

# Nehemiah 6,7

## Day 1

More Enemy Attacks. Read Nehemiah 6:1-9

1. How much of the wall was finished in 6:1? How did Nehemiah's enemies react? 6:2 Why do you think they decided to focus on personally on Nehemiah?

**FYI:** The *Plain of Ono* is located about twenty miles northwest of Jerusalem, near Tel Aviv.

"Throughout Scripture, and especially here in Nehemiah, we see that the devil has two primary forms of attack...First, Satan comes at us with the ferocity of a ravenous beast. (1 Peter 5:8)...Satan seeks to attack us with calamity and disaster. He seeks to destroy us physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually. Second, Satan also approaches us in disguise - in a form the apostle Paul calls 'an angel of light' (2 Corinthians 11:14). He comes to us with the appearance of wisdom, gentleness, compassion, charm, and attractiveness, and he offers enticing promises and flattering words. Satan assures us that the things he tempts us with will grant us everything and cost us nothing. ...

In the first five chapters of Nehemiah, we have seen Nehemiah's enemies using the first form of satanic attack - a frontal assault, the devouring beast approach. But in Nehemiah 6, his enemies switch to the second form of satanic attack - they employ charm and persuasion against Nehemiah." - Ray Stedman (106-108)

2. What did Nehemiah recognize about the invitation to meet? 6:2b

- What two reasons did Nehemiah give for not meeting with them? 6:3 (NET translation reads: "I am engaged in an important work, and I am unable to come down. Why should the work come to a halt when I leave it to come down to you?")

**FYI:** "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." - Henry Morris

"What was the nature of their scheme? We don't know. Some Bible commentators suggest that this was a ploy to lure Nehemiah out of the city, where he had plenty of bodyguards, and out onto the plain where he would be exposed to an ambush." - Ray Stedman (108)

3. Why do you think they kept repeating the invitation? 6:4

- What did Nehemiah's continued refusals lead Sanballat to do? 6:5

**Digging Deeper**  
Compare the attack on Jesus in Matt. 22:15-18.

**FYI: Unsealed letter** "Official letters were typically rolled up and sealed with an official signet by the letter's sender...An open or unsealed letter was not only a sign of disrespect and open criticism but also suggested the information therein was public knowledge." - John MacArthur (115)

"An unsealed letter was...designed by the sender to be read by everyone involved in its delivery. In other words, the sender, Sanballat, intended that the contents of the letter be spread as far and wide as possible. He was deliberately spreading the lie that Nehemiah was a rebel who was trying to make himself king." - Ray Stedman (112)

4. List the accusations contained in the open letter:

- 6:6a
- 6:6b
- 6:7

5. How intimidating would these accusations be? (If believed to be true, what impact would it have on the people? On the King of Persia? See Ezra 4:19-21)

- What solution did they suggest? 6:7b

**FYI:** "These lies probably outraged Nehemiah. He had worked hard and trusted God greatly, so this work would be done with the blessing of the king; and he had embraced great personal sacrifice to demonstrate that he was not in this for himself...Now he is accused of the very things he has worked so hard to not fall into!" - David Guzik

6. In your own words, what two things did Nehemiah say about these accusations? 6:8

**Food for Thought:** "Nehemiah did not mount an elaborate defense, trying to prove Sanballat wrong point by point. He wasn't going to waste his time. You don't satisfy men like Sanballat with facts, explanations, and evidence. You satisfy them by giving in to their demands, and Nehemiah would not!" - David Guzik

7. What did Nehemiah recognize about the nature of this open letter? 6:9

- How did he respond to this fear? 6:9b (See Psalm 56:1-4)

**Food for Thought:** "Sometimes we think that a feeling of fear and trembling, brought on by trial and opposition in the Lord's word, is a characteristic sign of immaturity or of the inexperience of a young believer, in Christ. Perhaps it will keep us in, or bring us back to, a godly humility if we are reminded that the faithful, the strong, the mature in the Lord's service are ever prone and open to fear and trembling when the going becomes difficult, threatening or dangerous...The enemies had made a groundless accusation that a conspiracy of rebellion was being hatched by Nehemiah and his companions. Although there was not a grain of truth in this, their fear can be imagine when one remembers that if it reached the ears of the higher authorities, there could be dire consequences."  
- Roland Wickes (7)

"We must do what Nehemiah did – pray for God's strength, His power in our lives. We can't overcome the slander and fear of our enemies in our own strength. It will be said, 'not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God.'"  
- David Guzik

**Applying the Word:** How do you respond to emotionally charged situations? Which of Nehemiah's responses to the enemy do you find most remarkable?

