

Neh 6:1 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),

Neh 6:2 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.

Neh 6:3 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?”

Neh 6:4 And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner.

Neh 6:5 In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand.

Neh 6:6 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.

Neh 6:7 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.”

Neh 6:8 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.”

Neh 6:9 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.

Neh 6:10 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.”

Neh 6:11 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.”

Neh 6:12 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.

Neh 6:13 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.

Neh 6:14 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.

Neh 6:15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

Neh 6:16 And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

Neh 6:17 Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.

Neh 6:18 For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as his wife.

Neh 6:19 Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.

Neh 6:1 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)**,

Rev 21:12 It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—

Rev 21:13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

Rev 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Rev 21:15 And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls.

Question: In 6:2, it stresses “no breach left in the wall.” I am wondering what does the “wall” mean in spirit?

Fellowship: The “walls” of the city, as well as of the New Jerusalem, may represent the protection, purity, singleness and holiness of God’s testimony, that is, the church. The wall is the ultimate boundary that surrounds a city. Once there is a breach, or a gap, many things can come in to damage the church life. Thus, the walls and doors and gates may represent the service teams and pillars in the church life who are attentive to anything that is in danger of causing a breach in the wall. Normally, as we see in chapter 6, the danger of the breach comes, not from the outside, but from the inside.

For example, saints, out of a good heart, like to invite people to the church gatherings. This is wonderful. However, if we are independent, we may invite people who have a certain lifestyle that is contrary to God. Such people, according to the burden given by the Lord to certain saints, may be cared for privately, in small groups, but not invited to be part of the larger church gatherings. If they come in, they may affect many saints in a negative way.

Therefore the wall, practically, may refer to the service teams who are vigilant to protect such an intrusion, and, at the same time, to be a door or even a gate (wider than a door), to afford a way for people to come in so the Lord’s testimony can increase.

Neh 4:9 And **we prayed to our God** and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

Neh 4:12 At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, “You must return to us.”

Neh 4:14 And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and **fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.**”

Neh 4:18 And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

Neh 4:19 **And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another.**

Neh 4:20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

Question: Facing different kinds of schemes, Nehemiah has ability to see through them. I think it is not only because of his natural ability (He was cupbearer to the king), but also his pure heart in the presence of God. What can the saints learn from Nehemiah to apply in our daily church life?

Fellowship:

1. Nehemiah had service teams. He was not alone or independent. The more attacks there were, the more the service teams (leaders of the people) prayed. The more they prayed, the more burden they had. This was not due to Nehemiah’s natural ability, but due to his denial of himself and his natural ability. Indeed, he was cupbearer to the king, and God used that function to perfect him to trust in and rely more on God.
2. Nehemiah denied family affection, but actually cared for all the families and even knew their human needs (weaknesses). Those closest to the Jews were concerned for the protection of their families. Nehemiah also was concerned for the families, and fought for them in chapter 5. Yet he continued to rebuild the wall. He did not let his natural affection hinder the burden that God had given him. This is a good example for us. We must care for our families. Actually, the best way we can care for our families is by caring for God’s interests first. When we fight for God’s interests, we are fighting for our families, that they also would know God and belong to God.
3. Nehemiah led by example. He participated in the night watch. He did not merely ask others to do so, but he himself participated.

Neh 6:10 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.”

Neh 6:11 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.”

Neh 6:12 **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.**

Neh 6:13 **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.**

Neh 6:14 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.**

Question: Nehemiah 6:10 mentions Shemaiah who might be a prophet to the Jews. But he worked for God’s enemies in order to obtain his own benefit. It is possible that some people like Shemaiah exist in our church life. How can we clearly know them, and protect ourselves from them?

