

Satan's Strategies¹

Nehemiah 6:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

1. Cf. Ephesians 6:12. Our true enemy is Satan.
2. **Illustration:** Re: Those “forward” emails. Certain things that are “brand new” information to the sender are really the same stories, the same pleas, the same warnings that have been seen dozens of times over many years. They make us angry and waste time. But the hoaxes cause fear in the senders and give instructions that, if followed, make matters worse.
 - a. Reminds us of the tactics of Satan
 - b. He is deceptive and does most of his hunting when his prey is weak, alone, unaware, and confused (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8, 9).
 - c. Lions roar when trying to confuse or frighten a victim.
3. In Nehemiah 6, Nehemiah's enemies are back and they are determined to bring him down.
4. They use three common ways meant to confuse and destroy.

DISCUSSION:

I. Isolation (vv. 1-4)

- A. Beware of a letdown that can come when you are near the finish line. As soon as you let down your guard and begin to “pat yourself on the back,” you are vulnerable to attack.
- B. The enemy wants you “on your own.”
 1. They wanted Nehemiah to leave the safety of Jerusalem and the protection of his relationships there.
 2. Nehemiah's wise answer: If there is going to be peace, it will be a result of your accepting my terms.
- C. Satan wants you lonely and isolated. Close relationships with Christians frustrate him.

II. Insinuation (vv. 5-9)

- A. The devil will question your motives and create uncertainty.
- B. A sealed letter would have been intended for Nehemiah only, but this was unsealed to let him know that these accusations were going public.
 1. “It is reported among the nations...” or, “Some people are saying....”
 - a. Destructive power of rumors
 - b. A roaring lion
 - c. “Some people are saying...” usually means, “I am thinking....”
 2. The specific rumor: It's all about Nehemiah.
 - a. “And according to these reports you wish to become their king” (v. 6).

¹ From “Now It's Personal!” by Craig Cramblet. www.sermoncentral.com. Accessed, 06/06/2012. Adapted by Andy Kizer.

- b. The enemy will try to get you to doubt yourself and your motives.
- c. Note Nehemiah's confidence: "No such things as you say have been done..." (v. 8).
- 3. The goal: Weaken resolve.
 - a. If the rumor was circulated that Nehemiah would be king, the force of Persia would be coming soon.
 - b. Nehemiah prayed for renewed resolve (v. 9).
- C. Prayer is and always will be our greatest weapon. Let every threat and accusation be a reminder to pray.

III. Intimidation (vv. 10-14)

- A. The enemy may use a trusted friend, e.g. Shemaiah.
- B. The enemy may use the language of religion, e.g. "Let's meet in the house of God."
- C. The choice will be sin or courageous obedience.
- D. As important as Nehemiah was, he still would not put himself above God's law.
- E. The enemy would have you to focus on "saving your own skin." If he can intimidate you, he has made you ineffective.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is power in corporate worship and fellowship with the saints. If the devil can isolate you and convince you that what you are doing is between you and God and no one else's business, he has you where he wants you.
2. You must know God's word well enough to recognize when you are being lied to by the enemy.
3. Your enemy's goal is to make you fear for your life. If you run from challenge or pain or the threat of death, you are much easier to defeat.
4. When you do not fear, you become fierce!