



NEHEMIAH

GOD REBUILDS & RESTORES

Distract, Discourage, Discredit

November 24 & 25 // Jim Johnson

_____ the problem

Nehemiah 6:1-14; Hebrews 5:12-14

_____ on mission

_____ the work

Nehemiah 6:15-16; Acts 20:22-24; Hebrews 12:1-2

TIME WITH GOD: If you don't currently have a Bible reading plan, you can download "Our Time with God" at spcc.tv/resources

REFLECTIONS: Whether you're using SPCC's reading plan or a different one, think about your time hearing and responding to Jesus this week. From your conversations with Him, describe one thing you felt Him speaking to you about.

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTION: Is there something that caught your attention during Jim's message? Do you have any questions?

Proposals for meetings, mail left open before the wrong eyes, messages leaked to the king, duplicitous offers of safety, and flattering words cannot hide the fact that the goal of these enemies with smiling faces was psychological terror from beginning to end. How does one defend oneself in such circumstances? Nehemiah tried several approaches. He equivocated, saying he was too busy, but he also said a flat no when he had to. He prayed to God to bring back their deeds on their own heads, knowing that vengeance belongs finally to God. The enemies' strategies to weaken the hands of Nehemiah and his associates in order to stop the work backfired, for Nehemiah only strengthened his hand all the more. — New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

MY PERSPECTIVE: When you have a task, do you find it easy to focus, or are you easily distracted by “squirrel” moments?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Direct opposition is easy to spot. Distraction, however, can be subtle, even deceptive. Read Romans 12:2. Describe some subtle distractions we can fall prey to if we have the world's perspective instead of godly discernment.

Read Hebrews 5:11-14: The power of discernment comes “by constant practice.” What kind of practice are these verses describing? Describe one way you are “practicing” to develop discernment in your own life.



Many people in Judah were under an oath of allegiance to Tobiah, who may have spent some time in Jerusalem as interim administrator after Artaxerxes had stopped the earlier building of the wall. Tobiah had significant, politically important marital ties to families in Jerusalem, who seem to have been supportive in general to Nehemiah's program. Obviously, not everyone who participated in the wall supported Nehemiah in all the other aspects of his program. The nobles may have wanted to maintain business, political, economic, and religious ties with other rulers in Palestine. The supporters of Tobiah constantly reminded Nehemiah of Tobiah's many virtues and reported Nehemiah's words and deeds back to Tobiah...We would love to have the other side of the stories, to know what Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem were thinking, and to know more details about the inter-Jewish debates. However one-sided Nehemiah's report may be, it is clear that he faced dangers from outside that could have frustrated and destroyed his reputation just as much as the internal threats from ruthless creditors could have done in chapter 5. Nehemiah maintains a posture that is consistent and coherent. With prayer to God and with considerable political savvy, he withstood all the dangers of the day and—with Go's help—finished the wall.— New Interpreter's Bible Commentary

MY RESPONSE:

Read 2 Timothy 3:12 & 1 Peter 5:8-11. Opposition is a reality for believers on mission! Describe one way you've experienced, or are currently experiencing, opposition in your walk.

Sadly, there are many who start the Christian "race" but get sidetracked and don't finish well.

Read the following verses: Luke 14:27-30; Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7-8. Describe what you're doing to stay on mission and finish well spiritually. Are there spiritual safeguards and support systems you're currently using?

