



Study 13: VICTORY OVER CONSPIRACY

Nehemiah 4:7-15

The enemies failed to discourage the Jews through ridicule hence they designed a new plot to physically stop the progress of the work. The devil always thinks he will win no matter how many times he has failed in the past. His methods may vary with time but the believer is assured of constant victory (I Corinthians 10:13). God's wisdom will always prevail over the wiles of the devil and His work will always prosper irrespective of the plans of the devil. Word of the plot got to Nehemiah who then prayed and later designed practical strategies for victory. The prudence he manifested in tackling the problems led to the progress of the wall. **THEY THAT TRUST IN THE LORD SHALL NEVER BE CONFOUNDED** (Psalms 22:5; 69:6).

1. **PRACTICAL PROBLEMS:** Nehemiah 4:7,8,10-12; Romans 8:31

Continued progress of the wall attracted increased severity of opposition from the enemies. This is the same pattern the devil used in the temptation of Christ and of the believers even till now. Previous victory over the devil does not deter him from trying new techniques. The temptations during Christian service may be different from those at salvation. The persecutions of the bishop may be different from those faced when he first believed, but so long as he is alive temptations and persecutions will continue to come from the devil. The devil never gives up, neither should the believer let down his guard. Chinua Achebe hit the nail on the spot when he metaphorically penned “... **since men have learnt to shoot without missing I (Eneke, the bird) have learnt to fly without perching**” (I Corinthians 10:12).

Here we see the full employ of the devil's strategy from without and within. From without was conspiracy of the enemies and from within was discouragement of Judah. Such combination could result in instant defeat if God were not in the work. **Active God-fearing leaders have often had to grapple with the terrors of foes as well as with fears of friends.** **MANY ARE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS BUT GOD DELIVERS HIM FROM THEM ALL** (Psalms 34:19).

(i) **Conspiracy of the Villain:** Nehemiah 4:7,8,11,12; Luke 22:31; I Peter 5:8-10; Proverbs 21:31

Sanballat and Tobiah mobilized the enemies and formed a united front to fight the Jews. The conspiracy was so strong and secret that they felt they could suddenly destroy the workers and force the work to stop. When the Jews that dwelt among them brought intelligence report to Jerusalem they repeated it **ten times** to register the import of the threat. **THE WORST PLOT OF THE DEVIL IS NO MATCH FOR THE POWER OF GOD!**

(ii) **Condescension of the Valiant:** Nehemiah 4:10; 2 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Samuel 1:25,27; I Samuel 30:1-6

The conspiracy of the villain alone would have been enough to stop the work but here was a more subtle attack of the devil from within. **At the very time the**

adversaries said, 'let us cause the work to cease', Judah said, 'Let us even let it fall, for we are not able to go forward with it.' A warlike valiant tribe like Judah would have been expected to give encouragement in the time of trouble, but alas, they did the exact opposite. HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE AND THE WEAPONS OF WAR PERISH! The devil still uses similar strategies today. He used Peter in an attempt to discourage Jesus (Matthew 16:23). He used Judas to betray Christ (Luke 22:47,48). He attempted to cause the backsliding and death of Job through his wife (Job 2:9).

2. PIOUS PRUDENCE: Nehemiah 4:9,13; Matthew 26:41; Jonah 1:6; James 2:17,18,20; 1 Peter 4:7

Nehemiah was here faced with a practical problem that demanded practical solutions. The best solutions are only available with 'divine intelligence' and can only be obtained through prayer. Despite the urgency of the situation and the business of Nehemiah, he took out time to pray first before acting. Prayer, to him, was like a steering wheel rather than a "spare tyre". If we learn to pray before acting we will always receive enough wisdom to act aright. ACTION SHOULD BE AN OFFSHOOT OF PRAYER AND NOT VICE VERSA. Following prayer, he set a watch behind the wall and on the higher places. ***To have prayed without watching would have amounted to slothfulness; and to have watched without praying would have been slighting God and manifesting pride.*** Nehemiah was balanced. How about you?

3. PERTINENT PROGRESS: Nehemiah 4:14,15; Proverbs 29:25; Isaiah 51:12,13; Romans 8:31

Progress is bound to ensue in divine service when divine process is followed. Here again Nehemiah demonstrated where his confidence lay – in God and not in armour. He encouraged the nobles, ruler and everyone not to be afraid of the enemies but to ***"remember the Lord which is great and terrible"*** The fear of man brings a snare. When we forget the Lord, then fear, worry and anxiety will direct us into frantic and fruitless actions. The reigning fear of the Lord is the best antidote against the snaring fear of man. With the conspiracy foiled, and the people encouraged, progress of the work continued. It is always too early to give up. If we will hold on, the light will certainly break forth. God is always faithful enough to give the victory when the believer trusts in Him. God's care of our safety should encourage us to go on with vigour in our duty despite prevailing circumstances. IF GOD BE FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?

Activity: Substitute 'us' for your name and repeat above quote till you believe it.