

NEHEMIAH  
**STANDING ON YOUR CONVICTIONS**

Thursday, October 8  
Reading: Nehemiah 6-7

**Nehemiah 6:9** *They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed." [But I prayed,] "Now strengthen my hands."*

Though the wall itself was complete, the danger remained as long as the gates were not set in place. Sanballat and Geshem failed to stop Nehemiah's building, so now they try to intimidate the man himself. If they could not destroy the work, maybe they could discredit the leader. The emphasis of their message is the word "together." They want Nehemiah to believe they are ready to make peace, but really they are setting a trap by luring him some 25 miles away from Jerusalem where they can do him harm.

Nehemiah sees through their scheme and refuses to come. He will not stop the Lord's work to deal with them. No matter how many times they insist he come, Nehemiah holds to his convictions and says "No." Finally, they send an open letter accusing Nehemiah of planning a rebellion and becoming king of Judah. This unsealed letter would be shared with everyone the messenger came in contact with - thus slurring Nehemiah's reputation. Nehemiah calls them for the liars they are and continues to build. Instead of weakening his hands as they had hoped, their threats drove Nehemiah closer to the Source of his strength - God Himself.

Next, they hire Shemaiah, a man Nehemiah apparently trusted. He warns Nehemiah of assassins coming to kill him and suggests hiding out in the Temple. However, Nehemiah recognizes that this message is not from God. God would not want him to hide when the job was so close to being completed; nor would He want Nehemiah to defile the Temple and himself by going where only priests were allowed to go.

Israel's enemies continue to try to discredit Nehemiah. They hire prophets to speak against him and many of the nobles of Judah sided with Tobiah the Ammonite. It must have been difficult for Nehemiah to know who to trust. Despite all this, his enemies' plans fail and Jerusalem's wall is completed in record time - only 52 days. Nehemiah then appoints men of integrity who fear God to help him govern and lead the people.

LESSON ONE: Nehemiah was a man of convictions. Though Sanballat's message may have seemed harmless, Nehemiah knew he was opposed to God's work and would not go along. We need people of conviction today! Do you stand by your godly convictions even when under pressure? How does society try to intimidate believers today? How important is prayer to this daily battle?

LESSON TWO: Nehemiah knew the people needed more than a wall. He appointed men to protect them, both physically and spiritually (gatekeepers), to lead them in worship (singers) and to teach them God's Word (Levites). These three areas are essential if we are to live for God. Who are the people in your life who watch out for you and keep you from the wrong path? Do you make worship and the study of God's Word a daily essential in your life?