

Challenged by False Accusations # 15

Nehemiah 6: 5-9

I am sure that most, if not all, of us have been affected by hurtful words and false accusations. There have been times in our lives when we were simply trying to do the right thing and we faced opposition and accusation for that. We live in a society that is growing less tolerant of the Christian with each passing day. The liberal agenda and those who support their cause have accused the conservative Christian as being no different than the racists of days gone by and some have even compared us to the Nazi regime of WWII. Many today seek to create an image of Christians as intolerant, arrogant hypocrites. The truth is we are being attacked from every angle and it likely won't get any better.

Nehemiah faced such opposition in his day as well. He was simply trying to complete the task he was called to do and the enemy wasn't pleased with his progress. He was a man of integrity who sought to be of benefit to Jerusalem and her people, but the opposition was determined to defeat Nehemiah, even if it required making false accusations and attacking the character of a godly man.

As I studied this passage I was reminded of the advice of a close friend. He said, "Chris, take care of your character and God will take care of your reputation." That truth is revealed in the verses we've read tonight. Nehemiah was falsely accused, but God stood by him and He would take care of Nehemiah's reputation. I want to consider the [challenges](#) Nehemiah faced and how he responded to those challenges as we think on: [Challenged by False Accusations](#).

I. The Slander of Sanballat (5-7) – These verses record the slanderous accusations Sanballat made concerning Nehemiah and his motivation. Let's consider:

A. His Determination (5) – We first encountered Sanballat in [Chp. 2](#) and we have read of his actions many times since. In our last study we found that Sanballat approached Nehemiah four times to come down from the wall, all in an effort to hinder the work at Jerusalem. Here we find that he has come again the [fifth time](#). Clearly Sanballat is relentless in his effort to defeat Nehemiah. He is determined to hinder him any way possible. It is apparent that his sole purpose in life at this point is to hinder and defeat the Jews in Jerusalem.

- Things have not changed and they never will. We too face a determined adversary. In fact, we have the same adversary that Nehemiah faced. Sanballat was influenced by Satan, seeking to hinder the work of the Lord. The enemy has been around for thousands of years. He has perfected his tactics and seems to be in no hurry. He is determined to work against the

church as long as time lasts. We might as well face the fact that we face a determined enemy. 2 Tim.3:12 – Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

B. His Intention (5) – Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; Nehemiah offers an interesting detail concerning the latest tactic of Sanballat. He sent an open letter to Nehemiah. In that day, as well as in ours, important, official documents were sealed, to be opened only by the one to whom it was addressed. This ensured privacy and confidentiality. Sanballat sent this letter without it being sealed. This provided an opportunity for each one who handled the letter to read it without it being known. This was the plan of Sanballat. He wanted those who carried the letter to read these false accusations and hopefully spread the gossip. He was seeking to damage the character and integrity of Nehemiah.

- The enemy is still using that tactic today. He seeks any way possible to hurt and damage the church. His sole intention is to bring harm to the church and hinder the advancement of the kingdom. Have we not witnessed this many times in our lives? Good news often travels slowly, but gossip and false accusations travel fast. When we spread gossip or false accusations, we are helping the enemy achieve his purpose.

C. His Accusation (6-7a) – Within this open letter, that Sanballat knew many would read, he accused Nehemiah of grievous errors. First he accused him of:

1. Rebellion (6a) – Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: This has the idea of “an organized rebellion, a revolt against authority.” Keep in mind that Nehemiah was the cupbearer of king Artaxerxes. He was highly favored. He had served the king loyally and now Sanballat is accusing him of leading a rebellion against the king. He also accused him of:

2. Treason (6b-7a) – for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. [7] And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: Sanballat was accusing Nehemiah of treason, of literally campaigning to become king himself. He claimed that Nehemiah had appointed preachers to spread his message of rebellion and the desire to anoint him as their king.

- Although they were false, these were serious accusations that could have resulted in the execution of Nehemiah. Don't be surprised when the enemy raises false accusations.

D. His Intimidation (7b) – and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words.

Sanballat sought to intimidate Nehemiah by claiming to report his “findings” to the king. He was in reality afraid that Nehemiah and the others would actually finish the work they had begun and he wanted to use any means possible to hinder their work.

- Do we not continue to see that in our day as well? Quite often the opposition will “flex its muscle” or seek other ways to intimidate people in order to accomplish their goals. Many times they will greatly exaggerate the truth or spread an outright lie if it will benefit their cause.
- You can tell a lot about the character of individuals or organizations by looking at the means by which they achieve their goals. Intimidation and ridicule are never acceptable ways to achieve a desired end. Intimidation is a strong means of influence, but we can rest assured that truth will always prevail.

