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6 Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), <sup>2</sup>that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm. <sup>3</sup>So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"<sup>4</sup>But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner. <sup>5</sup>Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. <sup>6</sup>In it *was* written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, *that* you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. <sup>7</sup>And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "*There is* a king in Judah!" Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together. <sup>8</sup>Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart." <sup>9</sup>For they all *were trying* to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.  
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### 1. The plain truth

- a. The enemies had tried joining the Jews, mocking the Jews, & threatening the Jews
  - a1. Now the enemy tries tricking the Jews
  - a2. The repertoire of God's enemies is extensive
- b. Satan wants to make us afraid & discouraged
  - a1. David & the prophets *strengthened themselves in the Lord* so they could continue to serve
  - a2. Paul admonished believers *not to be weary in well-doing* (Gal. 6)
- c. San. sends a message to Neh. 4 times
  - a1. He invites Neh. to meet him on the plain of Ono (near Joppa) so they can discuss their situation
  - a2. San. tried to sound reasonable & willing to accommodate Neh. to compromise
  - a3. All scams sound reasonable or they would not trick the unsuspecting
- d. Neh. discerns that San. was laying a trap to kill him
  - a1. There was nothing to discuss since Neh. was doing the work he was sent to do
  - a2. Neh. turns down the offer

- e. Neh.'s reply took the high road
  - a1. Neh. could have accused San. of laying a trap for him (San. would have denied it)
  - a2. Neh. stated that he was doing a great work & could not leave it to meet with San.
- f. Satan tries many ways to distract us from doing the work that God has called us to do
  - a1. There might be other good works to do, but when we are inhibited from doing the work we are called to do, they are not good works (note Paul going to Jerusalem in Acts 21)
  - a2. Many will try to intrude on your schedule to help them do their work or something they want to do
- g. Neh.'s refusal to come frustrated San.'s plans

### 2. Letter of incrimination

- a. San. was desperate since the wall was joined together & only the gates remained to be set
- b. Sanballat sent a messenger the fifth time to read an incriminating letter
  - a1. Accused Neh. of building the wall in order to rebel against the king (same accusation against Ezra 12 years earlier; Ez. 4)
  - a2. The letter was going to be sent to the king
- c. People have a tendency to believe rumors & gossip
  - a1. It is difficult to disprove a rumor
  - a2. There is always doubt in people's minds when accusations are made

### 3. Nehemiah's disclaimer

- a. Neh. responded with 3 points
  - a1. Direct denial = Neh. was planning no such rebellion against the king (a loyal subject)
  - a2. He accuses San. of prefabricating the accusation out of his own imagination (to the enemies of God, lying is natural; Jn. 8:44)
  - a3. He leaves the results in the hands of the Lord & appeals to God to strengthen him
- b. We must not allow the enemies of God to distract, discourage, or defeat us (the battle belongs to the Lord)
  - a1. David & Paul prayed that God would bring the enemies' lies back on their own heads
  - a2. Neh. refused to be weakened, waylaid, or worried (he kept moving forward)