



JOHN NEWTON

1725–1807



Through many
DANGERS,
TOILS *and* SNARES
I have ALREADY *come.*

THE CRY OF THE SOUL OF

Nehemiah

Today's Message:
Through many Dangers, Toils and Snares
Nehemiah 6:1-15

Perseverance through dangers, toils and snares

Assassination Attempt

Nehemiah 5:1-4

¹When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates—²Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono.”

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Assassination Attempt

Nehemiah 5:1-4

But they were scheming to harm me; ³so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?” ⁴Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.



Perseverance through dangers, toils and snares

Divide and Conquer

Nehemiah 5:5-9

⁵Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter
⁶in which was written:

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Divide and Conquer

Nehemiah 5:5-9

“It is reported among the nations – and Geshem says it is true – that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king ⁷and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king in Judah!’ Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together.”

The guile with which Sanballat did it is obvious – it could be true. In such circumstances the Persian king must be informed that his high ideals for his cupbearer had failed. Nehemiah was rebelling against him, again a piece of perfect guile, because in the Persian empire confidants of the king occasionally rebelled against him. This charge of high treason against Nehemiah was serious indeed. At the end of his message Sanballat betrayed himself by insisting on a meeting. If Nehemiah was busy with a revolt, why should a governor of another province want to meet him? It could be interpreted immediately by the Persian authorities as collaboration. Why should a Samaritan be interested in the welfare of the Jews? The scheming of Sanballat became clear to Nehemiah.



~ F. Charles Fensham, [*The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 201–202.

Another proof of Sanballat's dishonest intentions is that he sent an *open letter*, i.e., not sealed, as was the custom in those days. With the open letter, which could be read by anyone on the way, he was responsible for the further spreading of the rumor. Why then did he want to meet Nehemiah in private?

Nehemiah also discovered the real motive of their actions. With the rumors they wanted to frighten the people so that they would stop working on the wall. We have already seen how this continuous propaganda had its effects on the Jews (4:10–12). It was disheartening to work in such circumstances. The strong leadership of Nehemiah thwarted this attempt.

~ F. Charles Fensham, [*The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 201–203.



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Divide and Conquer

Nehemiah 5:5-9

⁸I sent him this reply: “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.”

⁹They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.”

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But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.”



Perseverance through dangers, toils and snares

Threats from Betrayal

Nehemiah 5:10-13

¹⁰One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at his home. He said, “Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you – by night they are coming to kill you.”

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Threats from Betrayal

Nehemiah 5:10-13

¹¹But I said, “Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!”

¹²I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. ¹³He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

This time his enemies tried to make a major breakthrough by hiring a prophet or prophets to lure Nehemiah into the temple. Nehemiah as a layman was not allowed to enter the temple. We must keep in mind that he was probably a eunuch and was therefore excluded from any religious participation in the temple (Lev. 21:17–24; Deut. 23:1). A person was allowed to flee to the altar to seek asylum (Exod. 21:13–14; 1 K. 1:50–53; 2:28ff.), but asylum was restricted to certain definite cases, and flight from a foreign enemy was not one of them. The whole purpose of the enemies and the false prophet was to incite him to commit a ritual transgression. This would discredit him in the eyes of his own people, and consequently they would not be willing to cooperate with Nehemiah in finishing the wall...



~ F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 204–205.

But Nehemiah was not so easily frightened; they underestimated his strength of character and his intelligence. He saw immediately through their whole conspiracy. He refused to enter the temple and commit a transgression. There might have been another reason for his refusal, namely, that it would have been a humiliation to him as governor to flee from his enemies in such an undignified manner.



~ F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI:Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 204–205.



Perseverance through dangers, toils and snares

A Prayer of Resolve...

Nehemiah 5:14

¹⁴Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet Noadiah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me.

Perseverance through dangers, toils and snares

And the Result!

Nehemiah 5:15

¹⁴Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet Noadiah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me. ¹⁵So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

Main Principle?

*We will face opposition,
so we must persevere!*

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

⁶For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing...



A grayscale painting of a man in a hood reading a book. The man is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark, textured hooded garment. He is looking down at an open book held in his hands. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall style is that of a classical or religious painting.

PERSEVERANCE
OF THE SAINTS

John 16:33

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.
In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have
overcome the world”

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

¹⁶At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*Don't I have to keep at it
in order to be saved?*

Philippians 1:3-6

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

*How much of this is my work
and how much is God's?*

Philippians 2:12-13

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

*Wait, are you saying this has nothing
to do with my behavior or performance?*

Philippians 3:4-11

⁴If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. ⁷But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

*Are you saying that I already have salvation? How can that be true?
What is motivating me, then?*

Philippians 3:12-16

¹²Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶Only let us live up to what we have already attained.



PRESERVATION
PERSEVERANCE
OF THE SAINTS

What is “Preservation of the Saints”?

