

The “*Do Not Be Afraids*” of the Bible, Part 3  
“Do not be Afraid of Persecution”  
**Nehemiah 4:1-23**

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**Introduction:**

**1. *Persecution by Mockery and Reproach (v1-3)***

**a. Mockery and Reproach**

- i. Great Anger (v1)
- ii. Great Mockery (v2-3)
- iii. “Great Distress and Reproach” (1:3, 2:17)

**b. How to Respond to Mockery and Reproach – Prayer and Perseverance (v4-6)**

- i. Prayer (v4-5)
- ii. Perseverance (v6)

**2. *Persecution by Evil Alliances (v7-9)***

**a. Evil Alliances (v7-8)**

**b. How to Respond to Evil Alliances (v9)**

- i. Prayer
- ii. Watchfulness

**3. *Persecution by Multiple, Simultaneous Assaults (v10-12)***

**a. Multiple, Simultaneous Assaults**

- i. Internal Discouragements (v10)
- ii. External Fears (v11)
- iii. Well-meaning Pessimists (v12)

**b. How to Respond to Multiple, Simultaneous Assaults (v13-15)**

- i. Practical Measures (v13)
- ii. Prayer (v14)

**c. Aftermath (v15)**

**4. *Conclusion: Preparing for Persecution (v16-23)***

**a. Co-operative Effort (v16-18)**

**b. Collective Response (v18b-20a)**

**c. Confident Hope (v20b)**

**d. Committed Service (v21-23)**

## Discussion Questions:

- Is persecution something Christians face in America? Discuss.
- Share your experience of opposition on multiple different fronts at once. Why do you think God permits such attacks on His people? – use Scripture to back up your answer.
- Can you think of examples of “Imprecatory Prayer” in the Book of Psalms? How might Christians pray prayers like these and Nehemiah’s in (v4-5) in view of Matt.5:38-48? Discuss the following quote from Matthew Poole: “[These] requests may seem harsh, but they were both just, as being directed against such malicious, inveterate and implacable enemies to God and to His people, and necessary for the vindication and defense of God’s honor, and worship and people.”<sup>1</sup>
- Make a list of all the different forms of persecution the Jews faced in Nehemiah chapter 4. What might today’s equivalents be?
- Explain how the fear of God is the antidote to the fear of persecution (Neh.4:14; Deut.20:1; 1Pet.3:14-15a, Luke 12:4-5).
- How does Jesus’ persecution and His response to it explain yours, and instruct you in it?
- What is the “sword and trowel” principle, and suggest how we might apply it at Southside?

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Poole, Commentary Upon the Whole Bible (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 2008 [1685]), 1:888