



The Harvester

*Preparing Souls
To Serve The Lord!*

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Number 5

Strength Through Challenges To Good Works

Brian R. Kenyon

In many ways, Christians are a small minority compared to the masses of worldly people in their communities. Thus, when God's people accomplish good works, they are often unjustly criticized or even persecuted for it. This was true in the time of Nehemiah, one of God's leaders who helped reestablish the remnant following the Babylonian captivity (cf. Jer. 25:11; 29:10). In about 445 BC, Nehemiah returned with a third group for the purpose of rebuilding Jerusalem's wall (Neh. 1-13). By the grace of God, "the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul [beginning of October], in fifty-two days" (Neh. 6:15). God's people today can learn valuable lessons from Nehemiah 6:1-8 to help them endure challenges. Let us be aware of three things.

Danger of Success

Now it happened when Sanballat ... and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it ... ²that 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. ³So 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?" (Neh. 6:1-3)

Christians are to "Rejoice with those who rejoice" (Rom. 12:15), but as seen with the response of Nehemiah's opponents, too many people increase opposition when their targets are successful. Sanballat invited Nehemiah to a meeting in Ono, a place considered neutral territory about 27 miles northwest of Jerusalem (cf. Ezr. 2:33). Nehemiah, however, knew the real intent was "harm [mischief, KJV]," probably to kill him, and thus, in their minds, stop the Lord's work (Neh. 6:2b cf. 4:1, 7-8). Nehemiah responded by continuing his great work, claiming it was not worth the time to meet in Ono (Neh. 6:3-4). Had Nehemiah not been successful, his enemies would not have been as persistent in trying to destroy him. Christians today must be aware that their success may result in increased opposition, even among people who claim to be of "like precious faith."

Deceit of Schemes

But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner. ⁵Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. ⁶In it was written: It is reported ... that you and the



We look forward to a great lectureship, Lord willing! There will be less books printed this year (as many are choosing the electronic version), so order early! Also, if you are able to help us defray the cost of the lectureship, it would be much appreciated! See the full schedule on page 3. Hope to see you here January 17-20, 2022!

Jews plan to rebel; therefore ... you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. ⁷And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, 'There is a king in Judah!' ... ⁸Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart." ⁹For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." (Neh. 6:4-9a)

The "open letter" falsely charged the whole building project as a plot to rebel and elevate Nehemiah as king (Neh. 6:5-6 cf. Ezr. 4:11-13). An "open letter" is one that was not sealed and, therefore, the contents could be known to the public. Among other accusations, the letter said Nehemiah employed prophets to stir rebellion against the king (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:29-31; Jer. 28:1-4, 11). Sanballot used these accusations as "leverage" to persuade Nehemiah's cooperation in his invitation to "consult together" (Neh. 6:7b). Nehemiah categorically denied the completely baseless charges (Neh. 6:8). These accusations were falsely fabricated in their "heart [mind, ESV]" (cf. Pr. 23:7). Nehemiah revealed the purpose of the letter as an attempt to "make us afraid," which they thought would "weaken ... the work" so "it will not be done" (Neh. 8:9a). God's people today must not underestimate the lengths to which even brethren will go to discredit spiritual growth and/or good works simply because of envy. Christians must not allow opposition to hinder their good works, as they are to "be not weary in well doing!"

Detail of Strength

Nehemiah's enemies thought their efforts would weaken the Lord's work, but it actually resulted in strengthening it. Nehemiah prayed, "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands" (Neh. 6:9b). "Strengthen my hands" calls upon God to meet and defeat the enemies' supposition that the remnants' "hands will be weakened" (Neh. 6:9a). Nehemiah was a man of prayer. From the beginning, he identified with his people, Israel (Neh. 1:5-11). Elsewhere, Nehemiah also asked God to "Remember me ... for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (Neh. 5:19). He also prayed for the destruction of those who opposed the Lord: "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" (Neh. 6:14). Strength must come from the Lord, through which His people will succeed (cf. Ps. 138:3; Isa. 41:10).

Conclusion

As God guided His people through the opposition and difficulties in Nehemiah's day, He has promised us today, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:5-6). May we be as successful in good works as Nehemiah! 🙏

The Harvester

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The Power of His Resurrection

Brian R. Kenyon, Director ♦ Broadcast Live at fsop.net

January 17-20, 2022

Monday

9:00 OT Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection Forest Antemasaris
9:40 OT Resurrections Larry Williams
10:20 BREAK

10:50 "Top Down" Argument for Jesus' Resurrection G. F. Beals

Forum: Since You Have Been Raised

1:30 The Working of God (Col. 2:11-15) Forest Antemasaris
2:00 There Are Things to "Put Off" (Col. 3:5-9) Joshua Cantrell
2:30 There Are Things to "Put On" (Col. 3:10-14) Hiram Kemp
3:30 **Ladies Class:** Angelic Words at Empty Tomb Brittani Kemp
3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
4:30 DINNER
6:30 Congregational Singing
7:00 Jesus' Post-Resurrection words w/ Thomas David Stearsman
7:45 The Resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-11) Jeff A. Jenkins

