

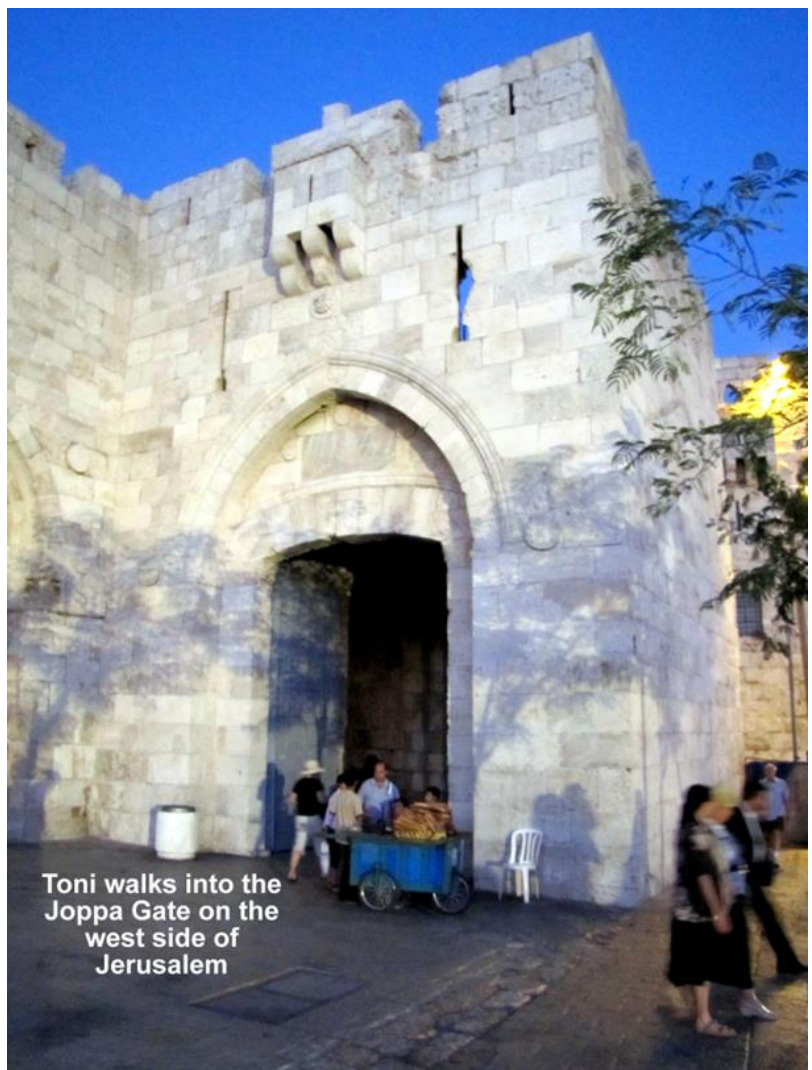
Nehemiah 6:1-19

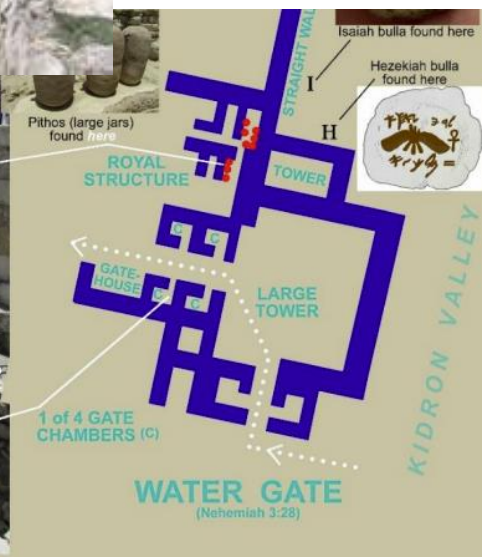
Outline of Nehemiah 6:

