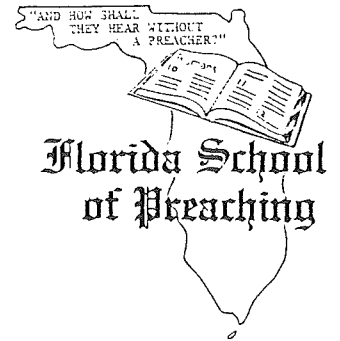


THE HARVESTERS



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When confronted by the foe How should we act?

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

Nehemiah was a great leader. His leadership was provided amidst trying circumstances. Good leaders must persevere, but how to do so under tribulation is not easy. Let us gain insight from him to help us in our service to the Lord. For a study of the methodology of the foe see October Harvesters.

PRAYER

Men ought always to pray, to do so without ceasing, and there is no time when we pray more than when we seek to serve God in trying situations. Nehemiah succeeded because he was a man of prayer. "And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven." (Neh. 1:4). "Hear, O our God; for we are despised; and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:" (Neh. 4:4).

LEAVE VENGEANCE TO GOD

If we succeed we must

not be absorbed in trying to "get even." The cause of truth will prevail and God will see that all receive their just due (Rom. 12:17-21). "Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head,

"BE NOT AFRAID OF THEIR WORDS, NOR BE DISMAYED AT THEIR LOOKS, THOUGH THEY ARE A REBELLIOUS HOUSE. AND THOU SHALT SPEAK MY WORDS UNTO THEM, WHETHER THEY WILL HEAR, OR WHETHER THEY WILL FORBEAR; FOR THEY ARE MOST REBELLIOUS" (EZEKIEL 2:6-7).

and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders" (Neh. 4:4-5).

WORK AND TOIL

Work must be done. The task must be completed. The battles must be fought and the faith kept. Work may also be a healthy method of releasing the emotion created by the problems of the day. "So built we the wall; and all

the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4:6). "And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work" (Neh. 4:15).

WATCHFULNESS

No man knows all that is being plotted by the foe. The injunction to all is that we must watch and stand ready for all opposition (Matt. 24:42-51; 25:13). "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them" (Neh. 4:9).

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE

Many battles have been lost due to the lack of preparation. Nehemiah succeeded because he was prepared, are we? "Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the

people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows" (Neh. 4:13).

COURAGE

The fearful are not pleasing to God (Rev. 21:8). Joshua was taught to be very courageous (Josh. 1:5-9). Nehemiah and his faithful brethren help us to see that success comes from true courage. "And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh. 4:14). "For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in" (Neh. 6:9-11). "And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff to Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frank-

incense" (Neh. 13:7-9).

CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF GOD

When the Devil succeeded in getting Eve to doubt the goodness and wisdom of God she fell into his trap. Those opposing the cause of truth have always sought to motivate the faithful to question the power of their God. Nehemiah faced it and so will we. "And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh. 4:14). "In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God

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shall fight for us" (Neh. 4:20).

ORGANIZATION MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

The cause we promote is greater than any of us. All are needed in the battle for right. When the task is organized as God directs and all assist as they are able, the task is successful and the burdens are lighter. "And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us" (Neh. 4:19-20).

SACRIFICE

Serving God demands a sacrifice (Luke 9:23). Many

will not enter into His cause for they are unwilling to pay the price. The faithful in Nehemiah's day and those in our day will know toil and sacrifice. "So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing" (Neh. 4:21-23).

INTEGRITY

While some in Nehemiah's day, as is the case in our day, were willing to take advantage of the poor and those sacrificing for the good, this was not true of all. Nehemiah was able to motivate his brethren to do what was fair and honorable as they strove to restore the wall. "And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for

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them, that we may eat, and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards" (Neh. 5:1-5).

REFUSE TO COMPROMISE

Like Nehemiah we will have to resist those who would bring us down by persuading us to compromise. "Now it came to pass when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:1-3).

BE INFORMED

Some do not wish to be informed of the foe. It seems to this writer that some feel that being informed of the ways of evil is less than proper. This was not the case

with Nehemiah. "Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear" (Neh. 6:17-19).

APPLICATION OF TRUTH

Well known, or well said, is fine but to be successful before God we must also enable Him to say "well done." Nehemiah, like Joshua and Caleb, did what they were assigned to do, do we? "Now

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it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many. And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house" (Neh. 7:1-3).

