



# *When Sanballat Shows Up: Why Opposition Means that the Work Matters*

[Click here to listen  
to this article](#)

by – Steve Martin

**E**very time God begins something beautiful, purposeful and freeing, opposition isn't far behind. It was true in the days of Nehemiah, and it's true today.

When Nehemiah began rebuilding the broken walls of Jerusalem – restoring identity, safety and hope – he didn't face apathy. He faced **fierce resistance**. Not from strangers, but from people who seemed convinced that the work must be stopped. Sanballat and his companions mocked, misrepresented, accused and harassed Nehemiah at every turn.

But here's the part we often forget:

**Their opposition became the clearest evidence that God Himself was behind the work.**

Because no one bothers to attack what doesn't matter.

### **OPPOSITION IS NOT A SIGN THAT SOMETHING'S WRONG – IT'S A SIGN THAT SOMETHING'S RIGHT**

Sanballat didn't rise up because Nehemiah was off track. He rose up because Nehemiah was on track. He rose up because:



- God was restoring something.
- God was freeing people.
- God was rebuilding places that religion and fear had destroyed.
- God was giving His people joy, safety and identity again.

Sanballat didn't oppose the work to ruin it.

Sanballat opposed it **because he couldn't stop it**. He was a tool – not an obstacle.

And Scripture makes it clear:

**God used even Sanballat's resistance to strengthen the workers' resolve.**

### **THE SAME PATTERN TODAY**

In every generation, whenever God rebuilds damaged places – minds, hearts, beliefs, communities –

*(continued on page 9241)*

When Sanballat Shows Up: Why Opposition Means that the Work Matters.....	9239
<u>Reader's Question Box #82: Does God Have Desires?</u> .....	9242
<u>Tidbits of Truth #86</u> .....	9244
<u>Obituary: Elwood Winter</u> .....	9246
<u>Honest Study (quote: William Barclay)</u> .....	9246

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*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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*Scripture education in a weekly format!*

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls “my gospel” (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past” (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice,

misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);

- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
  - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “church,” “denomination,” “movement,” “organization,” “mission,” “creed,” “meeting,” “school,” “conference” or “fellowship.”

*We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar*

## Bible Student's Notebook™

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Sanballat shows up again. The names change, but the pattern remains:

- Mockery.
- Misunderstanding.
- Misrepresentation.
- Accusation.
- Fear-driven warnings.

It always sounds dramatic. It always sounds urgent. It always sounds spiritual. But underneath it all is the same old anxiety:

**“If this message spreads, everything we built on fear will crumble.”**

Fear always resists joy. Control always resists freedom. Guilt always resists grace.

That's why Nehemiah's story speaks so powerfully to our own.

### **WE KEEP BUILDING – BECAUSE GOD CALLED US TO BUILD**

Nehemiah didn't debate Sanballat. He didn't argue. He didn't try to win him over. Scripture says that he simply replied,

*I am doing a great work and cannot come down*  
(Nehemiah 6:3).

Then he picked up his tools, turned his face toward the wall, and kept rebuilding the places that God had told him to rebuild.

That's our posture too.

We keep building because God has entrusted us with a message of:

- Grace that frees, not frightens.
- Joy that restores, not shames.
- Love that expands, not collapses.
- Truth that heals, not harms.

We're not building walls of stone – we're rebuilding walls of understanding, hope and freedom. Walls that protect people from the destructive messages of fear-based religion. Walls that help God's people stand tall again.

And no amount of criticism changes the assignment that God has given.

(see [SANBALLAT, page 9243](#))

## ***Hawaiian Shirt Theology***

by — Steve Martin

Steve Martin – the Grace Dude – wears a Hawaiian shirt every day, not because he lives on the beach (he doesn't), but because it reminds him of what life is really about: love, joy, grace and freedom.

