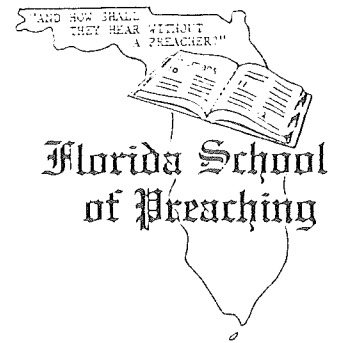


THE HARVESTERS



VOLUME VIII

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Enthusiastic Beginning

The fall semester of the Florida School of Preaching has begun with much fervor. We have enrolled as full-time students nearly twice the enrollment last semester.

In addition to those from the States we have for the first time foreign students attending full-time. We have two from Scotland attending: Graham McDonald and John Strachan, Jr. Joseph Charles a native from Haiti, residing now in the U.S. is in his second semester. There are tentative plans for students from the Philippines and Jamaica to attend in the near future.

With this increased enrollment including foreign students the school is in need of your faithful support. If you are not a regular supporter to the school may we encourage you to become a part of this great work. There is no greater message than the gospel of the Christ. There is a continued need for men to preach the gospel to the world and to edify the souls in the churches.

I am confident that if you could sit ten minutes with one of our students who went to Jamaica last summer you would be willing to make

a sacrifice to help them while they are in training. They are worthy of your support. They need your help. They love the Lord and have as their goal the preaching of the gospel to a lost and dying world.

If you are a regular supporter keep us in your plans. If you are supporting the work only occasionally become involved on a regular basis. If you are not supporting us please give us the opportunity to more fully inform you of our work at the Florida School of Preaching. Eternity will reveal the magnitude of this decision.



This picture represents a portion of those taking classes at the school. Reading from left to right starting with the TOP ROW are: Brian Kenyon, Thomas Faulk, Graham McDonald, Larry Williams, and Charles Austin.

The SECOND ROW: Willie Holton, Mike Dykes, Joseph Charles, British Carlton, John Strachan, Jr., Maurine Strachan, and Jack Strachan.

SEATED: Jackie Stearsman, B.C. Carr and Clifford Newell, Jr.

The Methodology of the Foe Never Changes

By
Jackie M. Stearsman

In this article we consider the opposition to truth and righteousness as reflected in the Book of Nehemiah. We often take personally the attacks of evil and to do so may be self-defeating. It is important to recognize the methods of evil are universal and timeless.

IT GRIEVES EVIL HEARTS TO WITNESS THE ADVANCE OF TRUTH

When true and just causes are progressing we can expect the foe to be grieved. "When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Neh. 2:10).

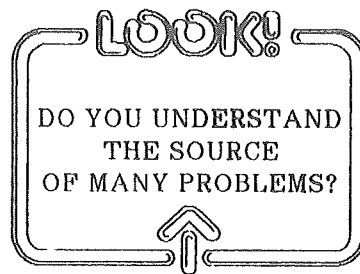
SOME EXPRESS RAGE

The forces of evil will not be neutral. We may expect the same reaction from the foe today as is apparent in the days of Nehemiah. "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews" (Neh. 4:1). "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth," (Neh. 4:7).

EVIL MEN MOCK GOOD WORKS

The foe knows that criticism will stop many good works. It has always been this way and it always will. We must never succumb to

this type intimidation. "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Neh. 4:1-3).



THE WICKED CONSPIRE AGAINST THE RIGHTEOUS

The enemies of Daniel conspired against him (Dan. 6). The Lord knew the evil plots of those who were his foes. We too must be aware of such in our labor of love. "And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." (Neh. 4:8).

CORRUPT SOULS MAY CREATE CONFUSION

Many good works are discontinued because of confusion created by the enemy. Was this not a constant problem for Paul? Informed people know that they must do good in spite of the confusion created by those

who oppose them. "And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." (Neh. 4:8).

BASE CHARACTERS WILL THREATEN

Those within the church who do not appreciate the good and the true will often use such methods. They may threaten to leave and place their membership somewhere else. They may threaten to withhold contributions. Some will threaten to lead a conspiracy to fire the preacher or replace the elders.

These methods are not new. Nehemiah encountered them, so will we. "And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease" (Neh. 4:11).

WICKEDNESS MEANS THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE BURDENED WITH DEFENSIVE BATTLES

If all one had to do was to teach the truth the task would be far lighter. In preaching the truth there is

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

a necessity of opposing the foe (Jude 3).

Nehemiah's load is made heavier because of defensive responsibilities. They had to watch, to arm themselves, and to persevere if they were to complete the wall.

"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. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. 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. 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. 4:15-23).

BRETHREN MAY BECOME ABUSIVE

Nehemiah, like many others, had brethren who would take advantage of the plight of the faithful. A few were making great sacrifices while many were taking advantage of the difficult times to get excessive gain at the expense of those toiling. "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 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).

THE TEMPTATION TO COMPROMISE

We guarantee our failure when we compromise. Nehemiah would not consider it, neither should we. "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" (Neh. 6:1-2).

THREATENING MAIL

Unsigned mail is used by the foe to discourage and defeat those who preach the truth in love. Nehemiah lets us know that this tactic is not modern. "Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together" (Neh. 6:5-7).

FALSE BRETHREN ASSISTING THE FOE

There are those who oppose the good, and do so feigning to be interested in the good. Their objective is to create fear in those promoting truth. Consider their procedure as they confront Nehemiah. "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. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy

against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me. My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear" (Neh. 6:10-14). The writer of Proverbs observes: "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Prov. 24:10).

RELATIVES WHO COMPROMISE PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR EVIL

It is not uncommon to hear it stated, "Blood is thicker than water," meaning that family ties will be upheld and truth compromised if we have to make a choice. This may be true of some but it was not so of Nehemiah, may it not be so of us. "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).

INTENSITY MAY BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD

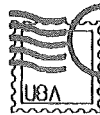
We may become weary in well-doing because of the sure intensity of the crisis. While we consider the toiling and tribulation of Nehemiah and his brethren, let us understand that most of these problems were confronting them in a two month period of time. He succeeded because he knew the methodology of the foe and refused to be discouraged by them. "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days" (Neh. 6:15).

CONCLUSION

The next time the foe rises in opposition to the good you are about, remember Nehemiah. It is likely that your enemies will be using the same methodology as his.

In another issue we will have Nehemiah help us to understand how to act when confronted by the foe.

[The following letter is the kind of mail we enjoy receiving, B.C. Carr.]



"Dear Mr. Carr:

"This letter is coming later than I was hoping to get it there, but the message is the same. I had the privilege to work with a group of men

who are attending or have attended the Florida School of Preaching in Jamaica.

This was my second trip and I was very pleased to have such a large, dedicated, and sincere group to help us in our efforts in the three areas in which we had returned to.

Brother Jackie Stearsman is a very dedicated man, and everyone could tell how much he loves the Lord, and the work in which he is doing.

I just wanted you and your staff to know that in this time of religious turmoil, lack of good solid preaching, and a host of other problems in which we as faithful Christians face daily it is refreshing to know that there are sound gospel preachers being taught at the Florida School of Preaching.

Lord willing I hope to return again next year, and I do look forward as do others I have talked to in having these same individuals and others from the preaching school join hands together with all of us who are trying to do what we can to further the cause for Christ on the island of Jamaica.

Sincerely,

Cathy J. Whitacre"
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301 West Dewey
San Antonio College
San Antonio, Texas

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