Nehemiah was concerned with the people knowing the truth and made plans that they be informed (Neh. 8). We cannot expect men to do what they do not understand or know.

REMEMBER THE PAST

It has been stated that those who forget the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. Nehemiah was careful to rehearse the history of the people that they might build for the future. "But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not" (Neh. 9:16-17).

BE REMEMBERED FOR GOOD

Nehemiah held one thing before him and that was that God might reward him according to the good he did. When such is our single motive we will succeed as did he. "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (Neh. 5:19). "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof" (Neh. 13:14). "... Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy" (Neh. 13:22). And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the first-fruits. Remember me, O my God, for good" (Neh. 13:31).

CONCLUSION

Doing the things Nehemiah did when facing the foe will enable the providence of God to guarantee our victory (Rom. 8:28).

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

THEME — "BACK TO BASICS"

Monday — January 22

- 9:00 "The New Age Movement"
Winford Claiborne — Henderson, Tennessee
- 9:45 "Back to Basics in Exalting Christ"
V. P. Black — Mobile, Alabama
- 10:45 "Emphasizing The Mission of The Church"
Hayward Brooks — Tampa, Florida
- 11:30 *Lunch*
- 1:30 "Back to New Testament Singing"
Keith Cozort — Mulliken, Michigan
- 2:30 "If Paul Should Come To Our City"
Jack Strachan — Brandon, Florida
- 3:30 **Open Forum**
J. Noel Merideth — Lawrenceburg, Tennessee
- 4:30 *Break*
- 7:00 "The One Baptism Essential To Salvation"
Bernard McKelver — Bartow, Florida
- 7:45 "Are We Drifting From The Old Paths?"
Bill Threet — Winter Haven, Florida

Tuesday — January 23

- 9:00 "The New Age Movement"
Winford Claiborne — Henderson, Tennessee
- 9:45 "Back to Basics in Exalting Christ"
V. P. Black — Mobile, Alabama
- 10:45 "Respect For Bible Authority"
Marlin Kilpatrick — Suffolk, Virginia
- 11:30 *Lunch*
- 1:30 "Role of Women In The Church"
Wallace Maxwell — Jacksonville, Florida
- 2:30 "God Hath Spoken"
Adron Doran — Lexington, Kentucky
- 3:30 **Open Forum**
J. Noel Merideth — Lawrenceburg, Tennessee
- 4:30 *Break*
- 7:00 "Repentance"
Leslie Bland — Jacksonville, Florida
- 7:45 "Let Us Go Back To Jerusalem"
Joseph Meador — Madisonville, Kentucky

Wednesday — January 24

- 9:00 "The New Age Movement"
Winford Claiborne — Henderson, Tennessee
- 9:45 "Back to Basics in Exalting Christ"
V. P. Black — Mobile, Alabama
- 10:45 "What Constitutes A Live Church?"
W. E. Wardlaw — Huntsville, Alabama
- 11:30 *Lunch*
- 1:30 "The Inerrancy Of The Bible"
Winfred Clark — Athens, Alabama
- 2:30 "Trends Toward Liberalism"
Eugene Clevenger — Abilene, Texas
- 3:30 **Open Forum**
J. Noel Merideth — Lawrenceburg, Tennessee
- 4:30 *Break*
- 7:00 "Greater Zeal in Fulfilling The Great Commission"
David Watson — Jacksonville, Florida
- 7:45 "Why I Left The Christian Church"
Clarence Lavender — Christiansburg, Virginia

Thursday - January 25

- 9:00 "Restoring The Rightful Place of Elders"
Joseph Meador — Madisonville, Kentucky
- 9:45 "The Preciousness of Fellowship"
Billy R. Davidson — Clearwater, Florida
- 10:45 "Why The Church Is Not Growing"
Wayne Coats — Mt. Juliet, Tennessee
- 11:30 *Lunch*
- 1:30 "Potential Dangers Of The Church Growth Movement"
Winfred Clark — Athens, Alabama
- 2:30 "Recapturing The Joy of Salvation"
Charles Moore — Lexington, Kentucky
- 3:30 **Open Forum**
J. Noel Merideth — Lawrenceburg, Tennessee
- 4:30 *Break*
- 7:00 "Is The Church Just A Denomination?"
Maurice Davis — Lakeland, Florida
- 7:45 "Where Do We Go From Here?"
Eugene Clevenger — Abilene, Texas

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