- 1-4 – Attempt to lure Nehemiah 27 miles away to a distant corner of Judaea into a possible assassination
- 5-9 – The “open letter” sent to leak false information about Nehemiah’s attempt to be King
- 10-14 – A “prophet” was paid money to give Nehemiah a false oracle to hide in Temple
- 15-16 – THE WALL IS FINISHED. The gates are shut.
- 17-19 – Constant communication from inside Nehemiah’s government was assisting Tobiah and receiving instructions from Tobiah to advance foreign causes through Jerusalem

6:1 – Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates),

1. Three enemies:
 - a. Sanballat from Samaria
 - b. Tobiah from Ammon (Trans-Euphrates)
 - c. Geshem from Arabia (moved into Edom, then the Negev to Judah’s southern border)
2. The wall was finished and “there was no breach left” (Completion is 6:15)
 - a. The wall had been completed around the city of Jerusalem
 - b. The gate ways were set and passable
 - c. The only thing left was the setting of the doors in the gates
3. The external enemies were surprised Nehemiah had finished the walls. They must act now!



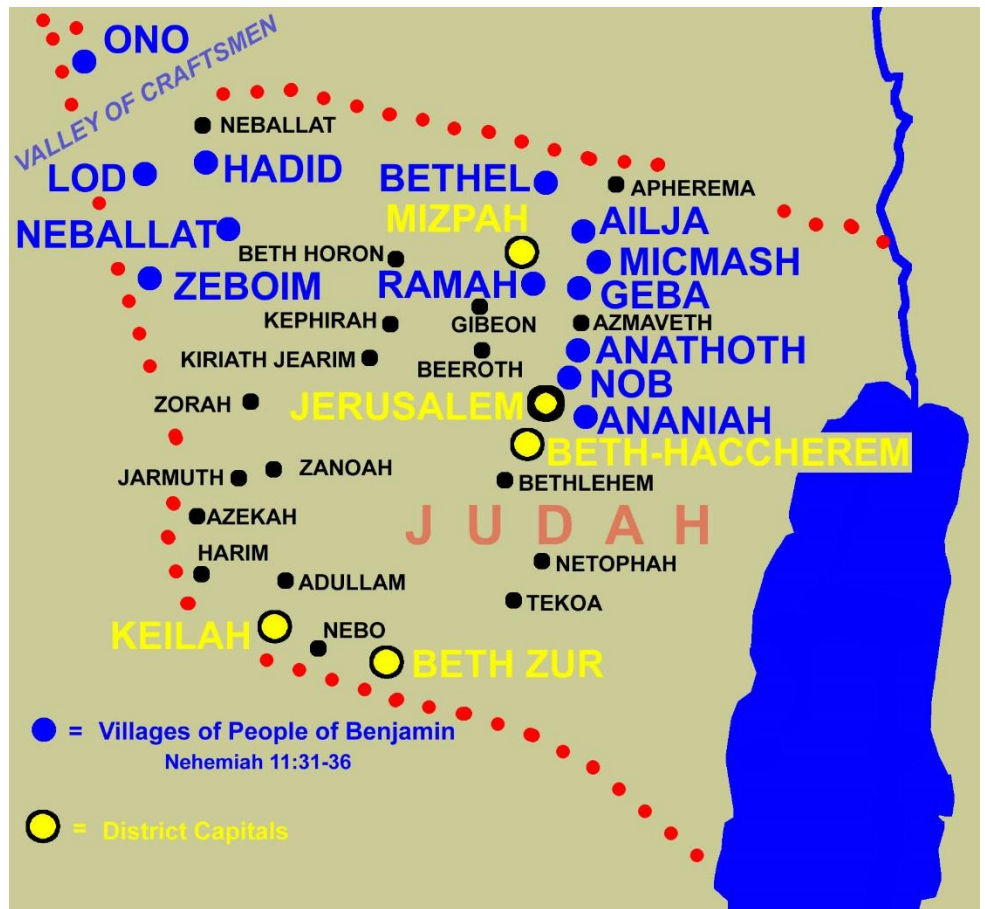


6:2 – Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm.