Fellowship: Shemaiah (a hireling or a hired hand) may represent those (maybe us) who know God superficially, in doctrine, but without the Lord’s speaking. Shemaiah knew about the temple (house of God), and he knew that in the temple, there was safety. He tried to persuade Nehemiah to give up the work of rebuilding, in the name of safety, or not being killed. This is the world. We may be like this. The world tries to warn us to take care of our future, our security, our financial well being, our families - all good and legitimate things. However, saints (we) may also be trapped into thinking that since we are in the church life (we come Sunday morning, maybe three or four times a year, or we know some brothers and sisters), we are safe. We think God will protect us and bless us because we are around the church life. This is a big trap. Shemaiah was hired by Sanballat and Tobiah. In the same way, the world “hires” us and even uses the church life (the temple) to trick us into thinking that we will be safe.

Neh 6:16 And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, **for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.**

Neh 4:7 But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry.

Neh 4:8 And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it.

Neh 6:2 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.

Question: In 6:16, of what are the enemies really afraid? In my view, what they were afraid of was that the Jews reunite before God.

Fellowship: The enemies (Sanballat and Tobiah) may represent the world governed and controlled by Satan. Satan’s biggest weapon against the church is not persecution (in certain countries), or even sin or immorality, though that, no doubt, is serious. The church, over history, when persecuted, has increased and flourished. Immorality no doubt damages the church, but is usually easily recognized and, when there is repentance, there is forgiveness and restoration. However, marriage to the world is a big trap because many times, we do not know what is happening. The big danger is that we may still think we are following the Lord. Chapter 6 of Nehemiah is a constant battle of Satan to convince Nehemiah and his service teams to get together with them, to meet together, to “fellowship,” but actually with a view to accuse Nehemiah falsely. This is the world, and can even be the religious world. Sometimes, because of a burden that we have, we may be accused by others of being “proud” or “not humble” or “arrogant,” or “fleshly.” This is the religious world. Sometimes, when brothers fellowship, no one wants to say anything for fear of “boasting.” As a result, such a fellowship is really meaningless and ineffective. This is Satan’s strategy, to frustrate the pursuing of the saints, the carrying out of burdens, and to damage the one accord. Nehemiah was aware of this strategy and resolutely resisted the attempts of Sanballat and Tobiah.

Neh 3:5 And next to them the Tekoites repaired, **but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord.**

Neh 6:17 Moreover, in those days **the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.**

Neh 6:18 For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as his wife.

Neh 6:19 Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And **Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.**

Exo 12:38 A **mixed multitude** also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

Neh 5:7 I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them

Neh 5:12 Then they said, "**We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say.**" And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised.

Question: In 6:17-19, of what should we be warned in the church life concerning the behavior of the nobles of Judah?.

Fellowship: The nobles may represent those (maybe us) who may not know the Lord that much, or know Him in an outward way, and yet are present in the church life, and even may have some kind of so-called position or seniority (because they have been around for a long time), just like the mixed multitude who joined themselves to the children of Israel. They may even have a good heart. Here, they sent letters to Sanballat and Tobiah to fellowship with them, back and forth. Seemingly, they fellowshiped with Nehemiah and also fellowshiped with Sanballat and Tobiah. We may even admire them. However, they were not willing to deny themselves and attach themselves to Nehemiah and his service teams. Nehemiah did not blame them or criticize them, or expose them. This may indicate that in the church life, we do need to take care of the "nobles," maybe ones with little burden or heart, but still brothers and sisters, and yet, at the same time, devote more of our limited time and resources to raise up pillars. Nehemiah did not "waste" time in trying to reason with the nobles, but continued with his burden.

However, Nehemiah did fellowship with another group of nobles in chapter 5, who were able to be built up together in one accord. This means that in the church life, everyone needs to be cared for by many different service teams which are raised up, to free up certain teams to raise up pillars.

6:1 And it came to pass when Sanballat, and Tobijah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had built the wall, and that there was no breach left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors in the gates),

6:2 that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, Come, let us meet together in the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

6:3 And I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?

6:4 And they sent to me four times after this sort; and I answered them in the same manner.

