THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH
“Invitations to Disaster”
Nehemiah 6:1-14

Introduction
1. Here is a record of repeated attempts to disrupt the work of God. The attacks are from without and rise from familiar sources (cf. 2:10;19; 4:1, 7; 6:1, 2, 5). The previous chapter outlined internal difficulties. It will always be the same: fighting and fears within without, BUT GOD!

2. The outstanding character of Nehemiah is seen in this instance more than ever. He is a leader in Israel. He will not give up. He never lost his vision (2:17).

3. In each instance of the tactics employed, look for: 1) A proposal. 2) A reply by Nehemiah. 3) An explanation for his stand:

1. NEHEMIAH’S POSITION
   a. The Proposal v. 2
      The enemies of Israel proposed a meeting with Nehemiah in a village of the plain of Ono. The verb “meet” (passive) means to meet at an appointed place. The village given may actually be Chephirah (cf. Josh. 9:17). This is an oft-repeated tactic of the enemy: “come, let’s talk!”

   b. The Answer v. 3
      Three basic statements are made by Nehemiah through his own messengers. 1) I am doing a great work. Nehemiah had no fear or pride to state he was being used of God! 2) I will not come down to you. He would not respond to an invitation of this sort. 3) I will not allow the work to cease. He felt that his presence was required for successful completion of an assigned task! Such loyalty to a call!

   c. The reason v. 2
      Nehemiah did not throw reason to the winds. He knew that the enemy had one end in view, evil (KJV mischief, Hebrew raah signifies destruction, calamity). Although the call to meet was offered four times (v. 4), Nehemiah was intransigent. His decision was unmoved!

2. NEHEMIAH’S PERSON
   a. The Proposal vv. 6, 7
      A fifth attempt to trip Nehemiah is advanced by an open letter sent through Sanballat’s servant (v. 5). This time it is that Nehemiah get some counsel! Like today, people want “counsel,” but they don’t want “regeneration!” This all came in the form of a letter which made some critical character assassinations: 1) You and Jews rebel. 2) You build the wall. 3) You want to be king. 4) You appoint prophets to speak for yourself. The strong emphasis on the personal pronoun “you” is at the core of the accusation. The enemy proposed “conciliation” first; now he turns to “scandal.”

   b. The Answer v. 8
      Nehemiah could have given an extended defense of his person. This he did not choose to do, at least as far as the record goes. He merely made a decisive and categorical denial of the charges: 1) No such thing as you say. 2) You invent the charges in your own heart. If tact were required, Nehemiah didn’t use it.

   c. The Reason v. 9
      Three goals are expressed here: 1) Make Nehemiah afraid. 2) Weaken Israel’s hand in the work. 3) Prohibit the work from being completed. Nehemiah knew the intent of the charges. God’s work was to be stop (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4; Eph. 6:11). He will do this at any cost, even if it requires character assassination. The enemy really does’t care in the process what happens to unsaved souls.

3. NEHEMIAH’S PRACTICE
   a. The Proposal v. 10
      Now comes the “closed door” strategy put forward by a lying prophet Shemaiah. He claimed there were agents out to kill Nehemiah. This sort of secrecy and diplomacy may be acceptable to moderns, but has no place for God’s man who has been charged to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

   b. The Answer v. 11
      Nehemiah gives a forthright detailed reply: 1) My kind of man doesn’t run. 2) I will not harbor myself in the temple for refuge (this would admit guilt). 3) I will not go (cf. v. 3). It was clear to Nehemiah that Shemaiah was the hired servant of Tobiah and Sanballat (v. 12).

   c. The Reason v. 13
      Four items are listed here as the objective of the proposal: 1) Make Nehemiah fearful. 2) Make Nehemiah sin. 3) Get an evil report of Nehemiah. 4) Bring reproach on Nehemiah.

Conclusion
Like a true servant of God, Nehemiah stood his ground and left the judgment of his enemies to God (vv. 9, 14). An insistsence on doing God’s will at any cost is worth it. Hallelujah!