3162 [e] yah-dāv יחדו together Adv	3259 [e] we-niw-wā-'ā-dāh ונגדנו and let us meet Conj-w V-Nifal-ConjImperf.Cohort-1cp	1980 [e] le-kāh לכה come V-Qal-Imp-ms 3fs	559 [e] lē-mōr, לאמר saying Prep-l V-Qal-Inf	413 [e] 'ē-lay אלי to me Prep 1cs	1654 [e] we-ge-šem וגשם and Geshem Conj-w N-proper-ms	5571 [e] san-bal-lat סנבלט Sanballat N-proper-ms	7971 [e] way-yiš-lah וישלח That sent Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms
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7451 [e] rā-'āh. רעה: harm Adj-fs	6213 [e] li לי me Prep 1cs	2803 [e] la-'ā-šō-wt לעשות to do V-Qal-Inf	1992 [e] ho-še-bīm, חשבים thought V-Qal-Prtcpl-mp	207 [e] 'ō-w-nōw; אנו of Ono N-proper-fs	1237 [e] bē-biq-'at בבקעת in the plain Prep-b N-fsc	3715 [e] bak-ke-pī-rīm בכפרים among the villages Prep-b, Art N-mp
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1. **The First Plan**
2. Geshem begins to help plot against Nehemiah.
3. Ono is in the far NW corner of Judaea in a tight wedge between the border of Samaria to the north and Ashdod to the west. Geshem is beside Ashdod and up to Judah's southern border in Idumea (or, formerly southern Judah)
4. Ono is in hostile territory. Imagine going into a corner of territory today wedged between Gaza and Syria while they conspire with Jordan or Iran.