E. His Proposition (7c) – Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. As I read this I was amazed at the audacity of Sanballat. He has falsely accused Nehemiah with an intentional effort to damage his character and ruin his credibility and yet he is inviting him to come and seek a reasonable solution. Basically he is calling for Nehemiah to compromise his convictions and abandon the work. There can be no doubt, Sanballat did not have the interest of Nehemiah or the Jews at heart. He was only seeking to accomplish their defeat.

- We too face mounting pressure to compromise our stand and conform to the ways of the world. How often have we been asked, “What would it hurt to give just a little? Would it really make that much of a difference?” The world constantly wants us to abandon our faith and embrace their philosophy. The church will never benefit by abandoning the ways of God to please the world. We must continue to stand for truth regardless of the opposition!

I. The Slander of Sanballat (5-7)

II. The Steadfastness of Nehemiah (8-9) – I rejoice for those who refuse to abandon their faith to conform to the world. Nehemiah faced opposition, but he remained steadfast. Notice:

A. His Answer (8) – Nehemiah wasted no time answering Sanballat. I am sure that it was not what Sanballat expected or wanted to hear. Let’s consider the response of Nehemiah.

1. He Spoke of Innocence (8a) – Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest. Nehemiah refuted the claims of Sanballat. He declared all that Sanballat had

accused him of was false. He was not guilty of any of the accusations. Nehemiah was saying, “You can say whatever you want, or make any accusations you please, but I know the truth.” Nehemiah was not concerned with the false accusations of the enemy. He had lived a life of integrity and character and he was sure that God would reward him for his faithfulness.

2. He Spoke of Impurity (8b) – *but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.* Nehemiah knew the source of these accusations. He knew that Sanballat’s heart was not right. He knew that each of the accusations was lies and that truth would prevail. He did not cower in fear, but he boldly confronted the lies that Sanballat sought to spread.

- Silence in the face of injustice and sin always causes more devastation. Many today are afraid to speak truth because they know it isn’t popular and won’t be well received. We have not been called to agree with or overlook sin and wrong. We must possess a compassionate spirit, but we have to confront sin and wickedness.
- Until Christians begin to live lives that back up their message, we will not have any credibility. We must live according to the Word of God if we are to be effective confronting sin and unrighteousness where it is found. Someone needs to be willing to stand for truth in our day!

B. His Awareness (9a) – Nehemiah was also aware of the effect that Sanballat’s tactics and message were having on the people. He was aware of:

1. The Presence of Fear – *For they all made us afraid.* He could tell that Sanballat was getting too many of the people. His continual opposition and accusation had taken a toll. His continual presence had created an attitude of fear among the people.

- I see that in our society as well. A lot of good people have been battered by society so long about their faith that they are unwilling to stand for truth and right. That is what the enemy desires. He wants to create fear in the hearts of God’s people.

2. The Purpose of Fear – *Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done.* Nehemiah knew that this was a tactic that Sanballat and the opposition had devised to hinder the work. If they could create an attitude of fear, the people would be less willing to continue in the work.

- As we continue to face opposition, we must be aware of the motivation of the enemy. The devil has had thousands of years to perfect his approach and he has become successful. He still uses the same tactics today. He has a purpose for what he is doing. He is seeking to hinder our labor for the Lord. If he can create an attitude of fear in us, he has already won half the battle.
- Many today are no longer making their voices heard because they are afraid of reprisal. Society has led us to believe that Christians no longer have the right to make their voices heard. A people plagued with fear will accomplish very little and certainly won't be productive in whatever they seek to do. Don't allow the enemy to create an attitude of fear that hinders you from accomplishing the work of God.

C. His Assurance (9b) – [Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands](#). Sanballat was a determined foe, but he had underestimated the faith of Nehemiah. He did not understand the power of God to strengthen His people. Nehemiah was surely concerned over all this, but he was not distraught. He did as he had done many times before; he prayed unto the Lord for strength in the face of adversity. He knew that God had called him to Jerusalem to restore the city wall and he was confident in the power of God to enable him to complete the task.

- There is much that we face on a daily basis and it seems as if the opposition is growing stronger and more influential. We cannot allow fear to dictate our lives. We face a determined adversary, but we serve an almighty God. He is more than able to provide that which we need to overcome. In our moments of weakness, we need to look to the Lord and depend upon Him. He has yet to fail a generation of His people and we have no reason to fear that He would fail us. We need to seek His strength and guidance in order to fulfill our mission.

There are many similarities to the situation that Nehemiah faced and the one we currently face. The enemy will continue to use the same tactics over and over again, seeking a place of weakness. Opposition will remain as long as we live, but we do not have to live in defeat. We can overcome by the power of the Lord.

If you are facing a difficult place in life, I would encourage you to look to the Lord. He can equip you to continue in the face of opposition. Victory was won at Calvary. We are not fighting for victory; we are fighting from victory!