

# JESUS IN A RACIST CULTURE IV

## *SAMARITAN DISTRACTIONS*

<sup>3</sup> *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?*

Nehemiah 6:3 KJV

### I. Samaritan mixture

- A. Samaritans are mentioned in the Bible in the books of Ezra (Chapter 3) and Nehemiah (Chapter 4) in the fifth century BC.
- B. Nehemiah was given a mandate to rebuild the walls of the temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans violently opposed the rebuilding effort.

### II. It is a season to avoid all distractions.

- \* Distractions are fatal to vision. (Nehemiah 4:17 NASB)

<sup>17</sup> *They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, [every one] with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other [hand] held a weapon.*

### III. Three Samaritan distractions

- A. Distraction number one - False opportunities (Nehemiah 6:1-4 KJV)

<sup>1</sup> *Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, 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;)* <sup>2</sup> *That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in [some one of] the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.* <sup>3</sup> *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?* <sup>4</sup> *Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.*

1. When things are going well, when you're on a roll, when you're just about concluding your work, the distraction of mixed opportunities will strike.
  2. It was a delicate time.
    - a. The novelty had worn off.
    - b. The people were tired.
    - c. The work was almost complete.
  3. Nehemiah's answer. He rejects pretended friendship and refuses to come down.
- B. Distraction number two - False criticism (Nehemiah 6:5-9 KJV)

*<sup>5</sup> Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; <sup>6</sup> Wherein [was] written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu 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. <sup>7</sup> And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, [There is] a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king*

*according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. <sup>8</sup> Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. <sup>9</sup> 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.*

1. The Samaritans sent an unsealed, untied scroll with false rumors.
  2. Nehemiah's reaction. He does not get defensive; he does not debate; he does not have a pity party. He calmly responds and finishes the work.
- C. Distraction number three - False prophets and fear (Nehemiah 6:10-14 KJV)

*<sup>10</sup> Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. <sup>13</sup> Therefore [was] he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and [that] they might have [matter] for an evil report, that they might reproach me. <sup>14</sup> My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these*

*their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.*

1. In an attempt to bring utter fear and terror upon Nehemiah and his brethren, he is encouraged to come down off the wall and to run and hide and save his skin in the temple of the Lord.
2. Nehemiah's reaction. He commends his enemies to God. He finishes the work, suddenly, in 52 days, and it is obvious that the entire work is by the hand of God. (Nehemiah 6:16 KJV)

*<sup>16</sup> And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard [thereof], and all the heathen that [were] about us saw [these things], they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.*