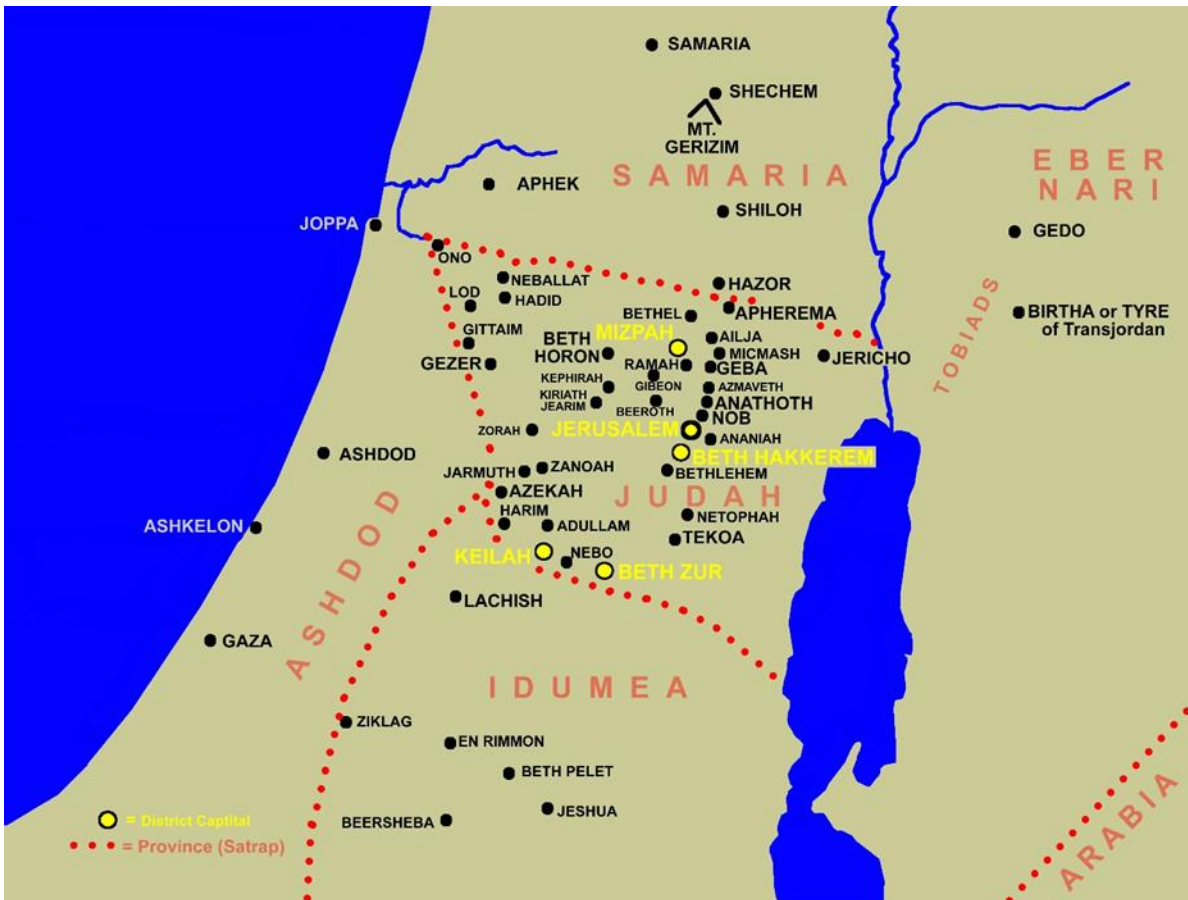


6:3 – **And I sent messengers to them, saying, “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”**

1. Nehemiah being a trained and excellent diplomat gives an honest and disarming answer without indicating he suspects anything.
2. Basically, Nehemiah says, “I am deep into a huge project. I can't take time away for a personal trip right now.”

6:4 – **And they sent to me four times in this way, and I answered them in the same manner.**

1. Four times they sent messengers asking Nehemiah to travel the 27 miles into hostile territory even though he would be a few yards inside his own jurisdiction.
2. The repeated request shows these men are desperate.
3. Obviously, they have a lot to lose if Nehemiah secures Jerusalem and Judaea.



6:5 – In the same way Sanballat for the fifth time sent his servant to me with an open letter in his hand.

1. The second plan:

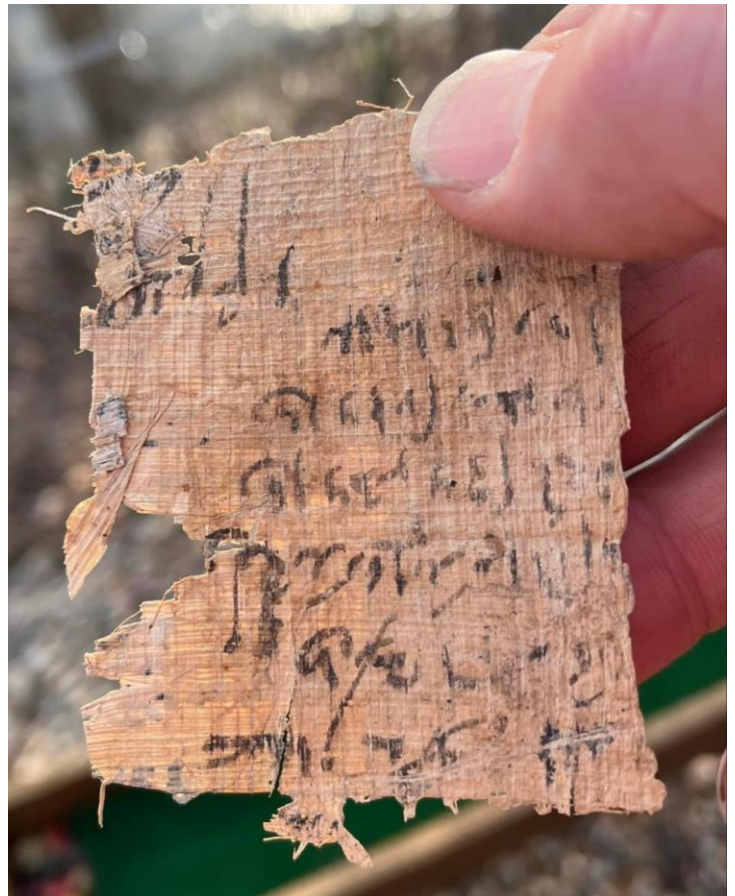
2. An unsealed letter
 - a. An official letter should be sealed with a seal pressed into clay to secure the rolled-up papyrus so only the recipient of the letter could read it.
 - b. An open letter could be read by anyone
 - c. An open letter is the equivalent of an internal governmental leak to the press





10-190 AD Roman Clay Bulla

Reverse side shows the imprint of the fibers from the papyrus document that this bulla sealed.



