

Rebuilding What Was Lost
The Book of Ezra-Nehemiah



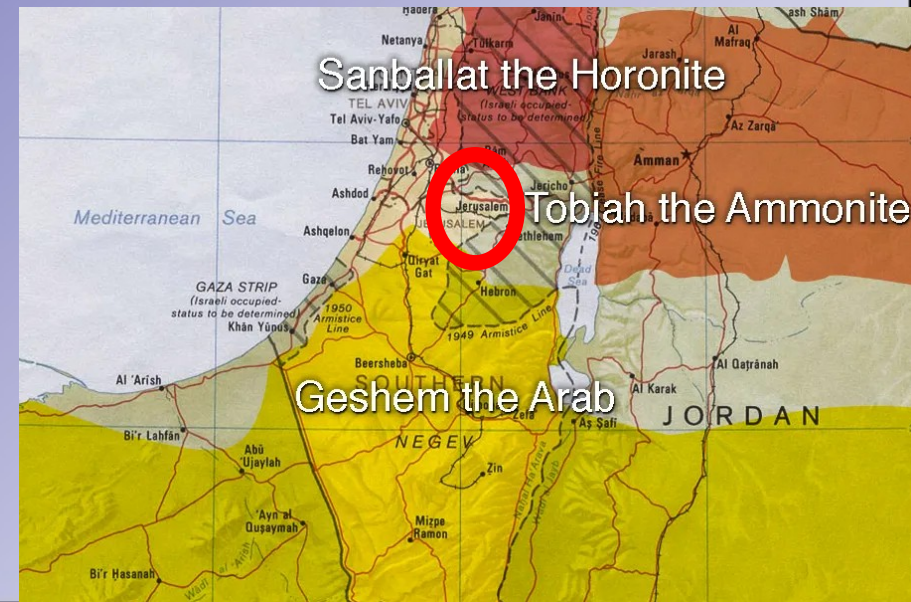
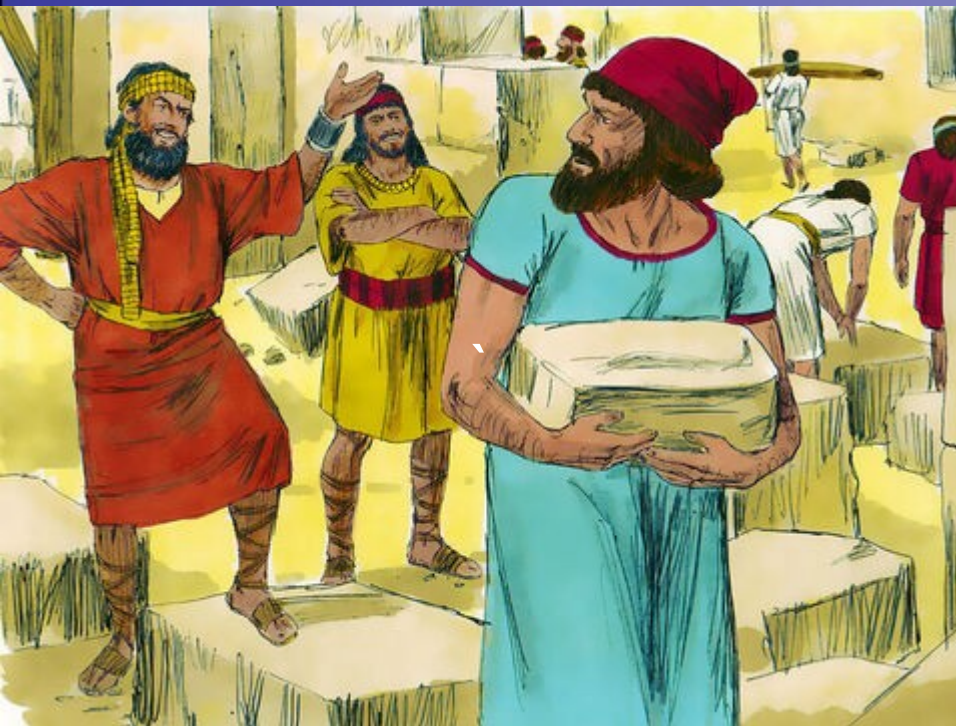
Rebuilding What Was Lost

- *A Little Bit of Background*
- *The Return*
- *Laying the Foundation*
- *Letters to Kings*
- *The Return of the Heroes*
- *After “The End”*
- *The Cupbearer to the King*
- *Nehemiah Comes to Jerusalem*
- *Rebuilding the Wall (part 5—One Last Opposition)*



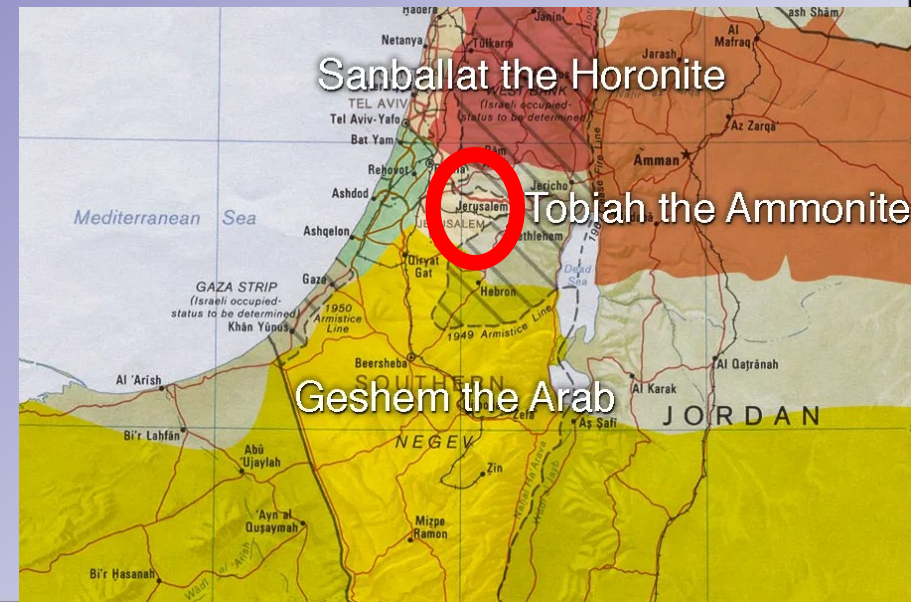
Rebuilding the Wall

- After a century, they're finally rebuilding
 - And that's when opposition started building too
 - Please re-read Nehemiah 2:10
 - Sanballat and Tobiah were stirring up trouble—focusing particularly on stirring up *discontent*
 - And what kind of trouble were they stirring up specifically in 2:19?
 - Why would this have been a particularly dangerous attack, had it worked?