## Day 2

### Another Ploy Against Nehemiah. Read Nehemiah 6:10-14

8. What proposal did Shemaiah make to Nehemiah? 6:10 What was he pretending to be to Nehemiah?

9. How did Nehemiah respond? 6:11

- Why would it be inappropriate for Nehemiah (“*a man like me*”) to flee? Why would it be wrong for him to enter the temple? Numbers 18:7

**FYI:** “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 to 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.”  
- Henry

10. What did Nehemiah recognize about Shemaiah? 6:12

**FYI:** “There was an altar of asylum in the temple courtyard, and people were permitted to flee to the courtyard and be safe - but that’s not what Shemaiah proposed...Clearly, Shemaiah was trying at the very least to discredit Nehemiah by enticing him into violating God’s commandments. In fact, Shemaiah might have been trying to lure him into an ambush as well.”  
- Ray Stedman (114)

11. List the motives behind Shemaiah’s offer. 6:13

- How do you think the people would have been influenced if Nehemiah had succumbed to these fears?

12. What did Nehemiah ask God to “*remember*” this time? 6:14 (Contrast 5:19)

- Who else had been working against Nehemiah’s efforts? 6:14b *How do you think Nehemiah felt about his own people turning against him?*

**FYI:** “The prophetess Noadiah is not mentioned elsewhere. Presumably she was among the group of false prophets who were eager to displace Nehemiah’s godly influence.” - The Woman’s Study Bible (765)

13. Read through the following verses on fear and God's provisions and protection. Underline anything especially meaningful to you.

- Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. NIV
- John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. NIV
- John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." NASU
- Matthew 10:28-31 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. NIV
- Romans 8:15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."
- Romans 8:28,31,34 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose...31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?...34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. NIV
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
- Hebrews 13:5-6 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" NIV
- 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. NIV
- Phil. 4:6-7 The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NIV
- Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength. NIV
- Philippians 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)
- Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

**Applying the Word:** *What have you learned about responding to false accusations, temptations, fear etc.?*

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## Day 3

The Wall is Finished; Opposition Continues. Read Nehemiah 6:15 - 7:3

14. Summarize Nehemiah's focus and dependence on God and the recognition he gave to the Lord's presence and power in His life.

- 1:4
- 2:4
- 2:8b
- 2:12
- 2:18
- 2:20
- 4:4
- 4:9
- 4:15
- 4:20
- 5:9
- 5:15
- 5:19; 6:14

15. Amazingly, how long did it take to build the wall? 6:15 (*Elul = August/September. See 2:1*)

- What did Nehemiah's enemies recognize about this accomplishment? 6:16 (*Humanly speaking, how probable was it for Nehemiah to have ever finished the wall?*)

***FYI: "were afraid and lost their self-confidence/very disheartened in their own eyes"*** Strong's OT:5307 *naphal*; to fall "to be overcome by sleep or emotion" - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (744)

"Finally, there came a man who did more than wish Jerusalem had walls; he grieved, he ached, he prayed, he planned, he asked boldly, he went, he fought, he encouraged, he stood strong, he saw the job through to completion. But he also had people around him with the same kind of heart. We have such small ideas of how God can use us. God used a man named Nehemiah to set right a 100-year-old problem in less than two months – and the same God sits on a throne in heaven and works through you today." - David Guzik

**Tobiah's Letters**

16. What else had been going on involving Tobiah during these months? 6:17

17. Although Tobiah was an Ammonite, what connections did he have through marriage and through his son's marriage (*Meshullam* - see Neh. 3:4,30)? 6:18 (See also 13:4)

- How had Tobiah used his relationships with the Jews to undermine Nehemiah? 6:19
- Although it is not stated, how did Nehemiah apparently handle this propaganda and false accusations?

