

SANBALLAT GOT MAD

“When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed . . . “ (Neh 4:1)

Don't be surprised! It was predictable! Nehemiah decided to do good, and the devil decided to oppose him. In fact, everyone who does good will be opposed by the devil. Just as God uses people to do good, the devil uses people to do bad. This time the devil used Sanballat. He was a ring leader of some very bad people. When he heard that Nehemiah wanted to rebuild the walls it grieved him (2:10); he laughed at and despised the Jews (2:19); he mocked the Jews (4:1); he conspired to fight and kill the Jews (4:8ff.); he wrote five letters to try to divert and distract them (6:2 - 5); he lied about them and claimed they were planning to revolt against the king (6:6); he hired Shemaiah to intimidate them (6:13); etc. These are just some of the things that Sanballat did to oppose the good work of Nehemiah.

It is important for us to focus on the facts of this story, for it is precisely what the devil will do every time we determine to do good. Paul said it like this: **“So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.” (Rom 7:21)**

- When Jesus was baptized, immediately He was tempted by the devil (Mk. 1:12 - 13). What do you think will happen to you when you are baptized?
- Paul saw a great open door at Ephesus, but at the same time knew that there would be many who would oppose him (1 Cor. 16:9). Can you imagine a great open door of service with no adversaries?
- When Mary anointed Jesus, Judas immediately criticized her generosity (Jn. 12:4 - 6). When you are generous, do not be surprised if someone also criticizes you.
- When Jesus ate in the home of Matthew, the Pharisees got mad at Him, because He was eating with publicans and sinners (Matt. 12:9 - 13). When you reach out to the lost don't be surprised if someone also gets mad at you.

- These examples are not rare, aberrations, or anomalies. This is the stuff that life is made of. This great struggle between good and evil began in heaven when Satan was cast out, and will continue until the consummation of the age. Which side will you be on?

GOOD NEWS

- Please don't be intimidated by the devil so that you do nothing!
- The Good News is that Nehemiah completed the walls in record time, in spite of the opposition.
- The Good News is that Jesus triumphed over every obstacle and is now seated at the right hand of God with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to Him (1 Pet. 3:22).
- The Good News is that Paul finished his race, kept the faith, and has received a crown of life that fades not away (1 Tim. 4:8).
- The Good News is that He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).
- THIS MEANS THAT YOU TOO CAN BE MORE THAN A CONQUEROR THROUGH THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST (Rom. 8:37).

WHAT WILL YOU DECIDE?

- Will you decide to not try at all and float downstream like a dead fish?
- Are you such a coward that you will sit idly by and do nothing while the wicked one ravages you, your family, your church, and your country?
- The battle will not be easy, but when you are led by Jesus, the victory is sure! Remember! He is no fool who gives up the things he cannot keep, to gain things he cannot lose.