6:6 – **In it was written, “It is reported among the nations, and Geshem also says it, that you and the Jews intend to rebel; that is why you are building the wall. And according to these reports you wish to become their king.**

1. An official of Sanballat carried the open letter to Nehemiah in Jerusalem leaking the contents of the letter to Persian officials who hopefully would report Nehemiah to Artaxerxes.
2. The evidence is “overwhelming”
 - a. The information is in this document. The “smoking gun”
 - b. This report has been heard in the nations (Samaria, Ashdod, Ammon for sure) because that is where the information was leaked to.
 - c. Even Geshem, the governor of Arabia, who was himself appointed by Artaxerxes, says he himself has heard this planned of Nehemiah.
3. The report: “Nehemiah is building this wall because as soon as it is finished, he is going to have himself declared King of Judea and the Jewish province is going to rebel against Persia.”
 - a. This could be tied into Biblical prophecies about the coming Messiah
 - b. Nehemiah had religious and political momentum to lead the province in this movement.

6:7 – **And you have also set up prophets to proclaim concerning you in Jerusalem, ‘There is a king in Judah.’ And now the king will hear of these reports. So now come and let us take counsel together.”**

1. Nehemiah was accused also in this letter to have already pre-arranged prophets to declare him as king with oracles and prophecies confirming that, ‘yes, indeed, “There is a king in Judah!” ’
 - a. This would be similar to:
 - i. Saul’s anointing by Samuel
 - ii. David’s anointing

- iii. Solomon's anointing
 - iv. And, all of the kings of Judah when they ascended the throne.
2. The reason Sanballat sent this letter to Nehemiah was to make plans together with Nehemiah concerning how Nehemiah could get himself out of this situation.
- a. Sanballat (Geshem and Tobiah) are appearing to only have Nehemiah's best interest
 - b. Nehemiah can't fight these accusations alone they say. Nehemiah will need their help.
 - c. "So now come and let us take counsel together" to help you Nehemiah.

6:8 – Then I sent to him, saying, “No such things as you say have been done, for you are inventing them out of your own mind.”

859 [e]	834 [e]	428 [e]	1697 [e]	1961 [e]	3808 [e]	559 [e]	413 [e]	7971 [e]
'at-tāh	'ā-šer	hā'ēl-leh,	kad-dē-bā-rīm	nih-yāh	lō	lê-mōr,	'ē-lāw	wā-'eš-le-ḥāh
אתָּה	אֲשֶׁר	הָאֵלֵה	כַּדְּבָרִים	נִהְיָה	לֹא	לֵאמֹר	אֵלָיו	וְאֶשְׁלַחְהּ 8
you	as	these	things	are being done	Not	saying	to him	And I sent
Pro-2ms	Pro-r	Art Pro-cp	Prep-k, Art N-mp	V-Nifal-Perf-3ms	Adv-NegPrt	Prep-l V-Qal-Inf	Prep 3ms	Conj-w V-Qal-Conseclmperf-1cs 3fs

908 [e]	859 [e]	3820 [e]	3588 [e]	559 [e]
bō-w-dām	'at-tāh	mil-lib-be-kā	kī	'ō-w-mēr;
בֹּדְאָם:	אתָּה	מִלִּבְבְּךָ	כִּי	אֹמֵר
invent them	you	in your own heart	but	say
V-Qal-Prtcpl-msc 3mp	Pro-2ms	Prep-m N-msc 2ms	Conj	V-Qal-Prtcpl-ms

1. Again, Nehemiah is a trained diplomat and has worked in the midst of some of the highest level of palace schemes in Susa in Xerxes and Artaxerxes chambers.
- a. Nehemiah has played “political ball” in the big leagues
 - b. Nehemiah is not going to get caught up in this low level conspiracy out here in the backwaters of the Persian Empire with the Samaritans and Ammonites
2. Nehemiah says literally,
 “These things you say are NOT BEING DONE because you invented them in your own heart.”
 - or -
 “This is not reality, but is fake news created by you.”