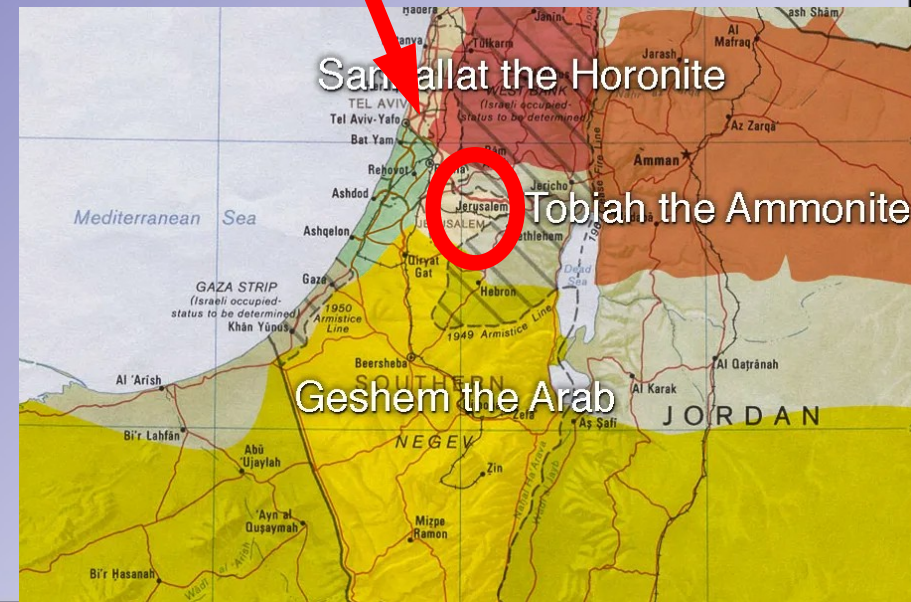
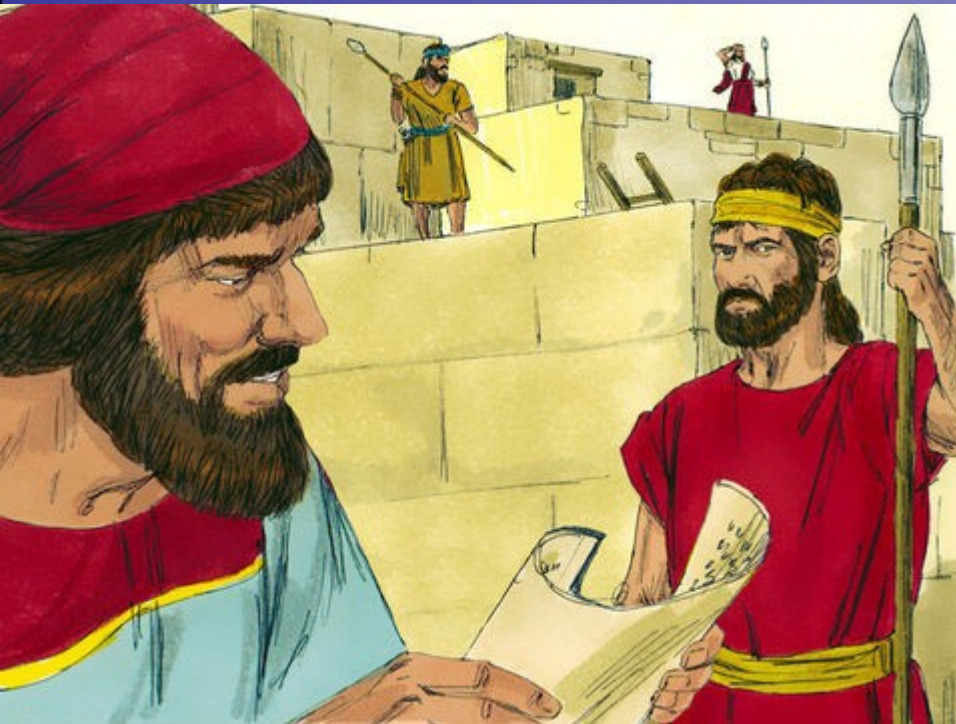
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 - Sanballat and Tobiah were stirring up trouble—focusing particularly on stirring up *discontent*
 - And what kind of trouble were they stirring up specifically in 2:19?
 - And have their attacks slacked off or built up by the time 4:7-8 come along?
 - And yet, what does Nehemiah do in 4:9?



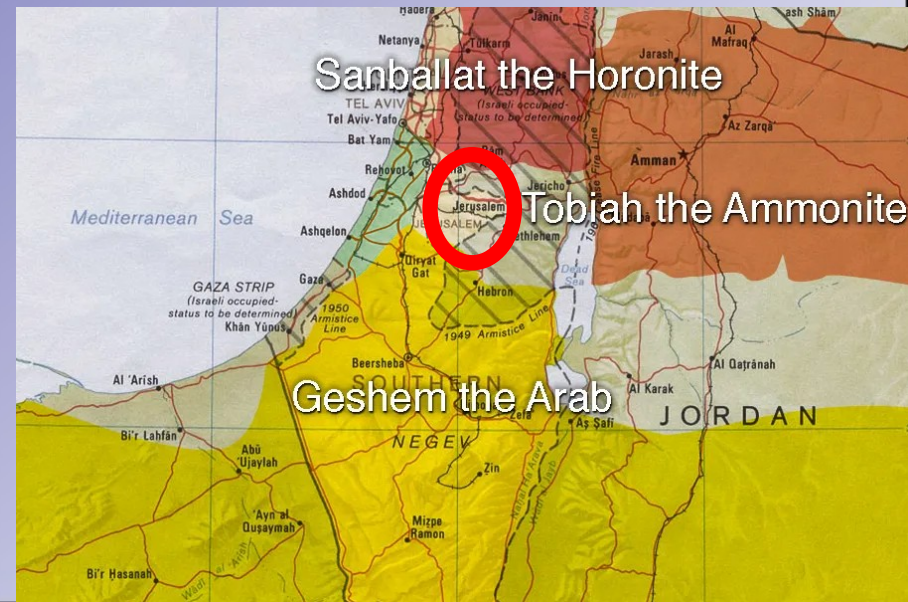
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:1-2
(the plain of Ono is over here on the coast, in ostensibly neutral territory)



Rebuilding the Wall

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 - Please re-read Nehemiah 2:10
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:1-2
 - So what's the new tactic that's being used by their enemies?
 - If we can't get to the people 'cuz of their leader...
...then we'll take out their leader...