**FYI:** "Tobiah and his son took Jewish wives from influential families...Sanballat's daughter married a son of the high priest Eliashib (see Neh. 13:28). These, along with many other intermarriages, provided conduits to the enemy that would continue to plague the people."  
- The Woman's Study Bible (765)

6:17-19: "Tobiah's numerous binding agreements (*by oath* 6:18) within the Jewish community were probably trading contracts, facilitated by his marriage connections. Such links and loyalties...were exploited by intrigues, persuasive talk, leaks of information and threatening letters."  
- Derek Kidner (101)

"Tobiah's friends... attempted both to propagandize on behalf of Tobiah and to act as an intelligence system for him."  
- David Guzik

"Even within the community of those who had returned from Babylon, there were influential agents of the enemy."  
- Africa Bible Commentary (552)

**Further Appointments and Safeguards**

18. What else did Nehemiah undertake after the wall was built? 7:1

- What does appointing "singers" and "Levites" (who served in the temple - see Numbers 8:11), say about Nehemiah's goals/priorities for the people?

**FYI: Gatekeeper.** "In the later books of the OT, written after the building of the Temple, the term is applied to the Levites who had charge of the various entrances (1 Chron 9:17; 15:18; 2 Chron 23:19)....In 2 Sam 18:26; 2 Kings 7:10-11, we meet the keeper of the city gates (cf. Acts 17:13)."  
- The New Unger's Bible Dictionary

19. Whom did Nehemiah put in charge of Jerusalem? 7:2 Why did he choose them?

**FYI:** "Nehemiah wasn't in this for political glory. He had done a work, and now he could let it go. God would still use him in Jerusalem, but he knew it wasn't his place to stay in authority."  
- David Guzik

20. What guidelines did Nehemiah give for securing Jerusalem? 7:3 What does this indicate about concerns he still had?

**FYI:** "In those days, walled cities would open their gates at dawn so merchants and traders could come and go. But Nehemiah ordered that Jerusalem keep its gates shut until the heat of the day, when the sun beat down upon the land. This would preclude any possibility of a surprise attack while the people were still sleeping...Nehemiah was a practical man who is not only deeply spiritual but he also possessed practical common sense. He investigated and assessed the situation, organized the people, set up guards, assigned responsibility, and shared the labor. He was not merely a great spiritual leader - though he was every bit of that. He was also a great motivator, organizer, analyzer, and construction boss."  
- Ray Stedman (119,123)

**Applying the Word:** *What are some the most efficient and effective ways you have seen a ministry established or executed? What focus was maintained?*

## Day 4

### Enrolling the People. Nehemiah 7:4-73

21. What problems did Nehemiah note about the city? 7:4

- What did God lead him to do first? 7:5

**FYI:** "Nehemiah wanted Jerusalem to grow and prosper. But before that could happen he must first know who he had already. Just as when he toured the broken-down walls in 2:11-16, he needed to know the problem well."  
- David Guzik

22. The genealogical record of people that returned is classified by leaders 7:7, lay people (families and towns) 7:8-38, religious leaders 7:39-45, servants 7:46-60 and people with uncertain genealogy 7:61-65.

- What was carefully noted about some of the people's families? 7:61-64 (How do you think this happened?)
- How many people returned in all? 7:66,67
- What else was numbered? 7:68
- How generous were the people? 7:70-72 (What does this say about how well some did in captivity? See Jeremiah 29:7)

**FYI:** "In the Old Testament, one could not be a priest unless it was established that they descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses, and the first high priest over Israel." - David Guzik

"One thousand gold drachmas would weigh about nine pounds." - The Nelson Study Bible (797)

"Urim and Thummin: " These objects, kept in the breastplate of the high priest, were used to determine God's will. (Exodus 28:30)" - John MacArthur (15)

23. What does the preservation of these exact details about the people who returned say to you about God's understanding and heart for every individual?

- How had the Lord fulfilled His promises to the exiles? 7:73 (See Jeremiah 29:11-14)

**FYI:** "These are the people... who returned: This list was important because each of these people were important to God, in that they did what so few of their fellow Jews did –... returned back to the promised land after they had already set down roots for seventy years in the Babylonian empire. Only about 2% of the Jews who were carried away into exile by the Babylonians came back...and they are mentioned *twice* in God's eternal word (Here and in Ezra 2)." - David Guzik

24. Read through the following verses about God's knowledge of you.

- Psalm 139:1-4,13,16 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it... completely, O LORD...133 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb...16 your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. NIV
- Jeremiah 12:3 But You know me, O LORD; You see me; And You examine my heart's attitude toward You. NAS
- 1 Chronicles 28:9 For the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. NIV

**Applying the Word:** How would you like to be what Nehemiah modeled in:

*His relationship with the Lord:*

*His leadership with the people and projects:*

*His dealings with opposition:*