

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Nehemiah: Pattern For Solutions In Spiritually Hard Times

D. Succeeding Amid Facing Evil Propaganda

(Nehemiah 2:17-4:6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We face a significant amount of evil propaganda today, and we need to know how to handle it:

(1) We face it in the mainstream media: "Charlie Chester, a technical director at the [CNN] cable network was filmed" explaining, "Our focus was to get Trump out of office, right? Without saying it, that's what it was' . . . Chester . . . talked about how CNN also targeted anti-Trump voters by focusing on climate-change, adding that 'fear sells' . . ." (Mark Moore, "This is propaganda," New York Post, April 14, 2021, p. 22)

(2) We face it in the government: The Supreme Court blocked California pandemic restrictions on religious groups: they "could 'sit for a haircut with 10 other people in a barbershop, eat in a half-full restaurant (with members of 20 different families) or ride with 15 other people on a city bus'" but not "'host three people from different households for a Bible study indoors or in their backyards.'" (Jacob Sullum, "No Locking Down God," Ibid., p. 25)

California's officials said that they had not imposed any more restrictions on Christians than on others, Ibid.

(3) We face it in academic circles: Paul Rossi, a private-school teacher in Manhattan, wrote about the "'Critical Race Theory'" agenda that he was being directed to teach, reporting, "Students are pressured to conform their opinions to those broadly associated with their race and gender and to minimize or dismiss individual experiences that don't match those associations. The morally compromised status of 'oppressor' is assigned to one group of students based on their immutable characteristics. In the meantime, dependency, resentment and moral superiority are cultivated in students considered 'oppressed.'" (Paul Rossi, Lesson in Wrong Division," Ibid., p. 20)

Need: *So, we ask, "How can we effectively handle evil propaganda?!"*

I. The Hebrews faced evil propaganda from foes to their building Jerusalem's wall, Neh. 2:17-19; 4:1-3.

II. Nehemiah and fellow Hebrews overcame such propaganda by prudent action, Nehemiah 3:1-32; 4:4-5:

- A. They *maximized* their *motivation*: Jerusalem's homeowners built wall portions near their homes spurred by their drive to protect their families. (Nehemiah 3:21, 23-24, 26, 28-30; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 678)
- B. They *shared* their *burden*: commuting workers living outside Jerusalem built where no houses existed, taking pressure off of the city homeowners who built the wall portions next to their homes, Neh. 3:2, 5, 7, 27; Ibid.
- C. They *set attainable goals*: phrases like "next to him," "next to them," etc. occur 28 times in Nehemiah 3:1-32, meaning the wall-building project was divided into attainable tasks for each group involved in the work, Ibid.
- D. They *worked efficiently*: workers building near their homes eliminated needless travel time for materials and they were more able to use all available help from their respective households to accelerate production, Ibid.
- E. A number of the Hebrew workers were *spiritually highly dedicated* to addressing the rebuilding project:
 1. The High Priest Eliashib and other priests built the Sheep Gate used for sacrificial animals, Neh. 3:1; Ibid.
 2. However, this ministry effort left the High Priest's own house by the wall unprotected, Nehemiah 3:20.
 3. In response, Baruch, son of Zabbai, "burned" (Hiphil causative stem of *harah*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 354) with motivation, sensing his duty before God to guard the High Priest's family by building the city wall that ran for some distance up to the High Priest's front door, Nehemiah 3:20.
 4. The priest Meremoth, son of Urijah, then built the wall from the High Priest's front door along the side of his house while priests from the surrounding area built the wall beyond him, Nehemiah 3:21-22 NIV.
 5. Thus, the High Priest's selfless devotion to his ministry spurred others to cover the needs of his own house.
 6. Other parts built by other similarly devout people who usually did no such hard labor included goldsmiths (Neh. 3:8, 31-32), perfume-makers (Neh. 3:8), various rulers (Neh. 3:9-12, 14-18), Levites (Neh. 3:17), merchants (Neh. 3:31-32) and Shallum, ruler of a half-district in Jerusalem, with his daughters (Neh. 3:12).
- F. Nehemiah, leader of the project, *prayed* for *God's help* against the propaganda from the mockers, Neh. 4:4-5.

III. The Hebrews consequently had a will to work, so the wall of Jerusalem was joined together all around and raised to half of its original height, Nehemiah 4:6 NIV.