Rebuilding the Wall



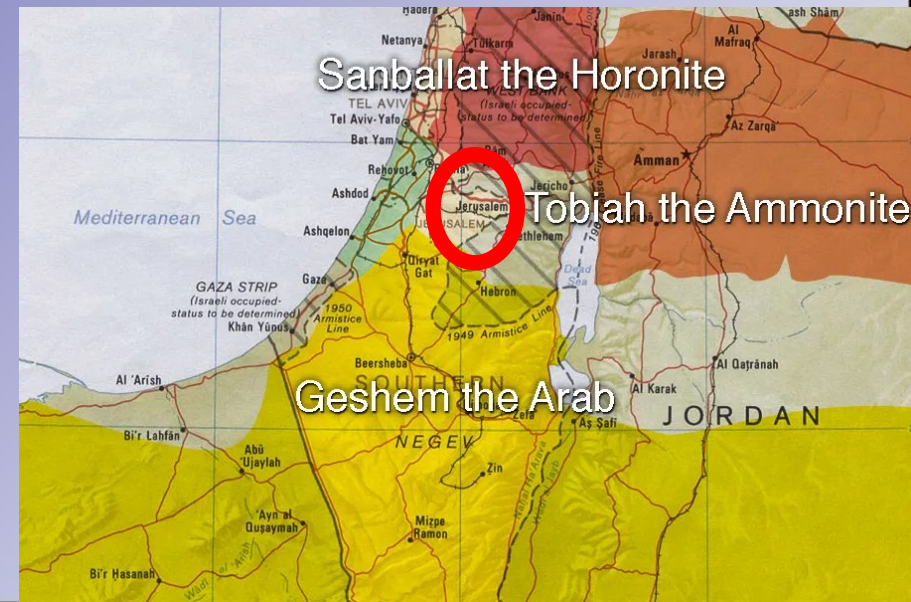
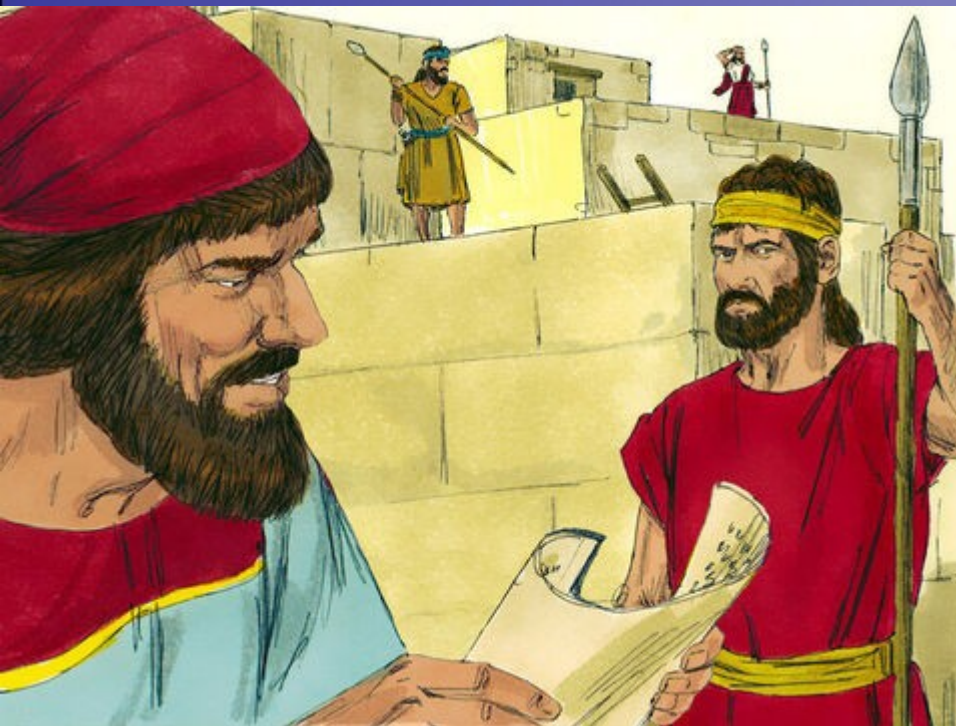
Funky little teaching moment...

- Since we talked last week about how Winston Churchill and his success in holding England together against the Nazis...
 - Did you know that the Nazis actually tried to kidnap and even to *assassinate* Churchill?
 - Reasoning that taking out the main Allied leader would take out the Allied resistance, and knowing how much Churchill loved his cigars, whiskey, and chocolate bars, the Germans tried to smuggle in bombs disguised as boxes of chocolate bars...
 - Luckily, none of the chocolate bar bombs ever got to Churchill...



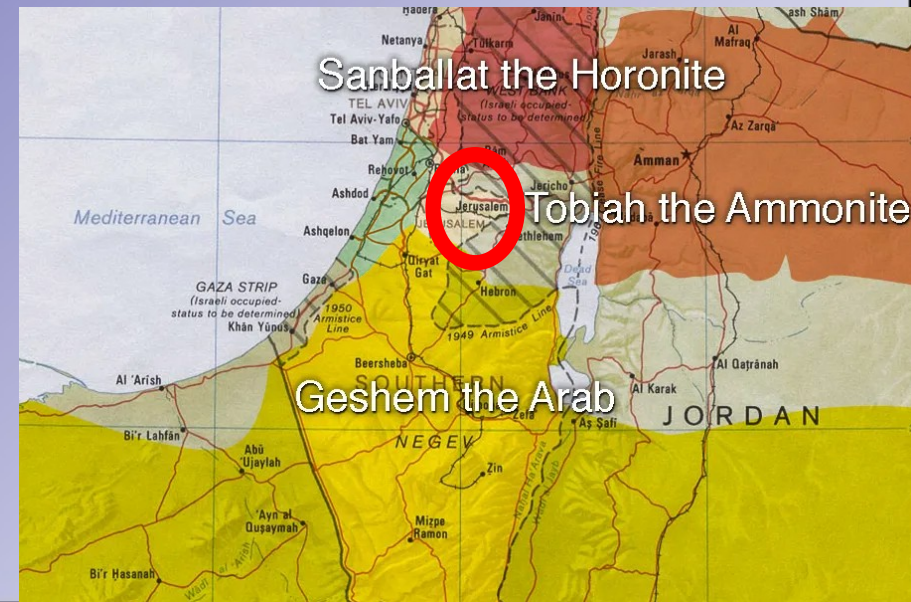
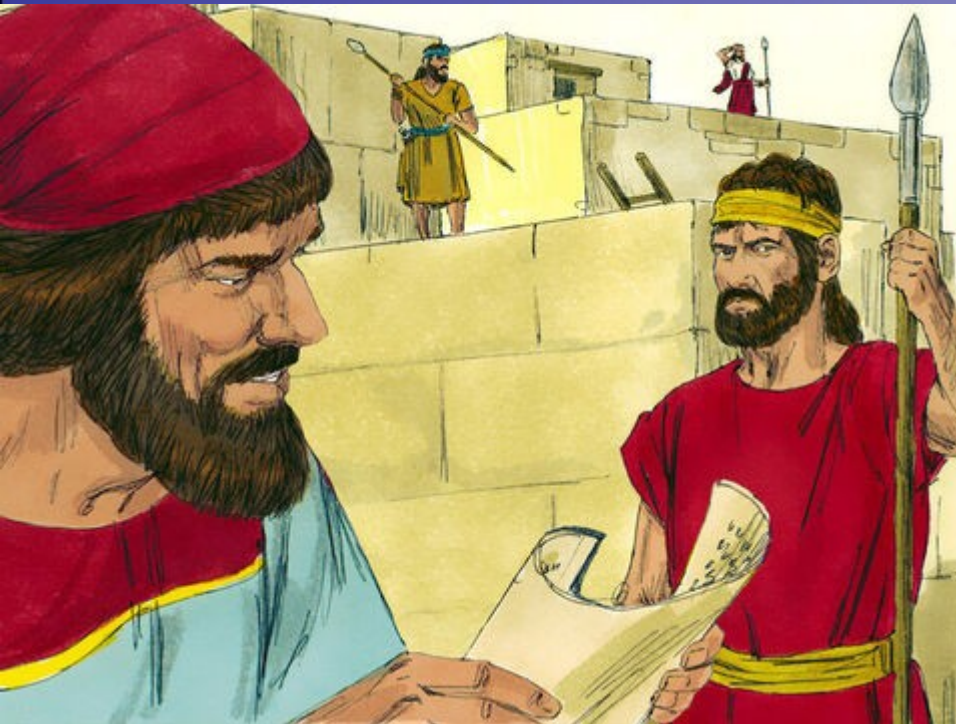
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:2-3
 - Proverbs 27:6 reminds us,
"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
 - So how wise would it have been for Nehemiah to have traveled 37 miles through hostile territory for a relaxing chat on a sandy beach?