The wall was built (6:1), representing the church being strengthened, a healthy church family style being established, many pillars being raised in the church, and teams also being established (Chapter 3). In addition, there are some people who are not in the team because they do not pursue or desire. They do not participate in many fellowships in the church. They drift on the edge of the church, but they often have their own opinions on the decisions of the church, and they often raise doubts and even oppose. For example, some people do not agree to open their mouth to pray and say "Amen" loudly, or write down the content of their testimony and fellowship. The church should not be kidnapped by these people. Instead, it should focus on raising and cultivating pillars, building and perfecting the unity of the team, just as Nehemiah replied to Sanballat and Gishan four times: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?"

David Shen

6:5 Then sent Sanballat his servant to me in this manner **the fifth time**, with an open letter in his hand,

6:6 in which was written: It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says [it, that] thou and the Jews think to rebel, for which cause thou buildest the wall, **and according to these words thou wilt become their king.**

6:7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning thee at Jerusalem saying, There is a king in Judah! And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

6:8 And I sent to him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

6:9 For they all would have made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be slackened from the work, that it be not carried out. -- Now therefore strengthen my hands!

By the fifth time, the attack from the enemy turned into a fabricated story. The purpose was to make people fear and give up building the wall. Faced with such a difficult situation, we can only look to and trust God. Therefore, Nehemiah had an urgent prayer here, asking God to strengthen his hand, which represents our work. We need to strengthen and build this matter, because the enemy does not and will not give up any opportunity to attack. The church needs many prayers to overcome the enemy's attacks.

6:15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth of Elul, **in fifty-two days**.

6:16 And it came to pass that when all our enemies heard [of it], all the nations that were about us were afraid and were much cast down in their own eyes, and they perceived that this work was wrought by our God.

6:17 Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobijah, and those of Tobijah came to them.

6:18 For there were many in Judah sworn to him; for he was a son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken **the daughter of Meshullam** the son of Berechiah.

6:19 Also they spoke of his good deeds before me, and reported my words to him. [And] Tobijah sent letters to put me in fear.

The team led by Nehemiah completed the wall repair in only fifty-two days, showing that the work was from God. Although the enemy was afraid, they were still not reconciled. Tobijah and his allies attempted to disturb Nehemiah through their influence in order to destroy the construction. Tobijah was an Ammonite, and the Ammonites were incestuous descendants of Lot and his young daughter, so Tobijah was once a man cursed by God, although his name means "The Lord is good." Moreover his son married the daughter of Meshullam who was one of the wall builders (3:4), but Tobijah stood in the same position as the opponents. At the most, if he was not entirely impure, he was a mixed person. Be wary of such people in the church life. They often communicate with those who love the Lord, but their minds belong to Satan and resist God's work. Beware of someone in the church pretending to use God's word to deceive and attack the Lord's servants (6:12).

Neh 6:1 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),

Neh 6:2 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.

Neh 6:3 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?”

Neh 6:4 And **they sent to me four times in this way**, and I answered them in the same manner.

Neh 6:5 **In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me** with an open letter in his hand.

Nehemiah knew that Sanballat and his gang had evil motives, without any proof, so he wisely said, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down,” to decline the enemy’s invitation. We cannot lie but need to be wise to avoid the evil plot of the enemies. **Matt 10:16 says “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.**

When there was no breach left in the wall, the enemies turned to make a plot to attack Nehemiah. **It also means that when the church is healthy, Satan will turn again and again to attack the leading ones in the church, according to Matt 26:31b: For it is written “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”** Therefore we need to have constant prayers for the leading ones and the servants of the church.

Satan attempts to attack the saints, in particular the leading ones, day and night.

1Pet 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Rev 12:10b for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

Question 1:

In Neh 6:2, it stresses no breach left in the wall. I am wondering what does the “wall” mean in spirit?

Fellowship:

The wall can be likened to the whole armor of God described in **Eph 6:11-18** for individuals and the church.

