

RALLY AT POINT OF ATTACK (1)

BY KEITH GREER

Nehemiah was the cupbearer for the Persian King, Artaxerxes. Upon learning of the deplorable conditions existing in Jerusalem, Nehemiah became very sorrowful. He asked King Artaxerxes for permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's gates and walls. Nehemiah also asked the king to provide the materials he would need to complete the project.

Then, he journeyed to Jerusalem and personally surveyed the damage that had been done. Nehemiah rallied the people together to help him undertake the work. He told them God would be with them. But not everyone wanted the rebuilding to succeed. Opposition soon came from two men named Sanballat and Tobiah. They began by ridiculing the people and their efforts. When that failed, they tried to get them to compromise. Finally, they threatened them with armed violence. Nehemiah resisted the troublemakers by arming the workers. He had them keep their weapons at their sides as they continued the work of rebuilding the walls. He also took one other special precaution: *“Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, the work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”* {Nehemiah 4:19,20} Nehemiah wanted all the people to rally at any **point of attack**. The walls were rebuilt and secured in **52 days**.

Rebuilding spiritual Zion's walls. In a very real sense, God's people today are called upon to rebuild spiritual Zion's walls. Isaiah prophesied that the church would begin in Jerusalem {Isaiah 2:2,3}. In Jerusalem, on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection and ascension, the apostles preached the gospel for the first time {Acts 2}. Thousands heard their message, and on that day, 3,000 were added to the Lord's church {Acts 2:41-47}. The membership grew, but opposition soon arose, and the Christians were scattered—but they went everywhere preaching the word {Acts 8:4}.

There was great opposition to the gospel itself. *“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”* {Galatians 1:6,7} Paul warned the elders from Ephesus that

opposition would arise from within the church {*Acts 20:28-30*}. He told them to rally at the point of attack—the false doctrine. Paul also warned Timothy of this approach {*1 Timothy 4:1-3*}. He later warned Timothy that the time would come when the people would reject sound doctrine and believe fables {*2 Timothy 4:3,4*}. We too must protect and be prepared against false doctrine.

Defending baptism. Do you ever wonder why so much debate and discussion centers around baptism? There is discussion regarding the mode of baptism, its element, its purpose and design, and finally, whether it's essential to salvation. The battle lines form at baptism because it is at baptism that the alien sinner's state changes. One who refuses baptism is still out of Christ; therefore, he's still in the devil's camp. The devil is delighted when people refuse to be baptized. He wants them to go ahead with believing and repenting, but not to change their lost conditions by contacting Christ's blood. If you were the devil, where would you make your last-ditch effort to avoid losing one of your children? How many millions has he managed to keep by convincing them that baptism is not essential to their salvation? How many others has he deceived into believing it's a "work of men" seeking to merit and earn one's salvation?

In the rest of next article, we try to show that truth must not be compromised. We must meet problems at the devil's **point of attack**. ***