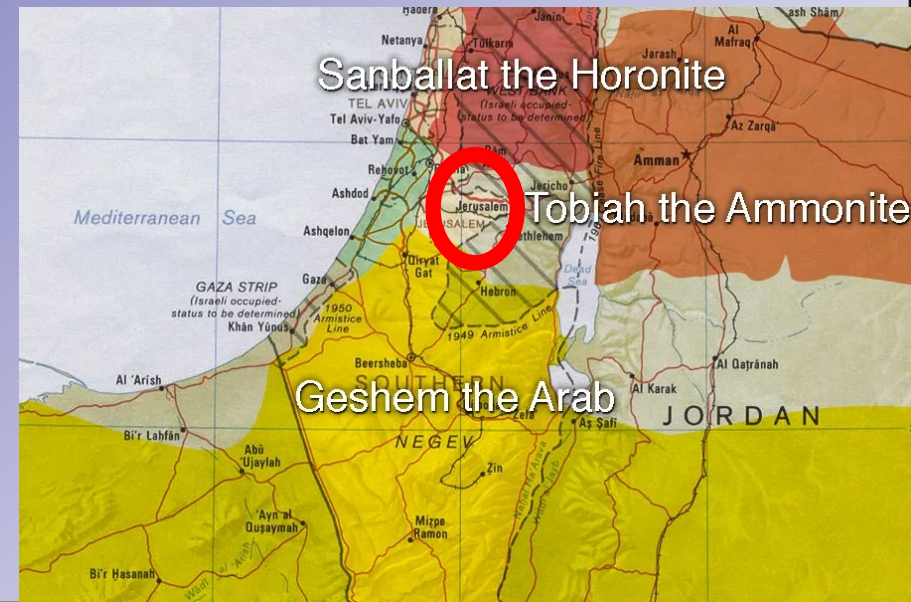
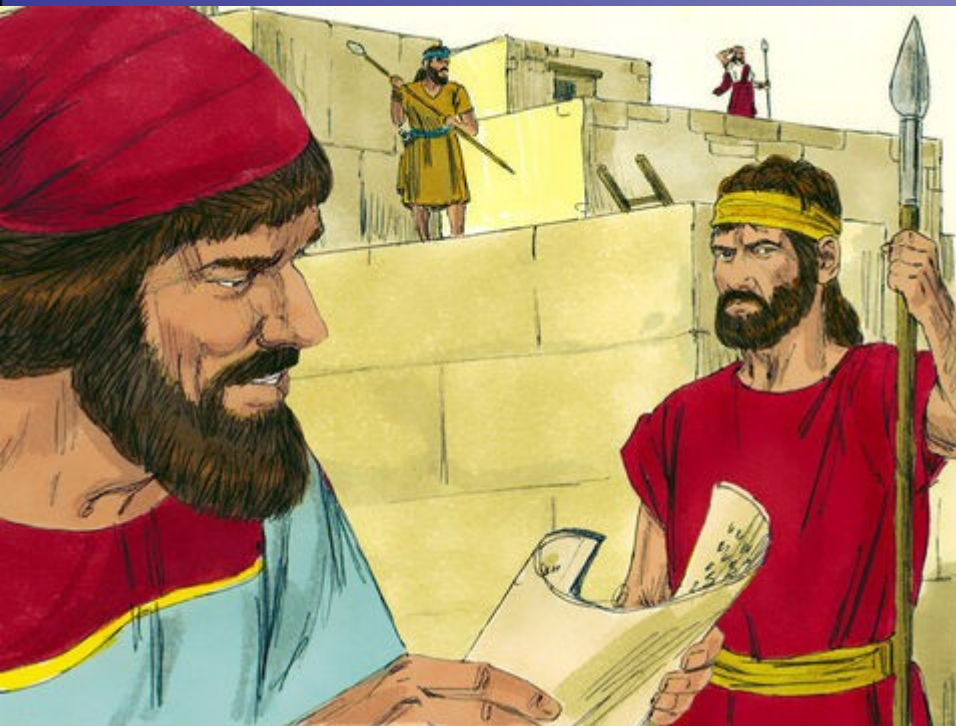
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 - Proverbs 27:6 reminds us, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."
 - How *did* Nehemiah respond?
 - What did he say here to them in reply?
 - And what does it say about his priorities?