This isn't a book about rules, guilt or trying harder. It's a book about discovering that grace is louder than shame, brighter than fear, and way more fun than religion ever told you it could be. Inside, you'll find bold reminders that:

- Grace isn't “undeserved favor” – it's joy, delight and freedom.
- God doesn't tolerate you – He celebrates you.
- Love doesn't come with fine print.
- You can live in full color, even in hard times.

With a mix of story, humor and unapologetic truth, Steve invites you to trade in the stiff suit of religion for the bright, relaxed, joy-filled shirt of grace. No guilt trips. No fear tactics. Just freedom, love, and maybe a few parrots and hibiscus flowers along the way.

If you've ever felt weighed down by religion, pressured to perform, or afraid you don't measure up – this book is your invitation to breathe again.

Grace isn't something you earn. It's something you wear. Boldly. Every day.



# Reader's Question Box #82

## Does God Have Desires?

by — André Sneidar

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

**Q:** This [He wanted us to need Him, long for Him, and love Him freely<sup>1</sup>] doesn't ring true to me. I may be missing something, but this seems off, Scripture-wise. Does the Sovereign have wants when He created everything after the council of His own will?  
– DT



until that point.

An example, perhaps a weak one, is when an architect draws up plans for some grand work. He creates drawings, outlines design specifications, lists requirements for materials, etc. During the process, he knows that his plan will be accomplished; nevertheless, he *desires* to see the fulfillment of his work.

**A:** Job 14:15 states,

*Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands (KJV).*

*You shall call, and I shall answer You; You shall long for the work of Your hands (CV).*

This verse came to mind as I considered your question.

God *does* have a desire for His work to be accomplished – that the *Logos*, which He purposed before this world came into existence, will culminate in the eventual redemption of His whole creation at the consummation. Yet God planned the work of evil

1. [BSN 1096, "All Back to God" \(BSC 2-1-6\).](#)

Our Father is compassionate about His plan for the reconciliation, redemption, restoration and ultimate joy that will be experienced in that day. Look for the many verses that talk about His compassion.

Any parents who have children know that their children's life as a baby, through childhood until they mature to the point to take care of themselves and pursue their own plans, will experience pain, sickness, heartache and trials – and this greatly affects the parents – they suffer as well. Yet they look forward to that point of their children's life when the goal has been accomplished. This speaks to their love and compassion for their children.

So it is with our Father. He is not some cold, unfeeling

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### Freedom Journey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCaNcKU7xOc&list=PLXXxM1xulaqv4FuHnWgZRkUHzURQt9UMU>



ing Deity, but His compassion and love for us is what drives His desire for the completion of His plans. Also, since we are created in His image, as we have passions and desires we are reflections of Him (albeit temporarily in the form of our flawed vessels), it's not surprising to read in the Scriptures of His passions and desires.

Finally, consider Colossians 1:24,

*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church (KJV).*

*I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body, which is the ecclesia (CLV).*

What a wonderful truth this is! I used to think that Christ's suffering was done, "finished," but when I realized the truth of this verse, that Christ has yet more

suffering to accomplish, and that it's being fulfilled via our sufferings (and really all of creation, as He is the Head over all), what a truly grand calling we have.

This speaks to the One Body being the complement (*pleroma*) – *i.e.*, the completing, fulfilling – of Christ, and then all of creation, and even God since all came out of Him. While it is strange to think that Christ, and His Father, "need" anything, the realization of this concept provides a tremendous anticipation (hope, expectation) and appreciation for the time when God will be "All in all" (I Corinthians 15:28).

Yes, even God our Father is suffering as well, looking to the consummate fulfillment of His plan, when all of creation will finally be released from the bondage of corruption into the enjoyment of the full ultimate joyful liberty in praise of their Awesome God, Creator and Father. **BSN**

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Consummation; God; Passion; Sovereignty; Suffering  
**Minor:** Ecclesia; Evil; *Pleroma*

**SANBALLAT (continued from page 924)**

**OPPOSITION CAN'T STOP  
WHAT GOD AUTHORS**

Sanballat tried everything:

- **Intimidation.**
- **Accusations.**
- **Public shaming.**
- **Private manipulation.**
- **Distortion of motives.**
- **Dramatic warnings.**

But the wall still rose stone by stone. Why?

