

Why Should I Come Down?

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When the walls of Jerusalem had tumbled in, and remained in that condition for a long time, Nehemiah was allowed to return to his native land for the purpose of rebuilding those walls. It was a great day in the life of the Jewish nation when these walls, which surrounded their holy city began to be raised again. There were some people were opposed to Nehemiah's work. They may have thought he was not doing it in the right way, or that it should not be done at all. For some reason, they did everything they could to interfere with the work, but Nehemiah refused to be moved from the great work he was doing. Sanballat and Geshem, leaders of the opposition, decided to invite Nehemiah to meet them in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. Their invitation seemed very innocent on the surface. Nehemiah knew there was more to it. He answered, "I am doing a great work, so I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:3).

Nehemiah did not refuse to meet these men because he was afraid. He refused because he had greater things to do. I am sure the two men thought meeting with them would be greater than rebuilding the walls, but Nehemiah did not think so. He had to do what he believed was the right thing to do.

Neither did he refuse to meet them because he believed he was in error by rebuilding the walls. He knew what he was doing was the right thing to do. Whether they understood this or not was not his problem. He could not leave an important work just to pamper the ego of those who opposed him. Naturally, it would raise their standing in the minds of those who thought that "making noise" is a sign of soundness to have a meeting with Nehemiah. No doubt they received some thrill from reporting that "we challenged Nehemiah to meet with us, but he would not meet us." But Nehemiah refused to let up in his work for the purpose of elevating little men.

Nothing could have been gained by the meeting. Nehemiah knew what God wanted done and how to do it. Those who were opposing him were doing nothing about erecting the walls. What, therefore, could he gain by arguing with those who did

not want the work done in the first place? The very fact that he would leave the work to meet with them would suggest that he thought there was some merit to their opposition. The best thing for him to do was ignore them and go on doing "a good work."

To ignore those who oppose you is not necessarily a sign of weakness any more than their opposition to you is a sign of strength. Jesus taught us much about ignoring those who tried to hurt the work He was doing. They accused Him of many things, but He knew what He was doing, and for what purpose He had come into the world. Sometimes in the very presence of those who questioned Him, "he answered them not a word." If He had taken time to listen to every little Scribe or Pharisee who wanted to argue some point of the law with Him, He could never have fulfilled His mission of saving the world. He always had time for a sincere person who was seeking the Truth but refused to waste His time with those who had opportunity to know what was right, but wanted to argue with Him in order to mask or justify their own wrongdoing. His refusal to enter into a discussion with these enemies of the Truth was no sign of weakness but of strength. As Nehemiah would say, "Why should he come down?"

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