6:9 – For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands.

1. Nehemiah inserts an explanation and a prayer:
- a. The intention of the letter:
 - i. Frighten:
 - 1. Nehemiah,
 - 2. his officials (who would all be executed if this were true)
 - 3. and the Jews (who would be enslaved if this were true)
 - b. This would be the final distraction that would disheartened the Jews, get them worried and working on some other problem (“a fake problem”) so they would not have not have the time, focus or energy to finish setting the doors in the gate.
 - i. It was so, “Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done (finished)”
 - 2. Nehemiah prays a blessing instead of the intended curse of his enemies:
 “Now, O God, strengthen my hands!”

6:10 – Now when I went into the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home, he said, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple. Let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night.”

6113 [e]	1931 [e]	4105 [e]	1121 [e]	1806 [e]	1121 [e]	8098 [e]	1004 [e]	935 [e]	589 [e]	
'a-šūr;	we-hū	mə-hē-ṭab·'él	ben-	de-lā-yāh	ben-	šə-ma'yāh	bēt	bā-ṭī,	wa-'ā-nī-	
—	וְהוּא	מְהִיטָבְאֵל	בֶּן־	דְּלַיָּה	בֶּן־	שֵׁמַעְיָה	בַּיִת	בָּאתִי	וְאַחֲרָיִם	10
	a secret informer	and he [was]	of Mehetabel	the son	of Delaiah	son	of Shemaiah	to the house	came	And afterward I
	V-Qal-QalPassPrtcl-ms	Conj-w Pro-3ms	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-msc	V-Qal-Perf-1cs	Conj-w Pro-1cs
5462 [e]	1964 [e]	8432 [e]	413 [e]	430 [e]	1004 [e]	413 [e]	3259 [e]		559 [e]	
we-nis·ge·rah	ha-hē-kāl,	to-wk	'el-	ha-'ē-lo-hīm	bēt	'el-	niw-wā-'éd		way-yo-mer	
וְנִסְגְּרָה	וְהִיכַל	תּוֹךְ	אֵל־	הַאֱלֹהִים	בַּיִת	אֵל־	נִוְעַד		וַיֹּאמֶר	
and let us close	the temple	within	inside	of God	the house	in	let us meet together		and he said	
Conj-w V-Qal-ConjImperf.Cohort-1cp	Art N-ms	N-msc	Prep	Art N-mp	N-msc	Prep	V-Nifal-Imperf.h-1cp		Conj-w V-Qal-ConseclImperf-3ms	
2026 [e]	935 [e]	3915 [e]		2026 [e]	935 [e]	3588 [e]	1964 [e]	1817 [e]		
le-hā-re·ge·kā.	bā-'īm	we-lay-lāh		le-hā-re·ge·kā,	bā-'īm	kī	ha-hē-kāl,	dal-tō-wt		
לְהִרְגֶךָ	בָּאִים	וְלַיְלָה		לְהִרְגֶךָ	בָּאִים	כִּי	וְהִיכַל	דַּלְתוֹת		
to kill you	they will come	and indeed at night		to kill you	they are coming	for	of the temple	the doors		
Prep-I V-Qal-Inf 2ms	V-Qal-Prtcl-mp	Conj-w N-ms		Prep-I V-Qal-Inf 2ms	V-Qal-Prtcl-mp	Conj	Art N-ms	N-fpc		

