**NEHEMIAH - (PART III)**

**HOW GOD’S CHURCH FACES OPPOSITION**

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Picking up where we left off on the last Newsletter, Nehemiah has now arrived at Jerusalem his beloved Homeland, to the people he loves – his very own who are suffering and in distress. The enemy (Babylonians) had come and ravaged the Holy city, plundered their homes, robbed the blessed people of their goods, stole their dignity, took most of them captive to Babylon and as they left, they tore down their defensive wall that surrounded the city and burnt the gates with fire. Only a few, a remnant were left and they were hurting. What a picture of defeat – smoldering ashes and piles of stones, sad faces and broken hearts just waiting for someone to care, someone to come and help them!!

 Then one day a man from a far country shows up with a Vision. God has been dealing with him and getting him ready. He makes a long grueling 350 mile journey on horseback. Not only was the horse carrying heavy luggage, but it was carrying a burdened man with a heavy heart. A God sent man on a mission! No sooner had Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, tied up his horse and unpacked his bags, the devil hears the news and Hell stirs. He doesn’t realize the conflict he will face from opposers to his work. The whole future of Jerusalem and his people hinges upon him and his determination. He must rally his people and keep his vision alive in the eyes of the workers. If he gets discouraged, so will they. If he gets tired of the battle, gives up and walks away – everything will be lost for God’s people and history will record defeat upon its pages as Hell celebrates victory.

In saying this, do you (the reader) realize what is hinging upon your calling, position and commitment in the work of Christ and His Church? A Burden always precedes a Vision. A true burden is birthed in the Heart when it sees the suffering and needs of others. When this happens, compassion stirs and it takes you to your knees. The heart cries to God for those who are hurting and in need. It says to God – “O God, would you please move for my Brothers and Sisters and these families who are going through it? Dear Jesus, what can I do to be a help and a strength?” This is when the Vision comes! It will plainly show you what you

can do to help and make a difference.

Our story now picks up: **Nehemiah 2:10** – When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the Welfare of the children of Israel. Nehemiah gathers all the people together, the nobles, rulers and the Priests. He shares with them his vision. (Like the little poem – “Two men stood staring through prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars.”) Before Nehemiah arrived, the people saw defeat, discouragement and destruction, but the God sent man saw Victory. He saw restored walls, restored homes, families and worship. He just needed to convince them to help him. I’ve got a vision children, we can do it! God has laid it on my heart, all I need is your willingness, your heart in the matter and your hands in the effort and we’ll take back and restore what the devil has taken away and destroyed. **Let us Rise and Build!**

 But when Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arabian heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us. Then Nehemiah answered – “The God of Heaven will prosper us and we His servants will rise and build: But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.”

**ALWAYS A BATTLE BEFORE VICTORY**

Listen, every Work of God will be contested. Satan will endeavor to put out the Vision and hinder the work of God in every Church. He has his pawns, his workers doing his bidding. He’ll do everything to wear down, tear down, confuse, lie, discourage and break the Unity of the Lord’s people. Proud selfish minds are always the enemies’ instruments that stand in the way of God’s Work in the Church. If there’s ever a time to stand United together – it is NOW! We are at War! Satan and his cohorts have drawn up their battle plans to engage us in unnecessary battles to side track us, to break our attention and get us away from the Work that God has called us to do. Listen children, our longed for Home is Heaven and our Goal is to build a Church of Worship and Praise, a sanctuary where the Presence of God dwells, a Light House for the lost drifters at sea to save them from the rocks of sin, a house of Prayer, a place where people can find peace and refuge from the storm, a haven of rest for the weary and where the Word of God is preached bringing food for the Soul! The House of God is a place of Hope and Strength. No wonder Hell fights.

**THE ROOTS OF INBRED ENMITY**

Listen, God seeks to build and unify, the devil weakens and scatters. Remember, God had brought Nehemiah to a key position in order to do a great work. Satan also had people in key places in order to hinder and stop it. Let’s look now at two main hit men who the devil inspires to come against Nehemiah’s work at Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that Sanballat was a Horonite from Moab and the Moabites were Israel’s enemies. Guess where the Moabites came from? Moab was the son of Lot by his drunken incestuous relationship with his daughter. Out of this bloodline and spirit came Sanballat. His name came from the [Sumerian moon god Sīn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin_%28mythology%29) meaning - "Sīn has begotten." He became Governor of Samaria - a position of power and pull. Do you see now how the devil also uses people in high places to thwart the plan of God? You see in this story, the roots of enmity run deep between God’s chosen bloodline and the devils children of wrath and darkness. One of the grandsons of the current Jewish high priest [Eliashib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliashib_%28High_Priest%29) had married a daughter of this Sanballat, and was thus son-in-law of the chief enemy of the Jews. Sanballat’s Daughter married God’s minister! Wow! (Looks like you’re up against it Nehemiah!) Satans tares have roots mixed with the Holy seed.

