

“Be a Warrior”  
Nehemiah 4, 6

4/19-20/08

6:00 pm; 9 & 10:45 am

## **INTRODUCTION**

When we are making progress in rebuilding our lives, we will encounter opposition in many different forms.

The Bible tells us we have three enemies: the **world**, the **flesh** (*sinful nature*), and the **devil**. These three are listed together in Ephesians 2:1-3:

Ephesians 2:1-3a “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed (a) the ways of this **world** and of (b) **the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit** who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

3 All of us also lived among them at one time, (c) gratifying the cravings of our **sinful nature** and following its desires and thoughts.”

**a) The flesh, the “sinful nature:”** we all lived lives controlled by the **flesh** at one time, meeting our legitimate needs in illegitimate (sinful) ways. This built habit-patterns of sin. And, we are still tempted to do things our way instead of God’s way.

*Our **sinful nature** doesn’t want us to rebuild our lives with God’s help because it insists on doing things its own way.*

**b) the devil:** a real person, not merely a force or the accumulation of negative energy. At one time Satan was one of the highest-ranking angels, he made himself into God’s enemy by trying to take God’s place by force.

God’s army of angels defeated Satan and the angels who had joined with him.

*Now, **the devil** doesn’t want you rebuilding your life because when you do, you start to reflect God and give Him credit to other people who need to rebuild their lives with God’s help.*

So, the Bible says the devil will tempt you to disobey God, to trust in yourself rather than God. He will **lie** to you, try to **deceive** you, **steal**, **kill**, **destroy**.

Note, too, Ephesians 2:2 says the devil is **at work in those who are disobedient** to God (non-Christians).

**c) “the ways of this world:”** the patterns of our culture, our society. The “authoritative” statements and patterns of our world that are opposed to God and His Word. These are a combination of individuals living in their sinful nature and

the influence of Satan. They combine for a world system that is opposed to God and His ways.

One example: two presidential candidates last week were answering questions in a public forum on moral values; they referred to babies in the womb as “*potential life*.” This is not their opinion only; they are reflecting the flawed “wisdom” of our world.

God says in His Word that babies in the womb are persons, not potential persons or potential life, but they are, in the womb, **persons**.

*That’s just one example.*

Movie/documentary, “*Expelled*,” by Ben Stein. A “must see” in this area of “world” re: evolution vs. intelligent design.

Every attack against rebuilding our lives finds its source in one of these three enemies.

As we read today, we will see all three at work. Sometimes it is one, sometimes a combination of two or three.

We will see how Nehemiah and the people in Jerusalem fought these attacks and continued to rebuild the wall and their lives.

**OPEN** to Nehemiah 4:1 (**PAGE** 754)

*To be a victorious warrior...*

### **I. Know Your Enemies**

We just saw that our enemies are the **flesh**, the **world** and the **devil**.

*Often, these three take human form or organizational form ... they are opponents, enemies.*

We saw Israel’s enemies first in chapter 2:10, 19

#### A. Sanballat

1. Governor of Samaria (historical records)
2. In the book of Nehemiah, we see that he exercised influence/control in Jerusalem through political position.

B. Army of Samaria

1. A powerful force that could easily annihilate the Israelites in their defenseless position.

C. Tobiah the Ammonite

1. Governor of Ammon (by modern-day Amman, Jordan)  
The Ammonites were sworn enemies of Israel.
2. Tobiah exercised influence in Jerusalem through marriage into an influential Jewish family.

These three men are:

**Worldly enemies:** *political rivals*; want Jerusalem to submit to their power.

**Fleshly enemies:** centuries of animosity and war between them and the Jews.

**Devil-led enemies:** the devil is at work through these men to destroy God's people

The world, the flesh and the devil at work to oppose God's work and God's people as they rebuild Jerusalem. When someone is opposing you, there is a reason ... world, flesh or devil.

To be a victorious warrior... **I. Know Your Enemies**

To be a victorious warrior...

**II. Be Alert to Psychological Warfare** (Nehemiah 4:1-6)  
(*the battle for the mind*)

**READ** Nehemiah 4:1-6

You may have heard of "Tokyo Rose" from WWII.

She was the voice of radio broadcasts in the Pacific region of the war. It was her goal to get into the heads of our servicemen.

In her broadcasts, she would name some of our servicemen, and generically speak to others, accusing their wives and girlfriends back home of being unfaithful. She would also threaten and try to intimidate.

It was psychological warfare designed to distract, break down the morale of our fighting men, and induce fear.

A. The Attack (v. 2-3)

*See if you notice any of these psychological attacks that have been used against you:*

Personal insults: “*feeble Jews*”

“*feeble:*” weak, inadequate, inferior, frail, powerless.

Instill doubt:

regarding their project: “*restore their wall?*”

regarding their relationship with God:

“*offer sacrifices?*”

possible meaning: “Do they expect God to hear them?” “Will He work a miracle for them?”

Mock their enthusiasm: “*finish in a day?*”

Steal their hope: “*bring stones back to life?*”

Like stones around a campfire that crack due to extreme heat and then cooling, heat and cooling.

Could they put the cracked rocks back together again?

Accuse of incompetence: “*a fox*” would break it down! (ha-ha-ha).

Have you heard those voices?

“Why are you trying to make your life better? You always fail! There are two kinds of people in the world, winners and losers. Face it, you’re a loser and always will be!”

Purpose of psychological warfare: To demoralize, discourage, weaken, dishearten...

... so that they would not complete the wall!