1. **The Third Plan:**

2. Sanballat and Tobiah had contracts and agreements with Nehemiah’s own Jewish community inside Jerusalem.
 - a. The enemies could not get Nehemiah out of the city
 - b. The enemy could not get the city distracted with rumors of a rising Messiah
 - c. So, the enemy pulled some strings with connections they had in the city.
3. Sanballat hired a Jew inside the city to claim to have a word from God, an oracle or a prophecy to guide Nehemiah
 - a. This is not ridiculous since this whole process was:
 - i. Foretold by Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
 - ii. Prepared by Daniel
 - iii. And, energized once the exile had returned by Haggai and Zechariah who spoke directly to the governor and the high priest at that time
 - iv. Now, there was a prophet for Nehemiah and his time....or, so it was claimed...
4. The false prophet Shemaiah was confined to his home. He could not leave for some reason:
 - a. Maybe he was unclean for ritual purity, but yet had an oracle
 - i. But, probably not since he wants to “meet in the temple”
 - b. “asur” means “restrain” or “retain”
 - i. Something such as an ecstatic experience or being in a state of seeing a vision kept Shemaiah in his house
 - ii. Similar Ezekiel
 - iii. This is not the normal understanding of the interpretation of “asur”

- c. The governor of the land, Nehemiah, made the effort and took the time to go to this seer's house, while the seer did not even bother visiting the subject of his prophecy.
 - d. Most likely, Shemaiah is acting out (like Ezekiel) what Nehemiah is going to have to do to keep himself safe. Nehemiah is going to have to go into hiding and keep himself restrained.
5. The prophecy is poetic ending with the repeated threat:
"They are coming to kill you!
They are coming to kill you by night!"
6. The plan:
- a. Go to the temple
 - b. Hide in the temple
7. The problem:
- a. Nehemiah is not a priest. He would nullify any respect from the Jews by doing this and could be killed by God for doing it.
 - b. Nehemiah is in Jerusalem to lead the people, not hide from the people. This would also nullify Nehemiah as a leader since he was fearful and hiding. (kind of like sitting at a beach while your nation is lured into a war in the Middle East.)

6:11 – But I said, "Should such a man as I run away? And what man such as I could go into the temple and live? I will not go in."

- 1. Should I, a leader, run away?
- 2. A man like me (not a priest, possibly a eunuch) would be killed by the people or by God for entering the temple.

6:12 – And I understood and saw that God had not sent him, but he had pronounced the prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

- 1. False prophet
- 2. Hired by Tobiah and Sanballat

6:13 – For this purpose he was hired, that I should be afraid and act in this way and sin, and so they could give me a bad name in order to taunt me

- 1. Nehemiah would have sinned against God
- 2. Nehemiah would have acted like a coward and Tobiah and Sanballat would have taunted him and his bad reputation.
- 3. The plan was to force Nehemiah to do something socially and religiously embarrassing

6:14 – Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

- 1. Nehemiah prays that God remembers this wicked behavior of
 - a. Tobiah
 - b. Sanballat
 - c. The false prophetess Noadiah
 - d. The other prophets who joined in (and, where paid) with Shemaiah and Noadiah.

6:15 – So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

6:16 – And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.

6:17 – Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah's letters came to them.

6:18 – For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was the son-in-law of Shecaniah the son of Arah: and his son Jehohanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah as his wife.

6:19 – Also they spoke of his good deeds in my presence and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid.

The Wycliffe Bible translator and his team at Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) have sent me the first map they have translated into Gumawana taken from maps I created in June for my "Nehemiah Notebook" used for Tuesday night classes.

You can see the Gumawana names inserted into the map that will be printed in the Gumawana Bible. They have finished the New Testament and are currently working through the Old Testament.

Gumawana is an Austronesian language spoken by people living on the Amphlett Islands of the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. The Amphlett Islands are a group of 18 islands that are part of the larger D'Entrecasteaux Islands about 6 miles from Fergusson Island that speak Gumawana.



Ali Gurewa Ana Tokaudakodao Idi Kasa tamo tamo Yoidi

Niemaiya 3
Niemaiya 4:7