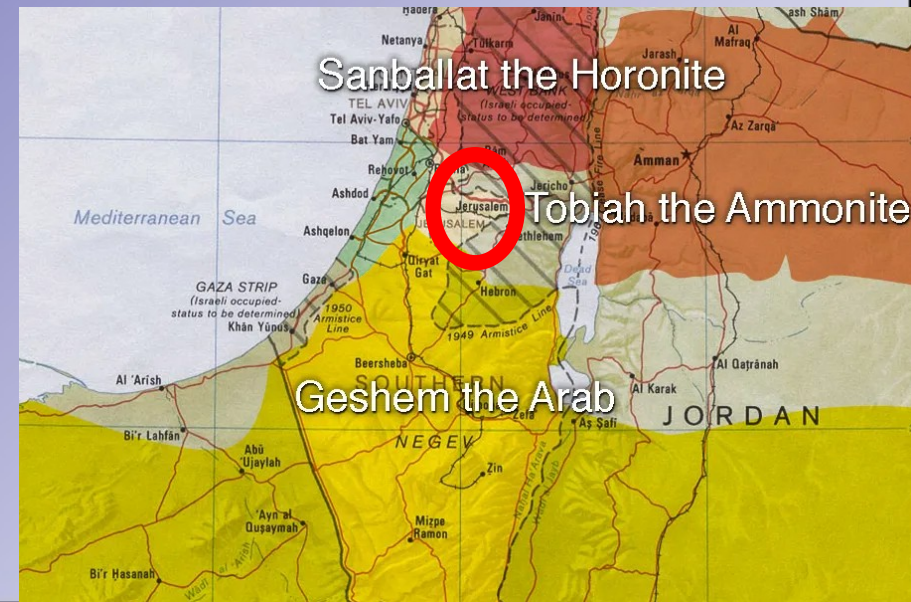
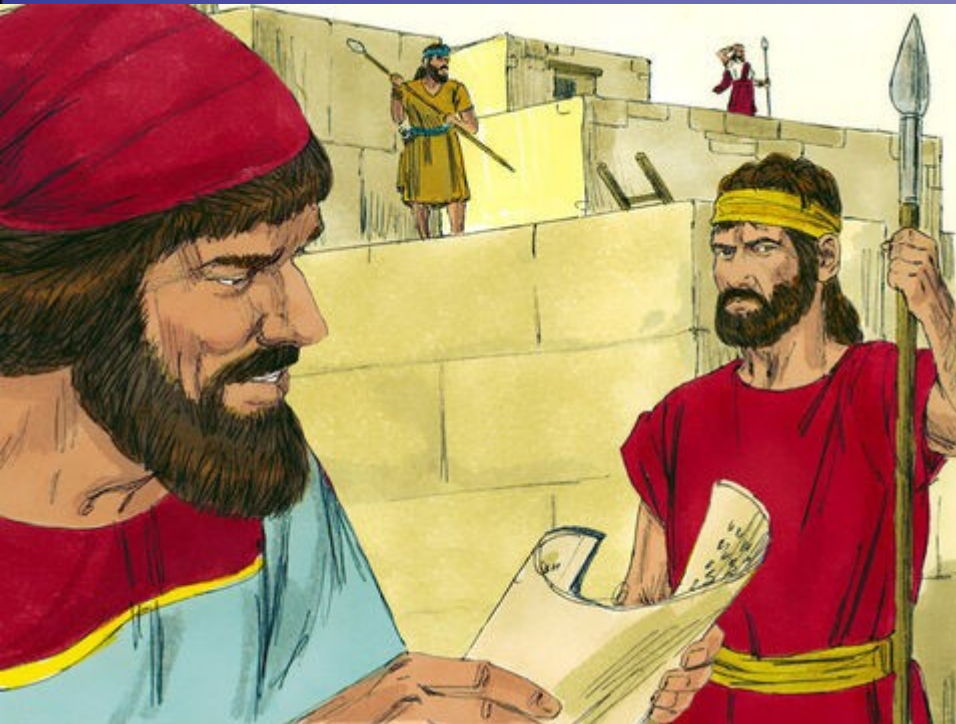
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:1-2
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:2-3
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:4-5
 - How many things are different about *this* message?
 - It's being delivered by Sanballat's personal aide — basically, the guy who is to Sanballat what Nehemiah is to Artaxerxes



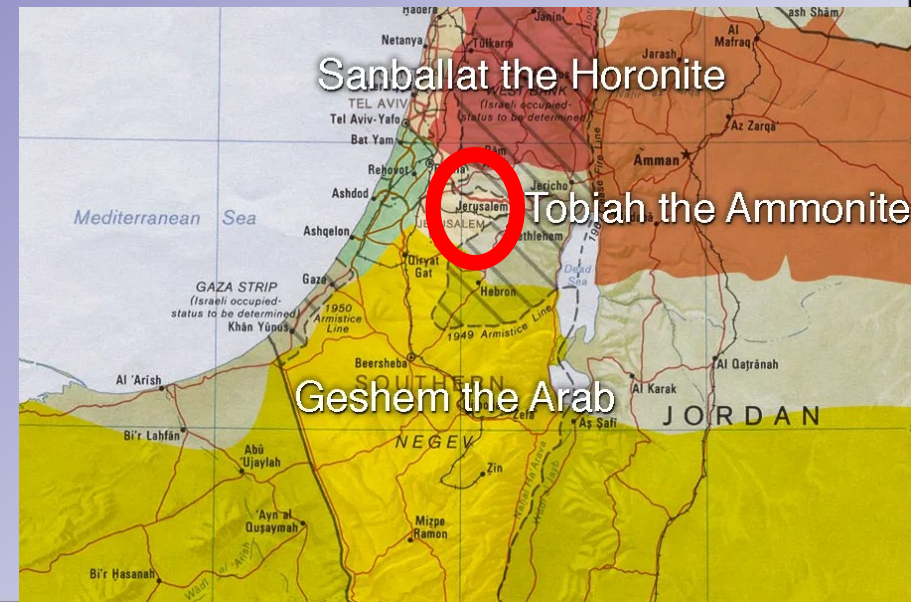
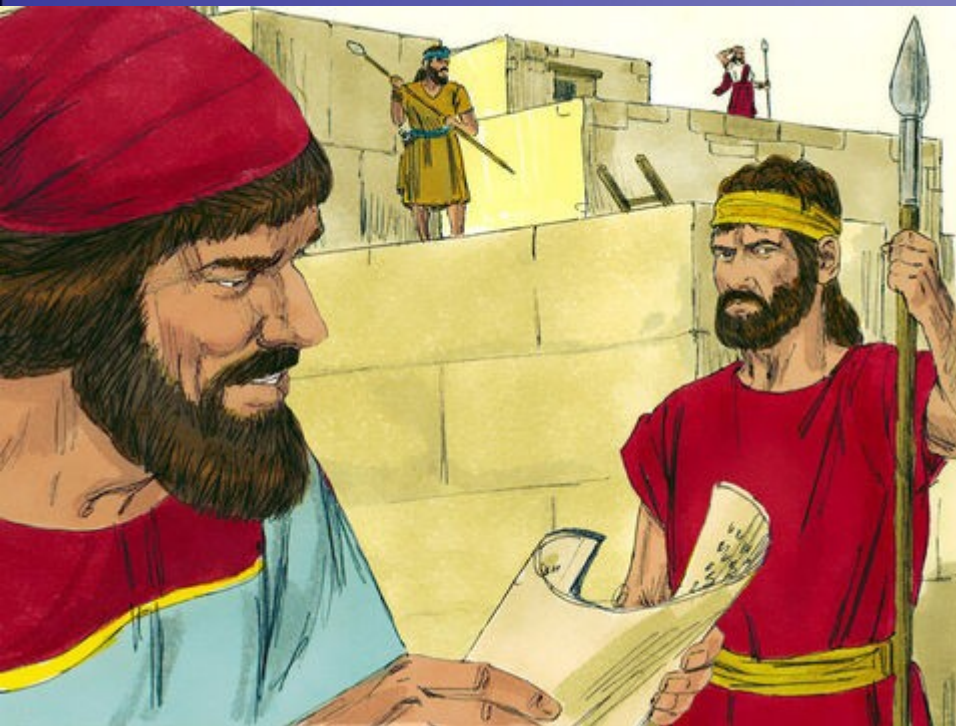
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:4-5
 - How many things are different about *this* message?
 - It's being delivered by Sanballat's personal aide
 - It's unsealed
 - The others were apparently sealed, because that's what you did to assure security
 - So why wasn't *this* one sealed?



