



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FROM MAY 4/5 SERMON

If you missed the sermon, check out [biblechapel.org/sermons](http://biblechapel.org/sermons).

1. Read [Nehemiah 4:1](#). Anti-Jewish agitators have been around for a long time. What do you think was the reason for Sanballat's anger and jeering at the Jews?
2. Read [Nehemiah 4:2-3](#). What is the deeper meaning behind Sanballat and Tobiah's jeering remarks?
3. Read [Nehemiah 2:17-18](#), [4:6](#), and [4:10](#). What moved the leaders and workers from determination and purpose to doubt their ability to finish the wall? What situations in your life have caused you to doubt?
4. Compare [John 1:29-34](#) and [Matthew 11:2](#). What do you think caused John the Baptist to doubt?
5. Read [Nehemiah 4:4-5](#). When challenging times hit, Nehemiah turns to God first. This prayer is called an "imprecatory" prayer. Read and discuss Getz's explanation below. Should Christians pray "imprecatory" prayers?

*Like some of the imprecatory prayers in which the psalmists invoked God's condemnation on His enemies, Nehemiah's prayer in this instance was severe and condemning. He prayed that Sanballat and his cohorts would be taken captive and that they would be judged for **their sins**.*

*How should a Christian interpret this kind of praying, especially in view of what Jesus Christ said about praying for one's enemies? ([Matt. 5:44](#); cf. [Rom. 12:14, 20](#)) Several facts need to be noted. First, in opposing the Jews, Sanballat "and company" were actually opposing God. Second, God had already pronounced judgment on Israel's enemies. Nehemiah was praying according to God's will—that God would deliver Jerusalem from her enemies ([Josh. 1:5](#)). Third, Nehemiah was praying that God would bring about what He had promised Abraham regarding those who curse His people ([Gen. 12:3](#)). Fourth, vengeance belongs to God, not to Nehemiah or other believers (cf.*

[Deut. 32:35](#); [Rom. 12:19](#)). Also see comments on the imprecatory psalms in the *Introduction to the Book of Psalms*.<sup>1</sup>

6. Nehemiah prayed and he had his people strap on their swords. Read Nehemiah [4:9](#), [15-23](#). Discuss Nehemiah's strategy. Today some Christians want to pray and do nothing while others want to move to action without praying. Discuss a situation where Christians need to pray and buckle up.
7. In the message, we discussed that "praying in the Spirit" means that we pray God's Word and promises back to him. I noted a few examples of the promises we can pray back to God ([Ps. 56:3-4](#); [Prov. 18:10](#); [Isa. 12:2](#), [41:10](#)). What are some of your favorite passages that you like to pray?
8. Read [Nehemiah 4:14, 20](#). How do these descriptions of God give you courage and confidence?

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<sup>1</sup> Gene A. Getz, "[Nehemiah](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 681–682.