

SPIRITUAL ATTACK – The pattern from NEHEMIAH

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Nehemiah heard about a disaster among believers and sought God about what he could do. God gave him the revelation after prayer, which was impossible in Nehemiah's own strength.

How many Christians have a dream to do something great for God and never get it off the ground?

A dream from the heart of God is always impossible because otherwise we would not need Him in it and the nature of God's enemy and ours is to oppose, kill, steal and destroy any of God's good ideas.

We know from the story that Nehemiah prayed and received favour and strategy from God and began the work, encouraging many helpers so that they would be involved in the victory over the disaster.

The perspective I want to deal with is the consistent pattern that the devil uses to come against God's people in undertaking their faith walk towards the fulfilment of their dreams.

1. Mocking and ridiculing. Nehemiah's answer was his trust in God to give him success in the undertaking that God Himself laid on Nehemiah's heart. Nehemiah refused to allow disunity in the camp.

2. Looking for a target – a weaker person to undermine and break the unity of the Body. Nehemiah had discernment and told Tobiah the Ammonite and Sanballat the Horonite (from a town in Moab) that they had no share in Jerusalem. (These were 2 of the local governors who wanted to expand their territory.)

Eliashib was high priest and is mentioned first in the restoration work. He and his fellow priests restored the Sheep Gate, the gate in the wall closest to the Temple.

Perhaps he felt a responsibility about the "sheep" and wanted to welcome people without discrimination. He forgot to refer to God's word about the Ammonites and Moabites to be excluded from the assembly of God, lest they introduce the worship of pagan gods. To side with them is to side against God.

3. Open threats and undermining of morale.

4. Carrying out the threats – open warfare. This usually involves getting factions together, whispering campaigns, and stirring up dissenters and the offended.

5. Bringing in the "big guns" to take out the leader, especially when the first hurdles of a vision are completed.

Tobiah and Sanballat got a man named Geshem the Arab on side. Geshem was not a wannabe governor but a local king (paramount chief), with real authority and with whom the Persian kings maintained good relations. As it was Artaxerxes who had authorised Nehemiah in the first place, the enemies thought to discredit Nehemiah in the eyes of the Persian king to achieve their goal.

Because Satan is a liar as well as the accuser of the brethren, sending false information by letter does not worry his messengers.

6. Bringing in the occult – in this story the prophetess Noadiah and her following. False prophets use manipulation and witchcraft in the name of God. God does not use this method ever, so therefore manipulation shows which god is behind this.

Against this onslaught Nehemiah knew to stand steadfast, immovable, trusting only in God to get him through. God is faithful.

Draw near to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.