

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of July 5, 2020

O God, Strengthen My Hands

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Nehemiah 6:1-14](#)

¹ Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), ² Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." But they intended to do me harm. ³ And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" ⁴ And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner. ⁵ In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand. ⁶ In it was written, "It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king. ⁷ And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah.' And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together." ⁸ Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind." ⁹ For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

¹⁰ Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." ¹¹ But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in." ¹² And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³ For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me. ¹⁴ Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

With order and unity restored among the Hebrews, Nehemiah's attention turns once again to the completion of the wall. The wall is virtually complete, but there will be a final effort on the opposition's part to halt it by harming, intimidating and discrediting Nehemiah. Nehemiah's character is tested to its utmost on the eve of this great accomplishment for God – not once, but three times. A man less concerned with God's opinion may have given in to the desires of those around him, those who opposed the work. Opposition to our character is often a test far greater than any physical or academic challenge, especially when our enemies attempt to deceive and derail us by intrigue and seemingly good proposals. But Nehemiah's singleness of purpose and loyalty to God alone serve as a shield for him in this final showdown.

- What **fears** are the background noise of your life, the ones that are just always there?
- We can **follow the pathway of our fears** back into our heart to discover the things than we love more than God. What do your persistent fears **reveal about your understanding of God's care and sovereignty**?
- **Read vv1-9.** As the rebuilding project finally nears completion, **what threats** does Nehemiah face? (1-2)

- **What tactics** are employed by Israel's enemies? (3-7)
- What was **the rumor** that Sanballat was spreading? (6-7)
- Why does Sanballat send an "open letter" instead of a private communication (5-7)? **What impact is the unsealed letter intended to have** on the public at large? On the King of Persia who released Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem? What is Nehemiah's response?
- What **purpose keeps Nehemiah** from accepting the invitation to meet? (8-9)
- **Read vv10-14.** What is the prophecy of Shemaiah intended to do? How does Nehemiah **discern that Shemaiah is a false prophet**? Read [Numbers 18:7](#) for some background here.
- Nehemiah discerns that Sanballat and Shemaiah are dealing falsely with him. How does a **Christian discern between truth and error**? Read [James 1:5](#), [John 10:27](#), and [II Timothy 3:16](#) for further insight.
- Nehemiah does not pray "Lord, change *this!*" Rather, he prays, "Lord, strengthen *me!*" This side of heaven we will always have friction, fear, and brokenness. What **challenging circumstances are you currently facing**? What **strength must God provide**?

Pray in response to God's Word.

- *Thank the Lord for His faithfulness to His name and therefore to those called by His name*
- *Confess your fears and failures and ask Him to forgive your sins.*
- *Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in wisdom & discernment*

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 Questions? Contact Pastor Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org