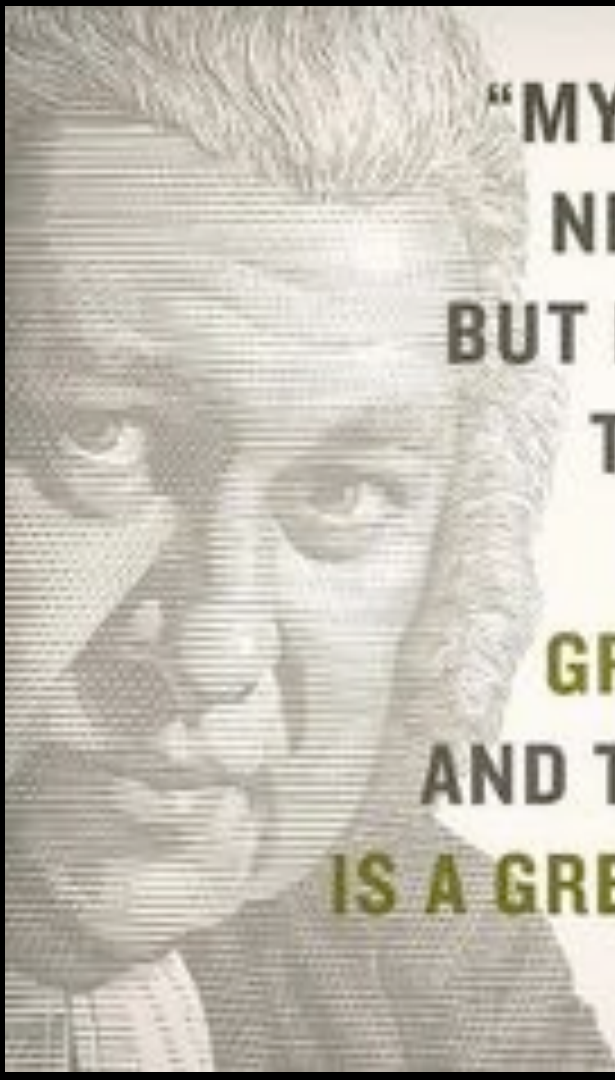
Preservation of the Saints is the work of God by which believers are upheld by God’s power such that believers elicit a spirit of perseverance in Christ to the End



Through many
DANGERS,
TOILS *and* SNARES
I have ALREADY *come.*

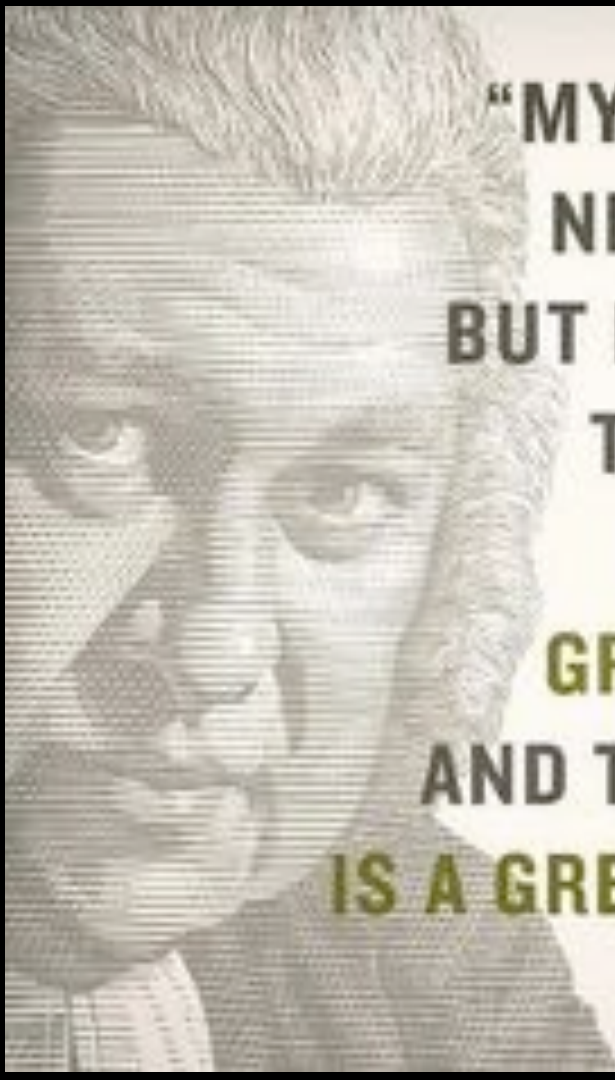


Through many
DANGERS,
TOILS and SNARES
I have ALREADY come.
'Tis GRACE that
brought me
SAFE thus far
and GRACE will
lead me HOME.



**"MY MEMORY IS
NEARLY GONE,
BUT I REMEMBER
TWO THINGS:
THAT I AM A
GREAT SINNER
AND THAT CHRIST
IS A GREAT SAVIOR."**

—JOHN NEWTON



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**“Stop? I cannot stop.
What? Shall the old
African blasphemer
stop while he can
speak?”**

~ John Newton, months before
his death

Gospel Application

Gospel Application

Are you persevering in your preservation?