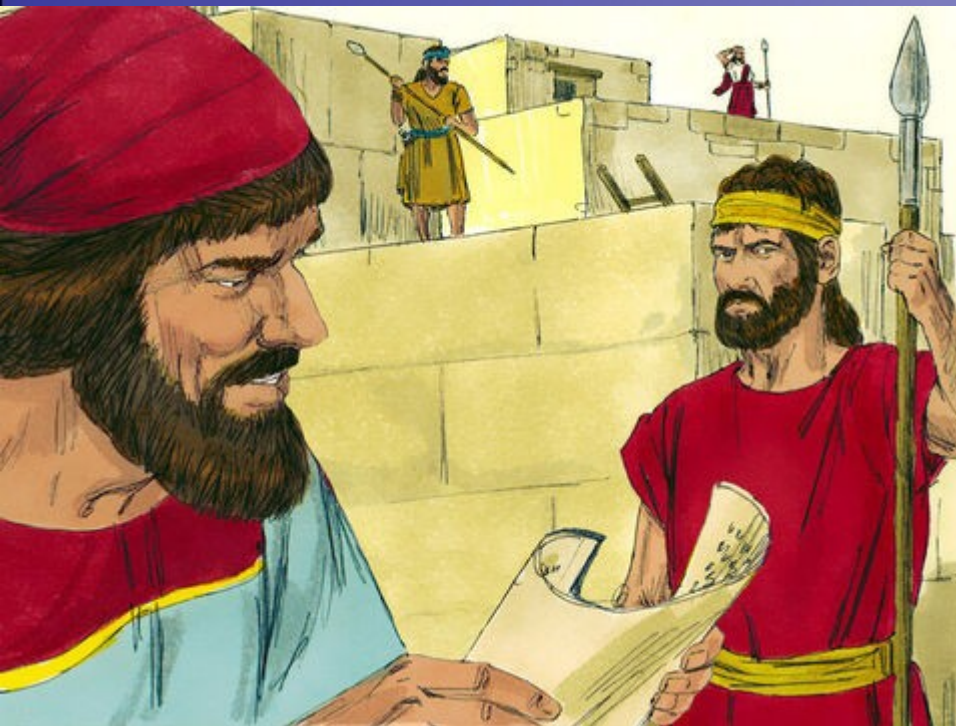
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:4-5
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-7
 - How on earth could that crazy rumor—that several of us claim to have heard of—ever get back to the king?
 - Why again was that letter unsealed?



Rebuilding the Wall

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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-7
 - How on earth could that crazy rumor—that several of us claim to have heard of—ever get back to the king?
 - Why again was that letter unsealed?
 - How serious is this getting now?



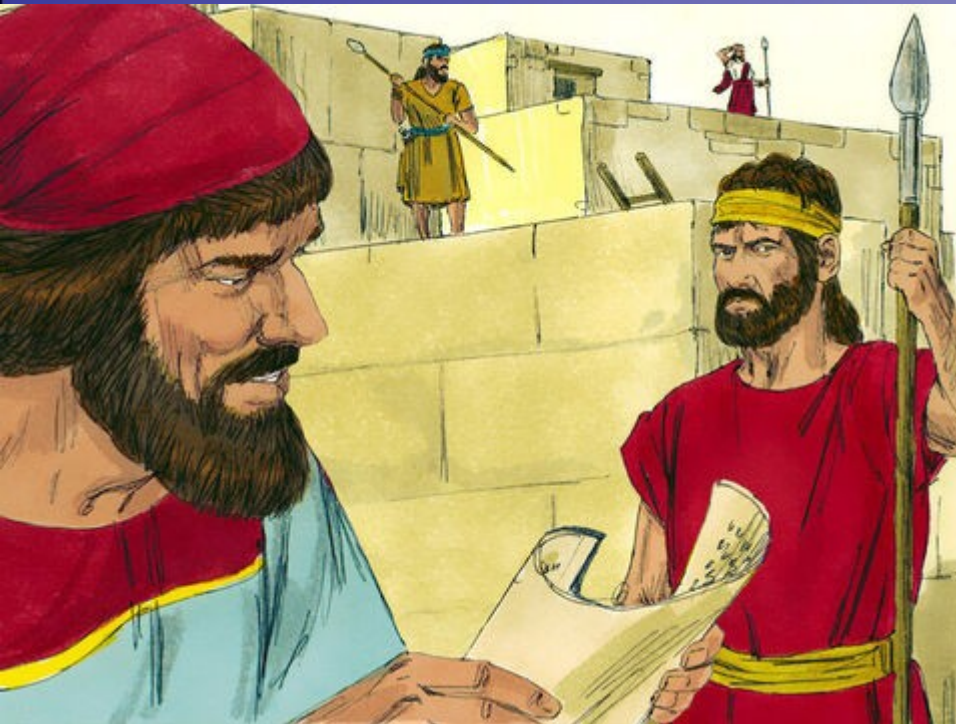
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-8
 - How on earth could that crazy rumor—that several of us claim to have heard of—ever get back to the king?
 - Why again was that letter unsealed?
 - How serious is this getting now?
- And yet, how did Nehemiah respond to them in verse 8?
- How confident was Nehemiah in his relationship with Artaxerxes that he didn't even seem to worry about their scheme?
- Or is it his relationship with *another* King that gives Nehemiah such confidence?



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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-8
 - Please read **Nehemiah 6:9**



Rebuilding the Wall



Discontenting Arguments Tally:

- 1) Your worship is a joke
- 2) You'll never get the work done
- 3) It's all too far gone to fix
- 4) You all stink at this
- 5) We're all tired and there's too much to do
- 6) Our enemies are constantly poised to attack
- 7) Even our allies are complaining
- 8) Our own people are taking advantage of us
- 9) Sanballat's slander about Nehemiah's rebellion



- And yet, what does Nehemiah do at the *end* of the verse to make sure that he stays strong?



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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-8
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:9
 - Please read **Nehemiah 6:10-13**
 - So what's going on here? Who's this guy?



Rebuilding the Wall



Funky little teaching moment...

- Okay, let's unpack this a smidgey bit
 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - According to verses 12 and 14, he's a prophet (though obviously, not a very reputable one, since he hires out his skills to people like Sanballat)



Rebuilding the Wall



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 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - According to verses 12 and 14, he's a prophet
 - Verse 10 tells us that he was “shut in at his home” —so what does *that* mean?



