

Lesson XI.

NEHEMIAH AND HIS ENEMIES

December 10, 1911

Nehemiah 6 : 1-12. Study Nehemiah, ch. 6—Memory Verse, 11.

Golden Text—The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?—Psalm 27 : 1.

1 Now it came to pass when Sanbal'lat, and Tobi'ah, and Ge'shem the Ara'bian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein ; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates ;)

2 That Sanbal'lat and Ge'shem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one* of the villages in the plain of O'no. But they thought to do me mischief.

3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down : why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you ?

4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort ; and I answered them after the same manner.

5 Then sent Sanbal'lat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand ;

6 Wherein *was* written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gash'mu saith *it*, *that* thou and the Jews think to rebel : for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jeru'salem, saying, *There is* a king in Ju'dah : and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. 8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. 9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands. 10 Afterward I came unto the house of Shemai'ah the son of Delai'ah the son of Mehet'abeel, who *was* shut up ; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple : for they will come to slay thee ; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. 11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee ? and who *is there*, that, *being as I am*, would go into the temple to save his life ? I will not go in. 12 And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him ; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me : for Tobi'ah and Sanbal'lat had hired him.

THE LESSON RETOLD

At last the walls of Jerusalem were finished all but the doors of the great gateways. Sanballat and Tobiah still wished to do harm to the Jews ; but they were now afraid to go into this guarded city, so they sent a message to Nehemiah asking him to meet them in one of the villages near by. But Nehemiah, knowing they only meant him harm, sent back saying, "I am doing a great work. Why should I leave this work and come down to you ?" These men sent to him four times ; but each time Nehemiah answered in the same way.

Then Sanballat sent his servant with a letter. The letter said : "I have heard that the Jews are going to rebel against the king of

Persia and that you are going to make yourself their king, and it is for this reason you are building up the city wall. Now, before the king of Persia hears of this, you had better come out and talk to me about the matter." But Nehemiah sent back a brave answer to this impudent letter : "You know that these things are not true ; you are only making them up out of your wicked heart." And Nehemiah prayed to God to help him and his people, so that these their enemies should not hurt them.

Sanballat and Tobiah, not succeeding in getting Nehemiah out of the city, hired a man in it to deceive him. His name was Shemaiah. He pretended he had a message