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<sup>10</sup>Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who *was* a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you." <sup>11</sup>And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who *is there* such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" <sup>12</sup>Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that he pronounced *this* prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. <sup>13</sup>For this reason he *was* hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so *that* they might have *cause* for an evil report, that they might reproach me. <sup>14</sup>My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

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#### **1. House call**

- a. Nehemiah paid a visit to Shemaiah the prophet
  - a1. Apparently, he was a true prophet of God
  - a2. We are not told if the prophet called for Neh. or if Neh. sought a word from God
- b. True prophets were subject to temptation like other people are
  - a1. Balaam undercut Israel against God's will
  - a2. Jonah resisted the will of God at Nineveh
- c. Neh. had no reason to suspect treason

#### **2. Warning**

- a. Shem. pretends to speak for God as he warns Neh. that the enemy was coming by night to slay him
  - a1. They must flee to the Temple & lock the doors for safety
  - a2. Neh. is immediately suspicious
- b. God had sent Neh. to build the wall as he gave Neh. both favor & grace before the king
- c. Neh. must have been stunned that a prophet of God would try to deceive him
  - a1. No one suspects people they trust
  - a2. History is full of stories of turncoats: Ephialtes at Thermopylae, Brutus against

Julius Caesar, Arnold against Am. colonists  
d. Paul also had his betrayers: Demus, Alexander the Coppersmith, Hermogenes...

#### **3. Nehemiah responds**

- a. Neh. found the advice repugnant
  - a1. He realized that Shem. was in league with Sanballat & Tobiah (paid by them)
  - a2. Like Balaam, a prophet of God sold out to the enemy for personal gain
  - a3. Elisha had refused to receive payment from Naaman, as Abraham did also from the king of Sodom (a prophet's reward is from God)
- b. Nehemiah's response showed wisdom & courage
  - a1. A man such as himself would not hide in the Temple in order to save his own life
    - b1. He could not afford to show fear before the people
    - b2. Neh. would face his enemies
  - a2. Neh. perceived that God hadn't sent Shem.
- c. Neh. prayed that the Lord would deal with his enemies according to their works (Paul had prayed a similar prayer)
- d. Not only had Shemaiah betrayed him, but other prophets, including the prophetess Noadiah
  - a1. Noadiah is one of 4 OT prophetess (Miriam, Deborah, & Huldah)
  - a2. In NT, Philip's daughters were prophetesses
  - a3. Apparently there were other prophets of God in league with the enemy
- e. True friends are revealed only when tested
  - a1. David complained that his friends had turned on him
  - a2. Job's friends were a source of grief
  - a3. Marriages dissolve due to betrayal
  - a4. Those who one counted as friends turn away due to rumors, gossip, & innuendoes without even giving one a hearing
- f. Trust must continually be verified, not by suspicion, but through relationship building