Now let’s look at Tobiah. Tobiah was an Ammonite. The roots of his bloodline also run all the way back to Lot’s other son conceived in drunkenness with his other daughter. (It didn’t pay for you to move to Sodom did it Lot? Wrong choice! You picked up a bad spirit while you were there in that perverted sinful city and now your evil seed will hinder and cause trouble for God’s people!) Be very careful children who you link up with, someone down the road will reap the seeds you sow. Tobiah and his son married two Jewish women and thereby entered the Jewish race. Listen children, notice how the devil gets a foothold in by marriage, by unholy unions. Be careful what or who you fall in love with and marry. It’s one thing when the enemy fights from the outside, but it’s quite another when he plants his thorns within by the union of mixed faiths and heathen bloodlines. The enemy has made many inroads into God’s Church and once in, he sows his evil tares and works under cover to disseminate and tear down the work of God.

 God has given specific warnings not to mix with or marry into people of other religions and faiths who do not hold to God’s only True Way and standard of Holiness! Light has no communion with darkness and Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness. God said to come out from among them and be ye separate. The Lord said in **Deut. 23:2** – A bastard (an illegitimate one who is not of my bloodline, an outsider) shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord. An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord. But Israel would not and did not listen and now look who you have fighting against Nehemiah, the man of God!

 People by their wrong fellowship, their wrong associations and marriages are letting the enemy into their ranks that will cause much discord and trouble. Listen, Church, the devil will surely come after your unity and if he can weaken and break it, God’s work will be destroyed and His Kingdom will suffer. It’s time to break off all ties with the worldly crowd. In spiritual things that really matter to God, these nonspiritual and worldly minded people will be a great hindrance. We see the results from Israel mixing with and marrying into these other nations of idol worshippers around them.

**THE SEDUCING POWER OF**

**POLITICS**

The Bible said that Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arabian laughed Nehemiah to scorn and despised the Jews. You see, Sanballat was already Governor over Samaria and according to history, he wanted to be Ruler over Judah also. In studying this history, Sanballat was jealous over Jerusalem and wanted it for himself, so when Nehemiah showed up, it grieved him. Listen close, you see in this story the role that politics plays today, not only in government but also in Churches. When politics enters God’s Church and congregation, it breeds jealousy and conflict. People seek positions they’re not qualified for nor called of God to do. It separates people and hinders the Work of God. The Lord does not operate in politics, it is earthly, it’s man made and of the flesh. It causes respect of persons, it is man oriented and ran. When this happens it weakens the Church and suppresses the Will of God and the Holy Ghost cannot move and operate in the midst. You must remember, God operates on a much Higher Spiritual level that is Sanctified, Holy and Righteous. God’s way is Spirit lead. When politics enter, it brings the world with it. When this happens, the Will of God is traded and replaced with secular programs and doctrines that opens the door and welcomes all types of people and makes them comfortable to join. Thus, a man operated Church is led of the flesh and not the Will of God. Look around and you will see the charisma that is used to win people and make them feel accepted. If God is not in it, there will be no Conviction of sin, no reproof or correction in righteousness – just come as you are and we will build a church and increase our numbers. When these things take place, the Church becomes socialized and not Spiritual.

There are many big name Churches that are in an organization. They have their boards and conferences and separated into districts which are over seen by superintendents. The head of the organization sends who they choose to Pastor their churches. They send polished men with seminar degrees across the states to a church they’ve never been to before, to a congregation that don’t even know him, and he doesn’t know them. But I want you to know the Old fashion Bible way is still God ordained. When God’s people pray for the mind of the Lord, the Holy Spirit of God sets into office the Shepherds and Pastors that He desires. God’s Leaders and workers are called, Anointed, chosen and ordained. **GOD SETS THEM IN**! A true God called Pastor will seek the face of the Lord. He will get the mind of God for the people to lead them in Truth. God speaks to him and he conveys the message to the congregation. God’s Church is governed by the Holy Spirit and not by the votes or will of the people. Look at our once God fearing nation today as an example and you will see the awful shape she’s in because of voting rights and politics. It’s obvious that people get what and who they want because the majority rules. And sad to say, the majority does not want the true ways of God. They don’t want Holiness, sanctification or preaching against sin. They sign their secret ballots and cast their votes and look what we have – leaders who don’t love God, enemies of Righteousness that will not acknowledge the Bible and old fashion Christian beliefs. These leaders are taking people down the wrong road. Thus the political system caters to the will of the people.

It’s amazing how people grapple for power! They seek positions, prestige and money and God’s Will and Presence is missing. Listen, many build their Churches on talents, on their abilities to charm or move the people with charisma, but where is the Lord’s Will and His Holy Divine presence? Where is the Anointing and the fear of God that will lead and direct the congregation? It’s sad, but if a good man can be voted in, he can also be voted out at the whim of the people. Wouldn’t that be something if when Nehemiah showed up with a burden from God to help the people that the people had said, “We don’t want you, we’ll choose another?” For if the people are not spiritual minded and don’t have a true heart for God, then good leaders, Pastors and Ministers of the flock can be voted out. When this happens, the Church is weakened. It becomes just a social club with no power and no conviction. It is true, today you have divided congregations with many voices and opinions but in God’s way, there’s just One choice and One voice – and that is the Holy Ghost! He sets in whom He chooses! Remember, God called one Man – Moses to shepherd His O.T. Flock. Many didn’t like it and got into serious trouble. It is a fact that if you took the money and the prestige out of the equation, many people would not grapple for or hold on to positions of power and rule. Where are the Anointed and God Called? I said all that to say this – God is looking down and He sees a modern day lukewarm Laodicean Church that has conformed to the world and accepting homosexuals and every other kind of lustful sin and saying it is alright.

