**Cross And Crown Christian Outreach**

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**Factor In The Ancestral Enemy.**

**Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.** - Neh. 4:3 KJV

Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah, who was a cupbearer in the king’s palace had approached the king in shushan the palace asking for permission to go back and re-build the wall and the gate of the city of his fathers which is in Jerusalem – Neh. 2:5-6. This was after information got to him of there destruction ( Neh. 1:4-11) and his solemn prayer to God that he be permitted and granted favour before the king. The king granted his request and empowered him with a letter addressed to the governors of that region stating that they give Nehemiah the necessary support to carry out the task which had now become the king’s task.

Whereas the king and some of the governors were ready to support him in this task, two nay three regional governors ( Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arabian) were obviously not happy with that order of the king. The Bible says they were not happy that someone was coming to seek the welfare of the children of Israel – Neh. 2:10. Nehemiah, on arrival in Jerusalem went on an inspection of the city and returned to inform the elders of his intention, divine approval and the king’s approval, both of which he had received for the project to proceed. The three dissenting governors meanwhile mocked and despised them wondering where they will get resources to complete the task – Neh. 2:19.

He however refused to be discouraged by their reaction, choosing to focus on the reconstruction of the wall which, with the cooperation of all the priests and elders of the Jewish people, was eventually completed in good time. This record time completion which definitely surprised Sanballat and Tobiah triggered the above statement which is the foundation scripture for today's devotion. Although Tobiah was credited with the statement, the Bible says Sanballat was wrought, filled with indignation and mocked the Jews.

So why were the two governors in particular, unhappy about this reconstruction? The response lies in history. Sanballat was from Horonaim, a city in Moab, which together with the land of the Ammonites were parts of the land that the ancestors of the Jews took away. If Nehemiah had forgotten history, the two governors were not forgetting that part of their history. The misfortune of their ancestral enemy was always going to be a source of joy for them while success of their ancestral enemy was always going to make them sad, but with the king’s instruction, they were left with no choice than to cooperate hoping that the project will be abandoned.

Many Christians, there are today, who set out on implementing projects but met with antagonists who succeeded in stalling the project because they did not anticipate the role of ancestral enemies, just as many Christians today are operating without preparing their generation for the challenge that their actions today will create for their future generations. Imagine the number of job opportunities that have been lost because of the mere mention of the candidate’s surname. Not knowing about the presence of that ancestral enemy is not sufficient reason to fall into such traps. To avoid such hidden enemies, it is important for the Christian to factor them into his/her plan in order to ensure successful project implementation. Ignoring such can only be at one's own detriment.

Nehemiah, consciously or unconsciously factored the ancestral enemy into his project implementation plan by;

1. Seeking and obtaining the permission of God to proceed in his mission – Neh. 1:5-11.
2. Seeking and obtaining the proper approval of the king to go on such a mission – Neh. 2:2-8.
3. Understanding the scale of the project before him by going round the city on inspection – Neh. 2:11-16
4. Ignoring the distraction that negative comments of mockers represent.

Christians should not allow themselves to be caught unawares. Prepare for every eventuality as waiting to see the problem before attacking it may prove to be a wrong tactic. Just like the case of Nehemiah, if the above steps are taken, it will be impossible for the Sanballats and Tobiahs of this world to successfully stand as obstacle on the path of the progress of the Christian.

Nehemiah in response to the resistance and mockery of Sanballat and Tobiah said, the God of heaven will provide prosperity for the project and his servants will rise and build the wall as the oppositions are not in anyway in consideration regarding the project – Neh. 2:20. Likewise, those ancestral enemies trying to stop your progress would have been effectively taken care of, if you had sought and gotten the approval of the Lord before embarking on the project. This is because, the Almighty God in such situations, will provide resources, spiritual and material, sufficient to overcome all the pranks of antagonists and mockers thus enhancing the chances of success of the project.

As a Christian, you may have a list of many abandoned projects in your life attributable to the activities of antagonists and mockers. You need to accept the fact that it happened, not because your God was unable to counter such antagonists, but because you did not follow the due process. Follow due process for those projects you plan to implement and your success is assured. May God lead you aright to take the right steps that will make you overcome antagonists and mockers in whatever form, in Jesus name. Amen.