

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH



4. Dealing with Discouragement

Introduction

Some of us may live in a country where there is peace, while others live in places where fighting and war is taking place. Wherever we live, there is a war going on in the spiritual realm that we cannot see. The Bible tells us that this war is real! We have an enemy called Satan and he is constantly trying to find ways to draw us away from the Lord. One of the weapons he uses is discouragement. When Nehemiah and the people began to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem this was the first weapon their enemies tried to use.

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 4:1-6

- ✿ What does it mean 'to be discouraged' and how does it affect you?

(The word discouragement means 'to lose heart', 'to lose courage' or to be 'broken down'. Things we see and hear affect our thoughts, which in turn affect our feelings, then we 'feel down' and easily want to give up.)

There are different ways the enemy tries to discourage us. One of the most common is through the words that other people say to us. This is what Sanballat and Tobiah tried to do in the time of Nehemiah. It is not only the words of our enemies that can discourage us, but sometimes it is the words of fellow believers. This is what happened when the Children of Israel were in the wilderness.

- ✿ What did God tell Israel to guard against before they entered the Promised Land? See Deuteronomy 1:21

(Fear and discouragement)

- ✿ How did the people respond when they heard the report from the spies who had seen the Promised Land? Deuteronomy 1:26-32

(The words of the spies caused the people to become afraid and discouraged. They 'lost heart' and as a result did not trust that God could bring them into the land.)

At other times it is not the words of others that discourage us, but the words or thoughts Satan puts directly into our minds.

- ✿ What does it mean in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 when it says, 'take every thought captive'?

(Every thought that comes into our minds needs to be filtered by the standard of God's word. If the thought is not true and pure then we need to reject it and not think it over and over. Sometimes these thoughts are planted in our minds by Satan and he wants us to feel guilty that the thought even came to our minds! Be quick to rebuke the enemy and reject the thought.)

- ✿ How did Nehemiah and the people respond when Sanballat and Tobiah tried to discourage them? Nehemiah 4:4-6

(First of all Nehemiah came to God in prayer asking him to deal with their enemies. Then he encouraged the people to continue to build the walls, and they did so, working with all their heart.)

Conclusion

It is easy to become discouraged! Satan can whisper in our minds words that are similar to those that Sanballat and Tobiah used. “Who do you think you are?” “Do you really think God can change you?” People may ridicule us and their words can cause us to lose heart and want to give up.

Let’s learn from Nehemiah’s example! Be quick to turn to the Lord and let him deal with the situation. Then continue following the Lord. Remember he has promised, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

