

# Keeping with the Vision – Nehemiah 6



Sunday 22 May 2005

## **Retain your focus**

The account of Nehemiah and the Jewish people rebuilding the city walls and community is a powerful illustration of Kingdom building as opposed to Empire building. Jesus highlights the importance of building God's Kingdom in Matthew 6.33 he says

But seek first his (God's) kingdom and his righteousness....

In contrast there were Nehemiah's opponents who were concerned with their own interests; they were out to build their empires.

Does our life as individuals, church, community point to God or to ourselves?

## **The Nature of Spiritual Warfare**

Behind the faces of Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem, and other enemies of Nehemiah there was the evil one battling against God's purposes. The apostle Paul writes:

We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. (Ephesians 6:12)

Jesus demonstrates the reality of this ongoing battle throughout his life Luke records (Luke 4:13)

"After the devil had finished testing Jesus in every way possible, he left him for a while".

The evil one attacks at different times and in different places. The good news is that one of the reasons for Jesus coming into the world was to destroy the works of the evil one.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3.8).

Here in Nehemiah 6 we see the opposition was getting desperate, they were out to trap Nehemiah

They had already engaged in

- mocking and ridicule 2.19, 4.3,
- intimidation and intended use of force 4.8, 11

This then focussed upon Nehemiah

- personal entrapment 6.1-4
- slander 6.5-7
- using "religious" personnel 6.10

- peer pressure 6.17-19
- further intimidation 6.19

In all, this was a ferocious attack upon Nehemiah and God's purposes.

## **Weapons in the Armory**

*Discernment 6..2,9, 12, 17.* A spiritual gift required to be effective in godly leadership.

*Prayer 6.9,14* . Nehemiah was a persistent prayer-er. As the battle continued, his relationship with God was held in tack and he knew the source of his strength.

*Trust 6.14.* Nehemiah did not take matters into his own hands as far as getting back at his enemies was concerned. He prayed for God to act against them.

Paul instructs us in Romans 12 that we are to leave matters of revenge to God (12.19) and for the Christian evil can be defeated with good (12.21)

*Tenacity 6.3.3,8,11.* Keeping going with the vision that God has given. This was a driving force for Nehemiah and for Jesus (Luke 9.51)

## **Giving God the Glory**

The wall was completed 6.15. This was a great task well done, Nehemiah had been key, the people had worked well; yet what was so apparent was that this was a work of God. God deserves the credit for his activity.

Jesus looks for this to happen when he says

(Matthew 5:16) Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

As we seek to keep going with the vision God has given us, worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and mission, remember it as God gets hold of our hearts with his desires and as he equips us, much can be accomplished.

## For Small group study – Nehemiah 6

1. As you read through this chapter what are the key themes that strike you?
2. How do you distinguish between Kingdom building and Empire building?  
What are the distinguishing features that you would like to leave as a legacy?
3. Nehemiah 6 takes us into the heart of spiritual warfare. Do we think this is too grandiose a term/. How can we distinguish with living life as a human being and spiritual attack?
4. What resources do you find as a Christian help you to keep going with what you believe God wants for you?
5. As we think about USBC can you think of specific ways that God wants us to flesh out our 5 core values in terms of what God wants for us/
6. How is prayer going in your life and USBC? Share ways that we could strengthen our prayer life and then pray.