Tuesday

9:00 Resurrections in Matthew, Mark, and Luke Brian Howard
9:40 "Lazarus, Come Forth!" Jeff A. Jenkins
10:20 BREAK

10:50 "Bottom Up" Argument for Jesus' Resurrection G. F. Beals

Forum: False Views of Christ's Resurrection

1:30 False Views Can Destroy the Faith of Some G. Montgomery
2:00 The Swoon and Hallucination Theories Jody L. Apple
2:30 Conspiracy Theories Daniel Stearsman
3:00 BREAK
3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
7:00 Post-Resurrection Words w/ Fishing Apostles Tom Blewett
7:45 The Resurrection of the Dead Jimmy Clark

Wednesday

9:00 Resurrections in the Book of Acts Cameron Freeman
9:40 "Life" and "Death" in Romans 8:10-11 Stephen Atnip
10:20 BREAK

10:50 A "Jesus' Resurrection" Harmony of the Gospels J. Clark

Forum: Evangelistic Insights

1:30 Peter's Appeal to Jesus' Resurrection in Acts D. Bryant
2:00 Paul's Appeal to Jesus' Resurrection in Acts D. Bryant
2:30 Reactions to Resurrection Preaching in Acts Jody L. Apple
3:30 **Ladies Class:** Words with Women at Empty Tomb Lori Boyd
3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic
4:30 DINNER
6:30 Congregational Singing
7:00 Jesus' Post-Resurrection Words w/ Peter Ben L. Radford, Sr.
7:45 The Resurrection Body (1 Cor. 15:35-58) Steven Lloyd

Thursday

9:00 "If We Believe Jesus Died and Rose Again" Brandon Baggett
9:40 The "First Resurrection" and "Second Death" Bob Bauer
10:20 BREAK

10:50 Raised to Stand Before God (Rev. 20:11-15) Melvin L. Otey

Forum: Due to the Power of His Resurrection

1:30 Christ Can Be Magnified in Our Bodies Jason E. Ridgeway
2:00 Christians' Citizenship Is in Heaven Christian Torres
2:30 Christians Can Do All Things Through Christ Bruce Daugherty
3:30 **Ladies Class:** Words with Mary at Empty Tomb Lori Boyd
3:30 Questions and Answers on Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
7:00 Post-Resurrection Words w/ Emmaus Disciples Hiram Kemp
7:45 Jesus' Last Words Before Ascending Melvin L. Otey

Make plans to join us for this study of the power of Jesus' resurrection and how it affects Christian living from this day unto the last day!

Preorder lectureship book by Jan. 14, 2022, for \$20 +tax. Regular price, \$25



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December 2021

Page 4

Spring Registration Opens December 13 at www.fsop.net

Spring 2022 Semester Begins Jan. 10

Registration opens Dec. 13 online at www.fsop.net. Any of these classes may be taken online for credit or to audit. Contact the office for more details.

| Day | Time | Lakeland Classes | Instructor | Credit |
|-------------------|----------------|--|-------------|--------|
| Monday | ___ 8:30-12:00 | Marriage and the Family (254) | Bauer | 3 |
| | ___ 1:00-4:15 | Acts (118) | Atnip | 3 |
| Tuesday | ___ 8:30-12:00 | Psalms (268) | Wheeler | 3 |
| | ___ 1:00-4:15 | Life of Christ (117) | Wheeler | 3 |
| Wednesday | ___ 8:30-12:00 | Personal Evangelism (120) | Patterson | 3 |
| | ___ 1:00-4:15 | English II --- Composition (125) | Kenyon | 3 |
| Thursday | ___ 8:30-12:00 | Pentateuch (164) | Kemp | 3 |
| | ___ 1:00-4:15 | Isaiah and Jeremiah (113) | Cantrell | 3 |
| Friday | ___ 8:30-12:00 | Christian Evidences (244) | Beals | 3 |
| | ___ 1:00-4:15 | Denominational Dogmas (131) | Antemesaris | 3 |
| Extension Classes | | | | |
| Tuesday | ___ 7:00-9:30 | Church History (241) (Wesconnett church of Christ, Jacksonville) | Kenyon | 2.5 |
| Thursday | ___ 6:00-8:30 | Marriage and the Family (254) (Tenth Street church of Christ, Apopka) | Kenyon | 2.5 |
| Thursday | ___ 6:30-9:00 | TBA (Eagle Lake church of Christ, Eagle Lake) | TBA | 2.5 |
| Thursday | ___ 6:00-8:30 | Wisdom Literature (248) (Orange Street church of Christ, Auburndale) | Antemesaris | 2.5 |