**Because God was the Builder, and His purpose cannot be stopped.**

The same is true for the work that God is doing today. People may misunderstand it. Some may misrepresent it. Some may stand against it sincerely, convinced that they're helping God.

But none of it can halt what God Himself has set in motion. He authored the work. He sustains the work. And He finishes the work.

**WE MOVE FORWARD WITH JOY, NOT FEAR**

So when criticism comes – and it will – we do what Nehemiah did:

We keep building. We trust the Author. We stay focused. We stay joyful. We hold our peace. We let God handle the opposition.

And like Nehemiah, we'll look back one day and say,

*"The wall was finished because God strengthened our hands" (Nehemiah 6:16).*

Sanballat may shout from the sidelines, but God is the One Who has written the story.

And we're honored to keep building – joyfully, confidently, and without coming down.

**BSN**

**TOPICS:**

**Major:** Believer's Walk; God; Opposition; Sovereignty; Sanballat; Nehemiah  
**Minor:** Adversary



# Tidbits of Truth #86

"Tidbits" is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

I suppose that all who do biblical research wish at times that they could set forth fragmentary and unfinished ideas in printed form without people thinking that a final and definitive conclusion has now been chiseled into imperishable granite which shall stand forever as the final word on the subject dealt with. Any such conclusion will be far from correct. — Otis Sellers (1901-1992)

## THE GREEK ELEMENTS A.E. Knoch on Word Building

Most Greek words are the members of a word family which has a common element, called the root. These roots are all given in the WORD ELEMENTS and CONCORDANCE. Words are built up by adding other elements to the root. Those placed before it are *prefixes* and those after it *suffixes*. ... With great ease and precision, a root can be changed to any part of speech, or its central significance modified to express various shades of meaning.<sup>1</sup>

The [Concordant Keyword] Concordance ... gives the meaning of the element or stem from which the word is derived and groups the whole family of words together. It is not safe to base the definition of a word on a single occurrence, or to leave out of our investigations any of the words which are derived from the same stem.<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Greek Elements*, page 162;  
Course in Sacred Greek, page 6;  
Concordant Publishing Concern (1987).
2. A.E. Knoch (*Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 31, 1940).

*The Greek Elements* calls these "Word Elements" an "etymological analysis" (Introduction), with the "literal English equivalent" in **SMALL CAPITALS**.

The exact sense of any word is determined by its usage in the original, supplemented, in some cases, by an analysis of its elements.<sup>3</sup>

Knoch reported that these ENGLISH STANDARDS brought him "into conflict with traditional teaching."<sup>4</sup>

— *Compilation*

## RELIGIOUS NEBUCHADNEZZAR VS. BELIEVING NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Nebuchadnezzar gave two speeches to all nations. Let's contrast them.

Religious Nebuchadnezzar Daniel 3:4 (Read the whole chapter):

3. (*Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 24, 1933).
4. (*Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 34, 1943).

## Reader's Question Box: A Comprehensive Compilation (Volume 1)



This is a collection of the first fifty questions and answers from the Bible Student's Notebook feature by the same name.



1. He threatened everyone.
2. He set up an image, wrote a patriotic hymn, forced everyone to worship the image, and sentenced everyone who refused to worship to hellfire.
3. When people refused, he was outraged and tossed the sinners into his hell.
4. His religion was angry, political and violent.

Believing Nebuchadnezzar 4:1 (Read the whole chapter).

1. He proclaimed peace to everyone – not a single threat.
2. He declared what God did for him personally but didn't force his faith on anyone – no images or objects of veneration were set up.
3. He didn't get angry nor create a hell for nonconformists but radiated peace and joy.
4. His faith was personal and gracious.

