

## Should a Man or Woman Like Me Run Away

By Phyllis Corbin

### The Weapon of Deceit

Nehemiah's enemies have tired many weapons against him, direct attack, ridicule, threats and distractions. But now a new weapon is utilized. We have lived through the horrors of the David Koresh cult. His Dravidians died in a fiery compound after a 51-day standoff. What is so sad is that most of these people first listened to David Koresh because they believed in the message he was preaching.

When we look back on Jonestown and to the events in Waco we see people who were deceived by people who claimed to be speaking for God. We must be constantly on guard against cults and fringe groups who will try and take control of our lives by twisting Scriptures and creating a power structure to oppress and blind people. There is such a spiritual vacuum in the world that we have to be watchful. We have to guard our souls and our families. The pastor has to guard his members the church needs a constitution and a statement of faith, as do all ministries to protect its members and staff. The pastor and all leaders are accountable to God for their decisions and therefore a board say in a church is there for the safety of the pastor as well as the the rest of the ministry.

Beware of groups and organizations that have no accountability structures. Beware of religious dictatorships. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" Listen to the words of Nehemiah.

NEHEMIAH 6:10 One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Deliah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at his home. He said, "Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you-by night they are coming to kill you."

Shemaiah was shut up in his home when Nehemiah went to see him. Perhaps he was ritually unclean and was quarantined or perhaps by being imprisoned in the house himself his own life appeared to be in danger. In any case he suggests that Nehemiah flee to the temple because his life was in danger. In fact Shemaiah has information suggesting men are coming by night to kill him. Again, this is the tactic: **ATTACK THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP WILL SCATTER.**

On the surface this seems like a legitimate suggestion. The altar area of the temple has long been a place of asylum. A person could hide in the temple and feel some security. 1 KINGS 1:30 has Adonijah going into the tabernacle and holding to the horns of the altar when he hears Solomon has been made king. In 1 kings 2:28 Joab flees to the same place and holds to the horns of the altar. Unfortunately, in both cases Benaiah, Solomon's official hit man hunted them both down and killed them. Perhaps Nehemiah remembered the fate of those two men and became suspicious. Listen to Nehemiah's response:

NEHEMIAH 6:11 But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!"

Nehemiah flatly refused. He was no coward. He would not desert his people on the wall and run somewhere to save his own neck. Rather, he was willing to stand with them and die with them if necessary. He had a wall to build. He had gates to hang. He had a city to restore. There is something sacrificial in Nehemiah's action. We need that kind of COMMITMENT, "Lord, I am willing to be poured out as a drink offering if only I can please you. If picking up these bricks and building these walls around my family and ministry demands my life, Lord I'm in your hands." Is that the way we feel about our own situations? When the campmeetings are over and the devil rears his ugly head, will I run to save myself? NO! A thousand times NO! Be like Nehemiah. "I will not come down off the wall!"

Jesus hung on the cross and His enemies cried, "If you are the Christ come down from the cross --- save yourself and us." Jesus stayed, He died, He rose again and He built a road to God that we have walked over ourselves. The songwriter said, "I'm too near the crown, to lay down the cross -- -"

There were a couple of other problems there. Laymen were not permitted into the sanctuary. To go there would be to defile the tabernacle of God. Uzziah went into an area of the temple to offer incense against God's instructions and was smitten with leprosy. When Shemaiah proposed action contrary to God's word, Nehemiah was convinced he was a false prophet. Here's what he reasoned:

NEHEMIAH 6:12 I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him 13. He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

Folks are thankful for the presence of the Holy Spirit to give us discernment. There are times we can walk into traps that the devil sets for us. We can work on the wall and the work can go well, but we had better be aware that there are people and forces that do not want to see our Christian growth continue or our ministries. Sometimes even without realizing it themselves people can be used to deceive us and draw us away from God. And once we've fallen hard we lose our credibility.

Nehemiah could have been discredited, his people could have lost their confidence in him and the work would have stopped Let us not let this happen in the ministries that God has called us into

Nehemiah concludes this latest threat with another prayer.

NEHEMIAH 6:14 Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophetess Hoadiah and the rest of the prophets who have been trying to intimidate me.

Sadly, the people who should have been standing by Nehemiah and encouraging him were the people who tried to fill him with fear. This is spiritual abuse; when religious people use their

perceived place in God to intimidate and control others. As a result this person is spiritually damaged and their relationship with God is wounded and scarred. Jesus came to deliver us from that too.

Let's close with a couple of points;

1) The enemy never gives up, he just changes his tactics a fly fisherman changes flies to lure the trout or salmon off the bottom

2) Saving your own neck, no matter how great a leader you are is never good justification to commit sin. The world says, "He who fights and runs away, live to fight another day." Jesus says, He who keeps his life shall lose it and he who loses his life for my sake shall find it"

3) Pray and depend upon the Holy Spirit to give you discernment over what is true and what is false. Pray that you know when you're under attack and who's leading the charge

4) Stay on the wall. Pick up another brick and press forward to its completion.

God bless

Sister Phyllis