Eph 6:11 **Put on the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Eph 6:13 Therefore **take up the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Eph 6:15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Eph 6:16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

Eph 6:17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

The importance of the walls and gates in the description of the New Jerusalem

Please pay attention to the adjectives describing the wall

- Rev 21:12** It had a great, **high wall**, with twelve **gates**, and at the **gates** twelve angels, and on the **gates** the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—
- Rev 21:13** on the east three **gates**, on the north three **gates**, on the south three **gates**, and on the west three **gates**.
- Rev 21:14** And the **wall** of the city **had twelve foundations**, and **on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb**.
- Rev 21:15** And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to **measure** the city and its **gates and walls**.
- Rev 21:16** The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal.
- Rev 21:17** He also **measured** its **wall**, 144 cubits by **human measurement**, which is also **an angel's measurement**.
- Rev 21:18** The **wall was built of jasper**, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- Rev 21:19** **The foundations** of the **wall** of the city **were adorned with every kind of jewel**. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,
- Rev 21:20** the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.
- Rev 21:21** And the twelve **gates** were twelve pearls, each of the **gates** made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Neh 6:6 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.

Neh 6:7 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."

Neh 6:8 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."

Neh 6:9 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.

Sanballat sent his servant to Nehemiah the fifth time with an open letter, the purpose being to spread rumors, to disturb the minds and hearts of the Jews, and to try to force Nehemiah to meet him and fall into Sanballat's evil trap to harm him. **Nehemiah as our example prayed to the Lord, "But now, O God, strengthen my hands."**

The enemy's rumors and intimidation are all aimed at making Nehemiah "frightened" and weakening the hands of the people at work. If we concentrate on God's work, we should not spend our energy on arguing with the enemy, but put our hands in the hands of God: "God, strengthen my hands." Only the strength of God can prevent us from being afraid of rumors and intimidation, and not falling into the traps of the enemy.

In the church life, a few saints are not satisfied with the services which normally are not sufficient provided to all the saints, including children. Thus, they leave the church life and often spread some rumors (what they thought the church should be doing and what they deem right for the church; they never mentioned their weaknesses) of the church to disturb the normal and healthy church life of the saints staying in the church life.

Question 2:

Facing different kinds of schemes, Nehemiah has the ability to see through them. I think ~~it is not only because of his natural ability (He was cupbearer to the king), but also~~ his pure heart in the presence of God. What can the saints learn from Nehemiah to apply in their daily church life?

Fellowship:

The natural ability of Nehemiah had nothing to do with his seeing through the plots of the enemies who desired to stop the Jews from building the wall.

Satan always use the weaknesses of the saints, including ourselves, to attack the church to prevent it from being built up. Therefore all the saints need to grow in life and know the truth subjectively, and the serving ones of the service teams in one accord need to know the weaknesses of all saints including themselves, so that they can offer constant, clear and detailed prayers to God (becoming spiritual men). God will have the power and wisdom to lead the church to prevent the church testimony from being damaged.

1st Cor 2:15 But **the spiritual man discerns all things**, but he himself is discerned by no one.

Paul and his companions had a very sensitive spirit

Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, **constrained by the spirit**, not knowing what will happen to me there,

Acts 20:23 except that **the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.**

Acts 20:24 **But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself**, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 21:4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. **And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.**