**THE POWER OF WORDS**

We see in this Bible story, that Nehemiah’s enemies had gotten their foot in by marriage. But the bold man of God spoke directly to Sanballat and Tobiah, “Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.” (Come on Nehemiah, stand your ground with these worldly men and their families! The God of Heaven called you and sent you to do a work and He will give you victory!) You see, satan’s main goal is to get inside – this is where he is most effective. If you will notice, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem in the beginning, hurled no stones and shot no arrows – they only used WORDS! Their threats were real and meant to discourage, confuse, divide and scatter the people. It turned into a war of feelings – a conflict of interests and attitudes. As Nehemiah’s workers’ hands were busy, the enemys’ tongues were busy undermining and criticizing. This will destroy a Church! Nehemiah knew this.

There’s an old saying – “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me” That’s not always true unless you have a Nehemiah heart and vision. Words become stones that break the heart. Your enemy (the devil) knows this and in his arsenal, there is a play of accusations and threats that will dampen and quench the fire and break the spirit. Words are powerful. They start fights, cause wars and divisions and separate the best of friends. Character assassins carry no guns – just words! Your words can kill a person’s influence, take away peoples’ confidence, cast a bad light on their character and murder them spiritually. Be careful how you treat God’s Anointed!

Many people walk the streets today lost and backslidden on God. They were once good workers in the Church, had talents and were anointed of the Lord but they were hurt by the tongues of their critics and the enemy pushed them out. They stay at home now and never go to Church because of gossip and rumors. Because of this, they stopped building, forsook the work of God and came down from the Wall. **Listen to me close, this story is recorded in the Bible for a reason to let us see that what happened to Nehemiah will confront every worker and minister of God today**! The devil is clever. He uses judgmental words, words of criticism that tears apart and brings the Wall down to keep it from going up! Listen children, we must get behind the Man of God, hold up his hands in battle, pray and stand strong lest the enemy destroys the work in God’s Kingdom! This is not anybody’s Church. It is not an organization run by the dictates of man. No one has a claim, right or monopoly on it – Only God has! It is His Church! Give the reins to Him and let the Holy Ghost call, ordain and set in the workers in their proper office and let Him run it!

**NOW THE WORK BEGINS**

Let’s now join Nehemiah and the Jews as they start the great work of reviving the stones from the rubbish and rebuilding the great Wall! Nehemiah had convinced them that God had sent him and it was the Lord’s Will to be Restored. So they donned their work clothes, gathered their tools and headed out. It was no doubt discussed as they gathered around the wall and its remains who would be placed where according to their ability. Some carried supplies, some labored and some watched and prayed. A sweet picture of UNITY indeed! What do you need now sir, and I will get it. I will do my part! Some said, I will be the hands, others were the feet while others said – I will be the eyes and ears!

**HERE’S THE PICTURE OF THE GREAT WALL**

This was no ordinary task. According to history, the Wall around Jerusalem at that time was 2.5 miles around the perimeter. It ranged from 10 to 15 feet thick. It was 30 to 40 feet high. It had 34 Watch Towers where the guards sat at the top looking out and watching for approaching enemies so they could sound the alarm to those inside. The blessed city of Jerusalem had 8 different gates in which people and their livestock would enter. It took Nehemiah and the dedicated people of God who labored, 52 days to rebuild the broken down Wall and Restore the Gates! O what Dedication!

 I don’t know how many hours, maybe just a few days into the work, the enemies of God show up on the scene. To see and learn the tactics of the devil and to understand why so many give up, notice the conspiracy from the powers of darkness! According to Nehemiah 4, Sanballat shows up with his army close enough that the Jews can see and hear them. Sanballat says to his army – “What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice and make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burned with fire? And Tobiah which stood by him, said – “even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” It made the Jews cry out – “Hear O God, for we are despised.” How would you like to work under circumstances like that and have the enemy say to you – you are too weak and feeble, you can’t do anything. Who do you think you are? The work you’re doing will never stand. You’ll never have revival. As the enemy of old said that day – “Just look at those Jews! Do they think they will have Revival and Sacrifice (Worship God) again?”

 In the next issue we will see and learn things from this story that will give us great understanding and wisdom on how to recognize the tactics of the enemy, how to guard against discouragement, how to fight the good fight of Faith and keep the Vision alive. You will see the genuine importance of God’s Work and Unity. Most of all you will discover the key to victory by a great unending Love for your families, friends and Church and be willing to stand in the gap for them. You will see the preciousness of souls that will make you want to keep on going and not give up! MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL until next month!