Rebuilding the Wall



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- Okay, let's unpack this a smidgey bit
 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - According to verses 12 and 14, he's a prophet
 - Verse 10 tells us that he was "shut in at his home"
 - Verse 10 also tells us that he's the "son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel"
 - That may mean he's from the family line of the "Delaiah, son of Shemaiah" who was an official in the court of King Josiah in Jeremiah 36:12 (i.e.; like those are "family names" that keep popping up in the lineage)



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 - Verse 10 also tells us that he's the “son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel”
 - That may mean he's from the family line of the “Delaiah, son of Shemaiah” who was an official
 - But Mehetabel is—interestingly—a *woman's* name
 - Calling his father “Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel” is like calling Jesus “the son of Mary”
 - It points to a dubious parentage
 - Note also that in 7:61-62, the “descendants of Delaiah” were among those who couldn't prove “that their families were descended from Israel”
 - How had those whose families had interbred with the neighbors fared back at the end of Ezra?



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 - According to verses 12 and 14, he's a prophet
 - Verse 10 tells us that he was "shut in at his home"
 - Verse 10 also tells us that he's the "son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel"
 - So he's a prophet who prophesies for money, who's shut up in his home, and a Jew who's parentage is at best uncertain—how well-respected was this guy?
 - Do you see why he might be willing to work with guys like Sanballat who would give him money while undermining leaders like Nehemiah and Ezra?



Rebuilding the Wall



Funky little teaching moment...

- Okay, let's unpack this a smidgey bit
 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - Secondly, what's he trying to get Nehemiah to do?
 - He calls Nehemiah to plead “sanctuary” in the Temple (maybe like when Adonijah fled in desperation into the Tabernacle back in 1 Kings 1 and “took hold of the horns of the altar” to protect himself from Solomon—which totally worked)
(and when Joab did the same thing later on in 1 Kings 2 to protect himself from Solomon—which totally *didn't* work)



Rebuilding the Wall



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 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - Secondly, what's he trying to get Nehemiah to do?
 - He calls Nehemiah to plead “sanctuary” in the Temple
 - If *that's* what Shemaiah is doing, and “the Temple” in verse 10 here is referring to the inner, holy chambers that contain the altar, then what's wrong with that?
 - The further you go into the Temple, the more access is *restricted*—as 2 Chronicles 23:6 says, “No one is to enter [those inner parts of the] temple of YAHWEH except the priests and Levites on duty; they may enter because they are consecrated, but all the other men are to guard what YAHWEH has assigned to them.”
 - If that's the case, then what's Shemaiah trying to get him to do?
 - And how does Nehemiah respond to him in verse 11?



Rebuilding the Wall



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 - First off, who's Shemaiah?
 - Secondly, what's he trying to get Nehemiah to do?
 - He calls Nehemiah to plead “sanctuary” in the Temple
 - If *that's* what Shemaiah is doing...
 - But if “the Temple” means the *whole* structure—and if we're right from several weeks ago, and Nehemiah is actually a *eunuch*, then what's wrong with that?
 - According to verses like Deuteronomy 23:1, “No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of YAHWEH.”
 - If that's the case, then what's Shemaiah trying to get him to do?
 - And how does Nehemiah respond to him in verse 11?
 - Either way, what does all of this say about Nehemiah and his commitment to honoring God?
 - He'd literally rather die than to risk offending the Law of God by entering the Temple wrongly



Rebuilding the Wall



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 - If *that's* what Shemaiah is doing...
 - But if “the Temple” means the whole structure—and if we're right from several weeks ago, and Nehemiah is actually a *eunuch*, then what's wrong with that?
 - But even then, I have to remind us of Isaiah 56:3-5
 - Please read that promise again
 - God said, “You may have had your *genitals* cut off for a king, but I will give you something far better, far greater, that can *never* be cut off from you—and you *will* have a *family* because you will be part of *mine*...”



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- After a century, they're finally rebuilding
 - And that's when opposition started building too
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:1-2
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:4-5
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:5-8
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:9
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:10-13
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:14
 - So what does Nehemiah do here?
 - Again, this is another “*imprecatory prayer*” but it *is* still a prayer
 - But you'll notice that more and more, Nehemiah's prayers are becoming either imprecatory against others or for God to bolster his own strength
 - Neither of those is *bad*, per se —but they *are* increasingly utilitarian... and maybe even just a smidgey bit self-oriented...?



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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:10-13
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:14
 - So what does Nehemiah do here?

- Again, this is another “*imprecatory* prayer” but it *is* still a prayer
- And yet, what does it say about what his enemies knew about Nehemiah that they thought that “faking” messages from God might be the way to get to him?
 - He's still truly seeking out God and His leading in all of this



Rebuilding the Wall

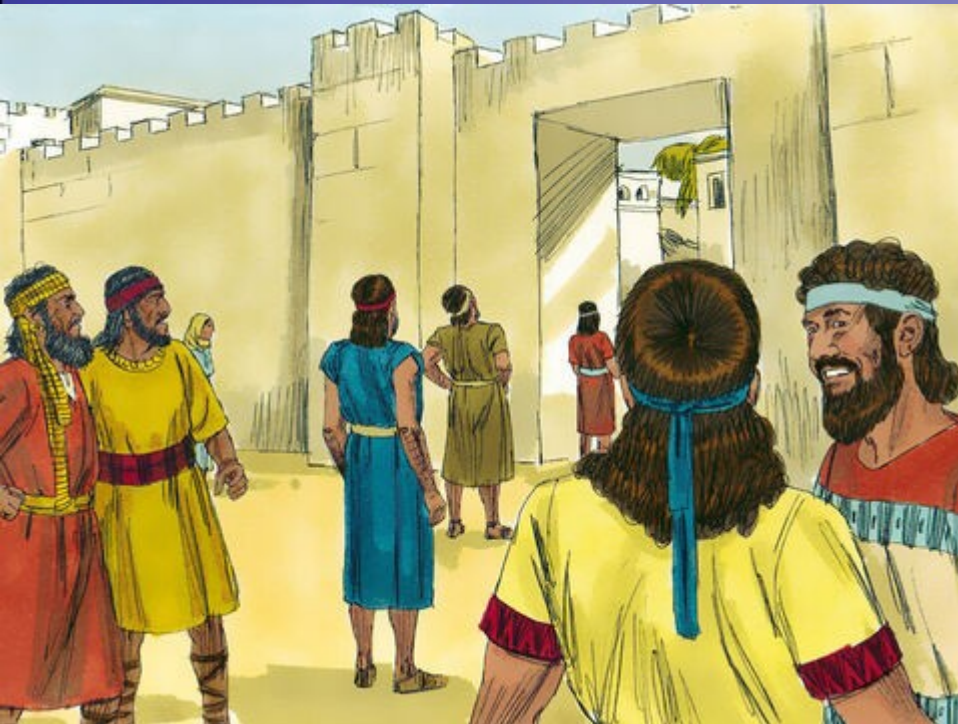
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 - Please read Nehemiah 6:10-13
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:14
 - Please read Nehemiah 6:15-16

- They finished the whole wall in under two months—so was that a short time to work or a long time?
 - It took a century to start building the wall, but less than two months to finish building it
 - What could we learn from that today?