Acts 21:10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

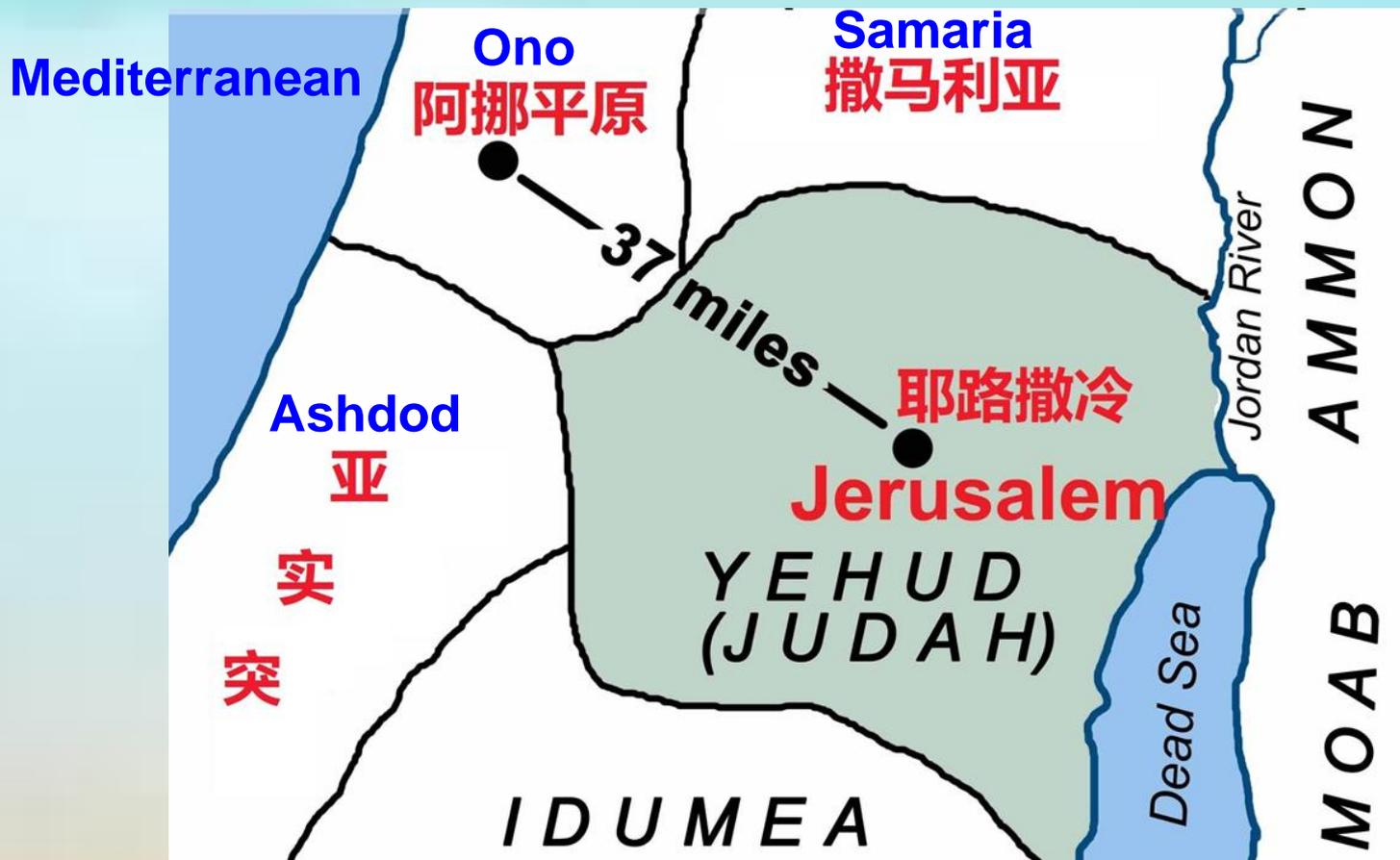
Acts 21:11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, **"Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"**

Acts 21:12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? **For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.**"

Acts 21:14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, **"Let the will of the Lord be done."**

Here, the body of Christ testified through the Spirit through many members, and tried to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But because he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the Lord, he did not listen to this persuasion and forced the members of the body of Christ to "Let the will of the Lord be done." May the saints of the Montreal church be sensitive to the Spirit.



Edom

Neh 6:10 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.”**

Neh 6:11 **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.”**

Neh 6:12 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.**

Neh 6:13 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.

Neh 6:14 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.

