.

DO NOT BE DIVERTED:

Nehemiah refused to be diverted by enemy tactics (Nehemiah 6:2-3). Do not let the enemy divert or distract you from rebuilding your spiritual walls.

DO NOT BE SWAYED BY "POPULAR OPINION":

Popular opinion was that Nehemiah was a rebel (Nehemiah 2:19). Popular opinion held that the walls could not be properly rebuilt (Nehemiah 4:3). Nehemiah was not swayed by popular opinion. Rather than conform to popular opinion, Nehemiah set an example. He said, "So did not I, because of the fear of God" (Nehemiah 5:14-19). Become an example in spiritual warfare. Do not become part of the crowd that says victory is impossible.

IDENTIFY THE ENEMY AND HIS STRATEGIES:

Nehemiah identified the enemy and his strategies. He discovered that the enemy planned a surprise attack (Nehemiah 4:8 and 11). You must identify your spiritual enemy and his strategies in order to be effective in spiritual warfare. This will help you be prepared for surprise attacks. Recognize that the enemy has conspired against you to kill, steal, and destroy but realize God has greater power and wants to give you life more abundantly (John 10:10).

DEVELOP SPIRITUAL COUNTER STRATEGIES:

Nehemiah developed a counter strategy when he heard the enemy planned to attack. He set some workers as a guard to watch for the enemy. Every worker built the wall

but also had his sword and was prepared to fight (Nehemiah 4:13-18). A signal was arranged (a trumpet blast) to alert the warriors of an invasion. Because they were prepared to fight and knew the strategy of the enemy, they prevented an invasion. They knew if they had to war with the enemy, God would fight for them:

...our God shall fight for us. (Nehemiah 4:20)

If you develop proper spiritual counter strategies, you can prevent many invasions of the enemy into your life. When Satan does break through and invade, be assured that God will fight for you!

FACE THE ENEMY:

When Nehemiah was offered refuge from the enemy, he refused. He said, "Should such a man as I flee?" (Nehemiah 6:11). Nehemiah faced the enemy in God's power. When the enemy threatens you, do not flee or take the easy way out or your spiritual walls will never be secure. When internal dissension and discouragement arose and the enemy worked through weak believers, Nehemiah did not ignore the attacks. He confronted and conquered them.

PROTECT YOUR WALL AT VULNERABLE TIMES:

In the story of Nehemiah, the greatest attack of the enemy came when the wall was half finished. When you start building in the spirit world, when you enter the arena of effective spiritual warfare, be prepared. It is a vulnerable time. You are a target for an attacks of Satan.

BUILD THE WALL:

Nehemiah's response to direct criticism, mocking, scorn, false accusations, threats, and fear, was simply to continue building the wall:

So we labored in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. (Nehemiah 4:21)

Nehemiah stayed with the task. He did not stop building: So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month of Elul, in fifty and two days. (Nehemiah 6:15)

Nehemiah did in a short time what the enemy said could not be done.

If the walls are down around your life, the enemy may tell you the task is hopeless. But, with God's help, you can rebuild the wall. With His strength you do not have to take a long time to do so:

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

(Philippians 4:13)

When the enemy attacks your spiritual reconstruction project do not quit! Just keep building your spiritual walls.

SET A WATCH:

When Nehemiah completed rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem, he set a guard to watch over the walls and

gates of the city (Nehemiah 7:1-3). Set a watch over your spiritual walls. Always be alert for attacks of the enemy.



TACTICAL MANEUVERS

1. Are there spiritual walls in your life which have been destroyed by the enemy? Examine your "spiritual walls" which include...

-Walls of salvation, gates of praise

-Work of the cross in your life

-Christian witness

-The old nature changed to the new nature

-Suffering and testing

-Elimination of works of the flesh

-Work of the Holy Spirit

-The Word of God

-Spiritual warfare

-The hope of the return of Jesus

-Self-examination

2. Believers are often defeated in spiritual warfare because of lack of proper spiritual preparation. Study how Nehemiah prepared himself before rebuilding the wall

and confronting the enemy:

-He saw conditions as they were: Chapter 1-2

-He recognized the root problem as sin and confessed his part in it: Nehemiah 1:5-7

-He fasted, wept, mourned, and prayed: Nehemiah 1:4

-He prepared properly before starting the task and facing the enemy: Chapters 1 and 2

-He had a strategy for rebuilding: Chapter 3

3. Ready to rebuild your spiritual walls? Review and apply the strategies learned in this message.