... so that they would not have competition politically!

... so that they would not reflect the glory of God to the world!

### B. The Defense (v. 4-5)

1. Prayer: a) Help us! b) Destroy our/Your enemies!
2. Keep rebuilding!

*They don't waste time and energy by retaliating with words!*

3. Replace lies with truth (not mentioned here, but in other places in the Bible).

### C. The Result: *great progress!*

v. 6: **“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height for the people worked with all their heart.”**

*To be a victorious warrior ... **II. Be Alert to Psychological Warfare***

*To be a victorious warrior ...*

### **III. Overcome Discouragement** (Nehemiah 4:10)

**READ Nehemiah 4:10: “Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, ‘The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall.’”**

#### A. The Attack: discourage the workers

1. The work has been so demanding, they are wearing out and doubting their ability to continue
2. The rubble from the destroyed wall is in the way, and now seems like an insurmountable problem

**Their perspective is being warped by their physical and emotional weariness.**

- They have been working at an intense pace.
- They are half-way done and have to lift the stones higher. Rubble from the old wall is in the way, making the rebuilding more difficult.

- Some are beginning to wonder if they should have tackled this project at all.

Discouragement: one of the devil's greatest tools. If he can get us discouraged, and then keep us discouraged, he's more likely to get us to quit.

### B. The Defense

It is wrapped into the response for the next threat, physical attacks. But, in summary:

- Pray
- Keep rebuilding
- *Perspective*: many times your rebuilding or your failure will have a profound effect upon those you love (more on this in next point).
- A threat against their physical existence comes, and it energizes them to snap out of discouragement and defend their lives.

*To be a victorious warrior ... **III. Overcome Discouragement***

*To be a victorious warrior ...*

### **IV. Prepare for Physical Attacks** (Nehemiah 4:7-9, 11-23)

#### A. The Attack: Physical

**READ** v. 7-8: “**But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem’s walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were *very angry*.**

**8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it.”**

#### B. The defense: prayed, posted a guard

**v. 9: “But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.”**

#### C. The result: the people worked on!

*And, as the threats intensified, they stepped up their defenses:*

**v. 11-12: “Also our enemies said, ‘Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work.’  
12 Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, ‘Wherever you turn, they will attack us.’”**

Defense:

**v. 13-14: “Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows.**

**14 After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, Who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.’”**

Defense: strengthen weakest points; renew perspective of *personal* importance of rebuilding (family), focus on the Lord, not the enemy.

In your rebuilding, follow this same pattern:

- Strengthen your weak points. You know where the devil’s attacks come against you, where you’re most vulnerable. Strengthen those areas.

- Renew perspective: Who are you fighting for? Imagine yourself behind the walls of Jerusalem, assigned with your family to the most vulnerable areas. You look around and see *your* family ... wife, children, brothers, sisters, grandchildren. The reality of what you’re fighting for becomes crystal clear. You have to fight to save your family. And everyone will fight together.

Rebuilding the wall of your life is just as critical. You are going to leave a legacy. If you build a strong life in the Lord, it will be a powerful legacy for your family. If you live for yourself and not for the Lord, your family will have nothing worthwhile to say about you, because they were not raised by someone who showed them how to build a wall and how to protect them. Generation lost.

- Focus on the strength God will provide you, the success He will give you.

Result:

**v. 15: “When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work.”**

Result: the enemy hears they're prepared to fight so they don't attack; and the people get back to rebuilding!

Further defense: (v. 16-23)

Each one is prepared for an attack, builders and soldiers alike;

Continue to work on the wall!

It is rare that we face actual physical threats to our lives, as these people are facing.

But we do face threats to our physical well-being:

- be dishonest, or lose your job,

- viewing movies with explicit sexual scenes. "I can take it! It doesn't bother me!"

*Really?* Are there no hormones in your body any longer? God says to not allow **even a hint of sexual immorality** in your life. (Ephesians 5:3)

It will affect you eventually.

- over-spending, spending money you don't have (sometimes caused by craving what other people have)

- food addiction, alcohol, drug, and sexual addictions ... all are physical attacks

Everything of you ... mind, soul, spirit, emotions... are in your body!

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. This is why there are so many kinds of physical attacks.

We reflect the image of God Himself. That is why there are so many attacks.

*Take these attacks as seriously as Nehemiah did... address them head on:*

**PRAY!!** God is really here and He is really listening and will really answer! He is not an impersonal force. He is a Person and He is listening to His children!

**Put a plan in place:**

get rid of the computer or internet connection that is a source for pornography or over-spending,

stop over-spending by getting on a workable budget

**Post a guard:** accountability! People watching out for you.

Get in a recovery program, admitting your need for help and recruiting a few to hold you accountable.

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Treat it like the dwelling place of God.

*To be a victorious warrior ... **IV. Prepare for Physical Attacks***

## **CONCLUSION**

When you start rebuilding, there will *always be attacks*. You have real enemies who don't want to see you do well.

When you are attacked it is because you are doing something right! Don't give up! Keep building!

You have seen today that the Lord has solutions, defenses for every attack. He will empower you to continue to build ... no matter the attack, no matter the temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13 **“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”**

*“Father in Heaven, thank You for giving me knowledge of the enemies that come against me and for giving me spiritual weapons and battle plans so that I can repel the attacks and keep building my life! You are so good to me! Please forgive me for when I have allowed the world, flesh or devil to cause me to sin. I invite You, Lord Jesus, to enter my life and to transform me into a child of God. Thank You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.”*