Shemaiah, who was hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, was trying to hatch a plot in asking Nehemiah to hide in the temple. Since Nehemiah was not a priest, it would have been a sin for him to go into the temple. **However, Nehemiah feared God and knew the law, and therefore he did not fall into such an evil trap. This also means that if the saints do not know the Bible well subjectively, they might easily fall into the traps (such as the worldly and religious concepts) of Satan.**

Nehemiah could see through the evil plot of Shemaiah, the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets, but he did not fight with them. If we focus on God's work, we should not spend our energy on the friction caused among the fleshy things in the church, but should bring the difficulties of the church to God, and ask God to "remember these things the enemies did." God Himself will judge and cleanse His church.

Question 3:

Nehemiah 6:10 mentions Shemaiah who might be a prophet to the Jews. But he worked for God's enemies in order to get his own benefit. It is possible that some people like Shemaiah exist in our church life. How can we clearly know them, and protect ourselves from them?

Fellowship:

Shemaiah, who was hired by Tobiah and Sanballat, was trying to hatch a plot in asking Nehemiah to hide in the temple. Since Nehemiah was not a priest, it would have been a sin for him to go into the temple. **However, Nehemiah feared God and knew the law, and therefore he did not fall into such an evil trap. This also means that if the saints do not know the Bible well subjectively, they might easily fall into the traps (such as the worldly and religious concepts) of Satan.**

We need to have close and intimate fellowship with the relatively mature saints, to gradually know the Lord and the Lord's heart desires through the words of God, and have rich subjective experiences in our church life.

Neh 6:15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

Neh 6:16 And when all our enemies heard of it, **all the nations around us were afraid** and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished **with the help of our God.**

Neh 6:17 Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.

Neh 6:18 For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as his wife.

Neh 6:19 Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.

The enemies desired to frighten the Jews who were building the wall so that they would stop their building work. Instead the enemies became afraid **because the Lord answered Nehemiah's prayers: Neh 4:4 Hear, our God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in a land of captivity!**

In the era of no machinery, in the dry and hot summer, the wall of about two kilometers in perimeter was completed at a very fast speed in 52 days, **so "all the nations around us were afraid." This was due to the power and help of God.**

Tobiah had close relations with two prominent families in Judah because of marriage, making many nobles friends with him. These people zealously participated in the construction of the city wall, and did not necessarily understand Tobiah's true intentions. But out of natural relations, they became a tool for the enemy to shake Nehemiah and created a potential breach among the people **(Neh 13:4-8). Today, if saints exhibit natural love instead of the love in Christ, they will unknowingly become a tool of Satan, preventing the church from becoming "the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth"(1Tim 3:15b).**

Question 4:

In 6:16, of what were the enemies really afraid? In my view, what they were afraid of was that the Jews reunite before God.

Fellowship:

The Gentiles did not fear the Jews including Nehemiah, but they feared their God (the only true God). All the nations around Jerusalem were afraid and were much cast down in their own eyes, because they perceived that the work of building the wall had been accomplished **with the help and the power of God who answered the prayers of the Jews, in particular Nehemiah the leading serving one. Nehemiah led the saints in one accord to build the wall.**

Neh 2:8b for the good hand of **my God** was upon me.

Neh 2:18 And I told them of the hand of **my God** that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.

Neh 2:20 Then I replied to them, "**The God of heaven will make us prosper**, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

Neh 4:15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that **God had frustrated their plan**, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.

Neh 4:20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. **Our God will fight for us.**"

Question 5:

In 6:17-19, what should we be careful in the church life from the behavior of the nobles of Judah?

Fellowship:

In the church life the serving ones need to know the great differences between the nature love and the love in Christ. In particular, our family members love us dearly but in what kind of love? Therefore we need to preach gospel to our household members wisely and intimately.

Mat 10:36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Mat 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Mat 8:21 Another of the disciples said to him, **“Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”**

Mat 8:22 And **Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.”**

Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in **the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world (fleshy, materials and religious) has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**