Lesson: *The Hebrews progressed in building Jerusalem's wall while facing evil propaganda by (a) maximizing their motivation, (b) sharing the burden, (c) setting attainable goals, (d) working efficiently, (e) being spiritually highly dedicated to the rebuilding effort and (f) praying for God's help.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:1-11.* (2) *If facing evil propaganda, may we follow the Hebrews' example in Nehemiah 2:17-4:6.* (3) *If we lack human help, may we pray for God's help, be spiritually highly dedicated to perform God's assigned task, maximize our motivation, set attainable goals and work efficiently.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We heed the Hebrews' Nehemiah 2:17-4:6 example to handle the evil propaganda noted in our introduction:

(1) We maximize our motivation by recalling that 2 Timothy 3:16-17 promises us that Scripture equips us for every good work, and Zechariah 4:6-7 with Romans 12:3-8 promise that by relying on the Holy Spirit to use His spiritual gifts for service equips us to succeed in God's calling regardless what trials we face [including propaganda].

(2) We set attainable goals by daily reading Scripture for God's blessing, Deuteronomy 17:18-20. Note that Moses did **not** direct how **much** Scripture one should read **each day**, only that he read *some* Scripture **each day!**

(3) We work efficiently by (a) using the "Search" engine on our Church web site for ready access to lessons that answer questions or issues that arise, and by (b) using Bible study tools such as complete concordances, the Bible Knowledge Commentary (O.T & N. T.), the Ryrie Study Bible, Zondervan Pict. Ency. of the Bible, etc.

(4) We share our burdens, regularly meeting with fellow believers for mutual edification, Hebrews 10:25.

(5) We commit to remain highly dedicated to fulfilling God's assignments for us in ministry (as follows):

(a) As your pastor, this means that I must follow the example of Israel's spiritual leader, the High Priest Eliashib, and be more committed to this pastoral ministry than to my own earthly welfare, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 2 Timothy 2:4.

(b) Accordingly, we address the evil propaganda mentioned in our introduction from Scripture:

(i) Re: false propaganda in the mainstream media:

(1) We must not be shocked by such propaganda -- 2 Timothy 3:13 said it would occur.

(2) On the "climate-change" view pushed by CNN, Genesis 8:22 completely counters it.

(3) As for political bias, Matthew 7:15-20 claims we can discern it by the "fruits" of the

false propagandists. The fact that technical director Charlie Chester of CNN has been caught on film admitting to the cable network's effort to remove President Trump from office exposes the political bias of that cable network.

(ii) Re: false propaganda in California officials on their restrictions on Christian gatherings due to COVID-19, Matthew 23:1-3 claims we can discern such propaganda by the hypocrisy of such leaders. Their obvious double-standard of giving greater liberty in gatherings to barbershops and restaurants than to Christian religious groups (Ibid., Sullum) exposes the hypocrisy and hence the false propaganda of such officials.

(iii) Re: false propaganda on racism:

(1) Contrary to how "Critical Race Theory" proponents urge students to dismiss their personal experiences that do not match "Critical Race Theory" generalizations on "oppressor" and "oppressed" people groups (Ibid., Rossi), (i) Proverbs 20:12 directs that God gave us eyes and ears as our best means of empirical insight into making our **own** judgments on **reality**. (ii) That being so, Rich Lowry's article ("Narrative overwhelms facts" (Republican-American, March 24, 2021, p. 8A) reported, "A New York Times story" told how "(t)he head of a Chinese social-services agency told the paper that 'many of his Asian colleagues were verbally harassed during the pandemic but chose not to alert law enforcement because they worried the perpetrators, who were often people of color, could be mistreated by the police.'" (iii) Mr. Lowry added, "Last March, an Asian-American woman was assaulted on a bus in the Bronx by a group of Black teenage girls who accused her of spreading the coronavirus," Ibid. Such stories and what some of us have experienced reveal that white supremacists are not the only entity that spurs racism opposite Marxist "Critical Race Theory," but racism exists across all racial, gender and ethnic bounds!

(2) Opposite Marxist efforts to make white Americans feel guilty of racism just because they are white Americans, (i) Galatians 3:28 claims **every** believer is unified in Christ, and (ii) Ephesians 1:3-14 claims **every** believer is blessed with **every** spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavens, that one day **every** believer will be separate from sin, blameless and in love in God's presence, being predestined unto the "adoption," that is, to the rapture of the Church [Romans 8:23]. **Every** believer is positionally redeemed from the slave market of sin, forgiven all trespasses, possessing an eternal inheritance in heaven and is sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the rapture, that Spirit now acting as the Evidence of his inheritance. (iii) Ezekiel 18:1-32 counters the Marxist claim that whole groups of Americans are guilty of racism against whole groups of other Americans simply due to their race, for that passage teaches that God holds every individual personally accountable for his own actions, whether they be good or evil.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. Then, may we heed the Hebrews' example to function well amid facing evil propaganda.