THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

"Wrought by our God"

Nehemiah 6:1-19

Introduction

1. God's work carried on in God's way will never lack God's blessing. This is absolutely true. BUT, it is also true that God's work will never lack opposition from the enemy. He is there to thwart any advances attempted.

2. Three attempts are recorded in this chapter by which the enemy (Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and the rest of the enemies, 6:1) sought to break up the building of the walls of Jerusalem (vv. 2,5,10). In each instance, Nehemiah stood his ground and declared his unswerving intent to do the will of God. He submitted to the Lord and resisted the enemy (cf. James 4:7).

3. The way Nehemiah submitted to the Lord is clear: a) He rested entirely upon God for strength (v. 9). The verb "strengthen" means to "bind fast" or to "gird tight." He found his entire courage in the Lord! b) He committed the enemy to God's judgment (v. 14). The people are named (Tobiah, Sanballat, and Noadiah, a prophetess). Their works are named, for they did not possess faith. Their intent to bring fear and stop the work is stated. How glorious a stand for the Lord Nehemiah made! As a result, certain effects are noted:-

1. COMPLETION v. 15

An absolute miracle is recorded here. The walls of Jerusalem were completely rebuilt in 52 days. It must be remembered that this was done in anything less than ideal conditions (cf. all the opposition listed in this book and Dan. 9:25). There was a holy zeal to do the will of God, namely, the rebuilding of the wall. "Elul" is August-September. The verb "completed" conveys the thought of perfection and wholeness. The job was done! Despite the problems, Nehemiah stuck to his appointed assignment. Mark these two thoughts: a) Never deviate from an assignment given by the Lord (cf. 2:17) b) Never stop until the goal is reached (Phil. 3:10-14).

2. REACTION v. 16

The completion of the wall did not stop the enemy, for the aggressive attempts of the enemy never cease (1 Pet. 5:8). Incidentally, the word "enemy" is sound at least 5 times in this book. It means one who "persecutes" or "hates." It's root significance is to "breathe" or "blow" at someone, hence to have anger or hatred. The form is a participle

therefore a persistant attitude is in view. It should be noted that "our" enemies is linked with "all the nations." All outside the people of God are united with one intent: destroy the work of the Lord! This offensive crowd is"cast down" due to the success of the Lord's people. True, this is "in their own eyes," but it is a fact nonetheless.

3. PERCEPTION v. 16

The verb "perceive" is the common one for "know." It has both the inchoative and completed significance, hence not only to get to know but to have the knowledge involved. The emphatic pronoun "this" is employed to show the "walls" are meant. Furthermore, it is clear the work was done by "our God." What a contrast this is with "their eyes." The ultimate issue in all of this are "gods," but only one true "God" (the term used is Elohim meaning Strong One, cf. Isa.44:6,8; 45:18,21, 22). The enemy did not "believe" on God, but they "knew" He had done a great work! The unregenerate heart must admit certain facts, but this must never be mistaken for true faith!

4. INFILTRATION v. 17-19

The Hebrew particle "moreover" shows that the enemy had another device in his favor: inside help! The list of names provided(v. 18) shows that Tobiah, the inveterate enemy of Israel actually had a son, Johanan, who had married a Jewish maiden, the daughter of Meshullam (cf. 3:4,30). There was a separation with the enemy and Israel by the wall, but there was a hidden participation with the enemy through marriage! Because of this, "many" in Israel had actually "sworn" to Tobiah to take up his cause against the nation! Think of it: an enemy had inside treachery at his command! This is all the more dreadful for "Johanan" means "God is gracious." Then, "Meshullam" means "friend," Berechiah means "God has blessed." The verb "swore" is rooted in the word "seven," the sacred number of perfection.

Conclusion

Success is no signal of relax. The enemy may find himself admitting his own loss and our gain, but he always has schemes by which to operate. Victory will come only when we see the Lord (1 Cor. 15:54). It is for us today to "be sober, be vigilent" (1 Peter 5:8). God grant this spirit to us all. Amen