— Daniel Sheridan

### **JIMMY CARTER – A HOPEFUL UNIVERSALIST**



Some can't seem to go so far as William Barclay (1907-1978) did,<sup>5</sup> to declare themselves a "convinced Universalist," but they are nonetheless *hopeful* Universalists.

These are those who have rightfully seen a glimmer of something different concerning the true nature of God that

5. "I Am a Convinced Universalist," [Bible Student's Notebook 748](#).

gives them hope toward the salvation of all. Such was the case for the 39<sup>th</sup> president of the United States.

In 2007 I was moved as I watched an interview in which Jimmy Carter (1924-2024), after his study and subsequent teaching through Paul's epistle of Ephesians, endeavored to express a better view of God than his denomination held. He was asked by Beliefnet's Executive Editor, Elizabeth Sams, concerning his ongoing Bible study class series,

Your first lesson on Ephesians describes man's reconciliation to God through grace and the sacrifice of Christ. Do you believe that grace ultimately applies to people who don't personally believe in Jesus?

To which Carter responded in part,

Yes, I do. ... My own personal belief is one of God's forgiveness and God's grace. That's the best answer I can give.

Of course, we have been granted a realization of more detailed answers from the Scriptures regarding God's grace for ALL creation, but nonetheless, we are always thrilled to hear of those who have come to see a hint that God is far more gracious than religion has made Him out to be.

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

**TOPICS:** [The Greek Elements:] Greek Elements; English Elements; Word Families; Word Building; Root Words; Etymology; Word Stems; [Religious Nebuchadnezzar vs. Believing Nebuchadnezzar:] Nebuchadnezzar [Jimmy Carter – A Hopeful Universalist:] Carter, President Jimmy

## **Death, the Intermediate State and the Resurrection (A Comprehensive Compilation)**



Are you afraid of death or "hell"? Well, you needn't be. After all, Christ has the keys to both of them. Authors include:

Arthur P. Adams (1847-1925), Cecil J. Blay (1906-1976), E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), Joseph E. Kirk (1903-1974), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Aaron Locker, Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Charles H. Pridgeon (1863-1932), William B. Screws (1884-1961) and André Sneidar.

## OBITUARY.

### Elwood Winter

April 24, 1931 – September 20, 2025

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



Born in Williamsport, PA, Elwood married the former Pauline R. Schultz, and together they celebrated 70 years of marriage until her passing in January.<sup>1</sup> He was a 1949 graduate of Montoursville High School and spent most of his life as a dairy farmer.

1. See her obituary in BSN 1071.

THE STUDENT  
OF THE BIBLE MUST  
STUDY THE BIBLE  
HONESTLY ... TO FIND  
AND TO SEEK THE TRUTH,  
AND NOT TO PROVE A CASE  
ABOUT WHICH HE HAS AL-  
READY MADE UP HIS MIND.

— WILLIAM BARCLAY (1907-1978)

Elwood always had a happy disposition and diligently studied the Scriptures, following the teachings of Apostle Paul, for which message he rejoiced.

Rest well, dear brother. We will see you in the morning! **BSN**

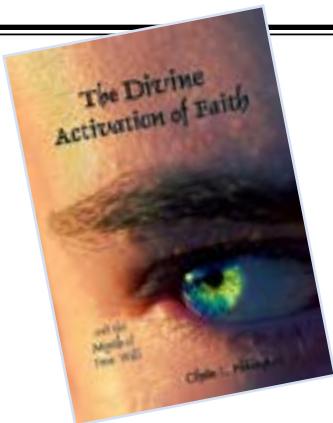
### Video of the Week



*Why “Grace” Can’t Possibly  
Mean “Unmerited Favor”*

(click to watch in browser)

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



### *The Divine Activation of Faith, and the Myth of Free Will*

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

What is faith? Who is a believer? Is faith a matter of human choice, or is it a gift from God? Do those who have faith understand and believe everything correctly? Or, do they experience areas or degrees of unbelief? Can one be weak or strong in faith? Is there room in faith for growth? These are among the important questions that are considered in this work.