

Nehemiah 4:1-23, "The Opposition Gets Personal"

Outline:

- 4:1-6, Ridicule (mocking)
- 4:7-9, Threats
- 4:10, Fatigue
- 4:11-14, Criticism
- 4:15-23, The Sword & the Trowel

4:2-3

1. Mocks their ability
2. Mocks their motivation
3. Mocks their beliefs
4. Mocks their intelligence
5. Mocks their building materials
6. Mocks their workmanship

4:4-5

Biblical foundations for Imprecatory Prayers:

- **God's promise:** He blesses those who bless Abraham's descendants & curses those who curse them. Refers to the Jews, yet are we not also Abraham's children?? Acts 9:4, "Saul, Saul...?"
- **God purpose:** A call for God to judge those who oppose **His** work & **His** kingdom! This is the Lord's work—come defend Your work O Lord! Not our **personal** revenge.
- **Contradict the NT?** Pray/love our enemies. Rm. 12:19-20, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." ²⁰ "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (Comes from **the OT**: Deut. 32:35, Prov. 25:21-22).
 - **Mt. 23**, Jesus pronounces 7 woes on the Scribes & Pharisees. **Mt. 23:15**, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?"
 - **Gal. 1:9**, "As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, **he is to be accursed!**"
 - **Rev. 6:10**, "They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge & **avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?"

J. I. Packer, "The principles here are stated in Ps. 139:21-22, "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord... I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies." The nearer we come to this state of mind, which is a spinoff from the desire that **God's will be done, His kingdom come, and His name be hallowed & glorified** the less problem shall we have with vengeance prayers."

How to apply it today? Jay Adams, "As Christians, we should pray that God would 'destroy' our enemies by converting them. But if He so chooses, God may also destroy them by pouring out His wrath on them, as He will surely do at the final judgment if they have not repented of their rebellion against Him."

4:11-12

Questions to ask ourselves to help decipher between good & bad criticism:

- 1) Does this criticism line up with Scripture?
- 2) Is the person criticizing me normally critical & negative?
- 3) Have I heard this same criticism from other people?