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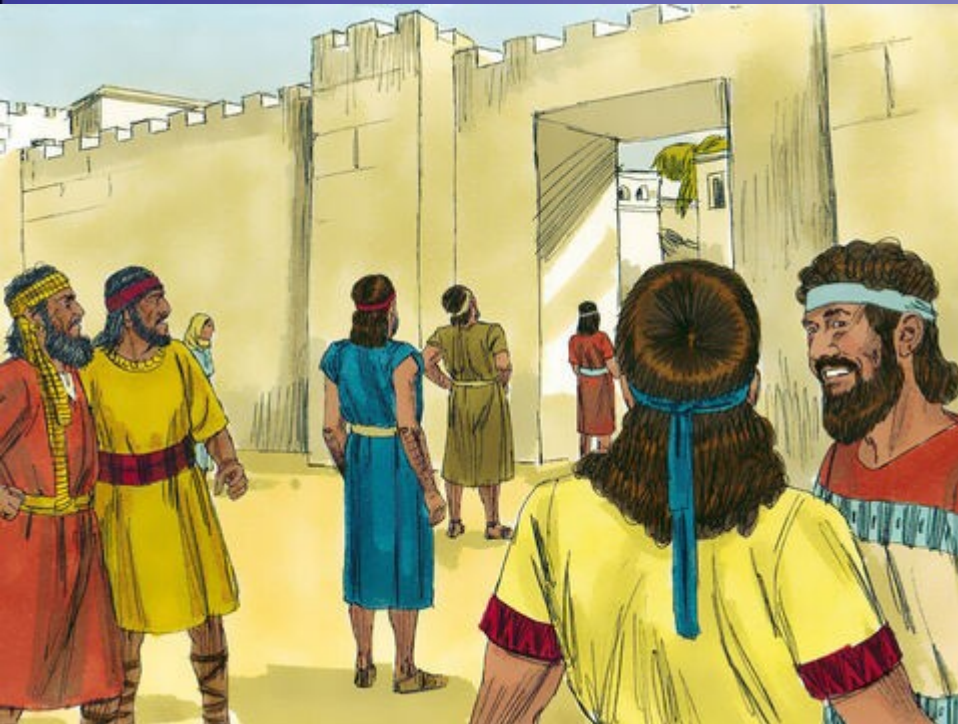


- They finished the whole wall in under two months—so was that a short time to work or a long time?
- And what was the result with their enemies like Sanballat and Tobiah?
 - But in Nehemiah's mind, why was that, exactly?
 - Even if we want to think that our praying leader is praying a little less, his focus on actively honoring God is still rock solid, isn't it?
 - Can you do both?
 - How so?



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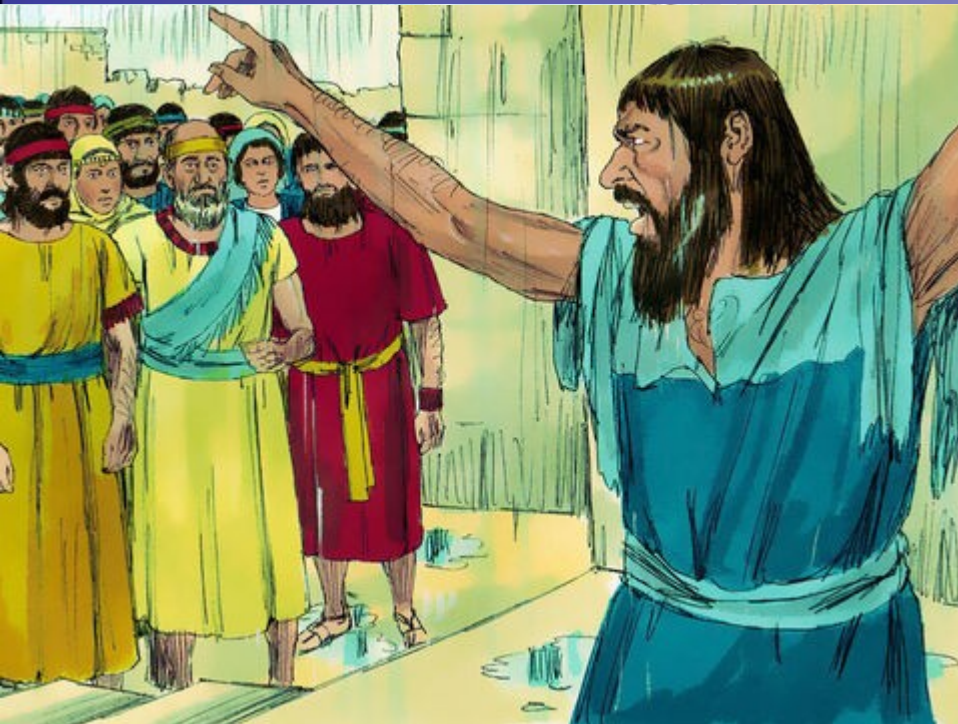


- They finished the whole wall in under two months—so was that a short time to work or a long time?
- And what was the result with their enemies like Sanballat and Tobiah?
- **The End.**
 - Man, that would've been such a satisfying place to end, wouldn't it?



Rebuilding the Wall

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 - OK, please read Nehemiah 6:17-19
 - So what's going on here?
 - He's being spied upon constantly to Tobiah—but why are people ratting him out?
 - Well, in part it's probably all of his family ties
 - “Shecaniah son of Arah”—his father-in-law—was probably the same important Shecaniah the priest whom we're told later on in Nehemiah 12:3 had come back with Zerubbabel years before
 - What does that suggest about how well the religious leadership in Jerusalem had been obeying God's commands about intermarrying?
 - And about the sorts of pressures that Ezra had faced in his reforms back in Ezra 10?



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 - (way back in Nehemiah 3:6 and 30—specifically on the parts where we're told that all of the rich guys and fancy, visiting nobles were supposed to be working)



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 - So what kinds of people were “in cahoots” with Tobiah?



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 - OK, please read Nehemiah 6:17-19
 - So what's going on here?
 - He's being spied upon constantly to Tobiah—but why are people ratting him out?
 - So why were people trying to say such good things about him to Nehemiah, at the same time that he was saying such bad things to Nehemiah?
 - What are they trying to do by playing leader up even as he plays the other leader down?
- How would you describe the sorts of stuff that Nehemiah is still having to deal with, even after his “great victory” in building the wall?
- How is there *never* just a “The End” or a “They lived happily ever after” in real life?
- How can we apply all of this to *our own contexts* today?

