



VENGEANCE 20:22; 24:17-18, 29

These **proverbs** deal with the subject of **vengeance**, which is “*the spirit and act of revenge, retribution, and retaliation for what a person has done or neglected to do*” BOTH THE SPIRIT AND ACT ARE FORBIDDEN BY THE WORD OF GOD! It is declared in **Leviticus 19:18** “*Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people*” and in **Romans 12:17** “*Recompense to no man evil for evil*” and in **Romans 12:19** “*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves*” and in **I Thessalonians 5:15** “*See that none render evil for evil unto any man*” and in **I Peter 3:9** “*Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing*” What is prohibited in these verses and in these **proverbs** is what we instinctively want to do and feel that we must do, and feel justified in doing. What is taught in these verses and in these **proverbs** is in opposition and contrary to the dictates and inclinations of human nature. The **vengeance** that is forbidden and denounced in these verses and in these **proverbs** coincides with the “*wisdom*” of the world [**James 3:14-16**], and are a rebuke and a warning concerning the ways and vices of the world. What is taught in these **proverbs** requires and is a manifestation of heavenly wisdom, the “*wisdom that is from above*” [**James 3:17**].

“Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee” [20:22].

The phrase “*Say not thou, I will recompense evil*” speaks of a **determination**, a **resolve**, and a **bent** to repay wrong (actual or perceived) done to us. These words are both a **command** and a **warning** against the spirit and act of inflicting injury or harm (physical or emotional) upon another. The second part of this **proverb** provides the **remedy** to the desire and act of **vengeance**-“*but wait on the LORD*” COMMIT YOURSELF AND CAUSE TO GOD! TRUST THE LORD WITH THE MATTER! Leave it with God to do as He pleases. THIS IS NOT OUR INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE! Our example is *Christ* [**I Peter 2:19-23**]. The reason to commit and leave the person and case to God is that **vengeance belongs to God** [**Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30**], and He never takes **vengeance** from impure motives. This **proverb** teaches that “*instead of repaying evil with evil, leave it with God*” and then there is a **promise**-“*and he shall save* (rescue, deliver, preserve and keep) *thee*”

“Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him” [24:17-18].

The *Psalmist* is an example of the first part of this **proverb** [**Psalm 35:11-15**]. The first part of this **proverb** deals with the **spirit** of **vengeance**. *Christ* warned *James* and *John* of the **spirit** of **vengeance** [**Luke 9:54-55**]. The *Lord* in **Ezekiel 25:15** spoke of **vengeance** proceeding from a **spiteful** (malicious, vindictive) heart. The spirit behind **vengeance** is **bitterness** “*intense animosity, resentment, harshness, and coldness*” The writer of **Hebrews** declares that this “*bitterness*” is a **root** sin, and as a “*root*” it grows, and it zaps the soil of nutrients, that it **troubles** and **defiles** [**Hebrews 12:15**]. The spirit behind **vengeance** is **hardness** of heart [**Ephesians 4:31-32**]. The second part of this **proverb** is a **warning** against the spirit of

vengeance-*"Lest"* (with the intention of avoiding the risk of) the *Lord* being displeased and turning His wrath upon the one who is vindictive!

"Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work" [24:29].

Again, the words "*say not*" are indicative of **determination** and **resolve!** It is the instinctive response of human nature to react in like manner to the acts and behavior displayed toward us. THE TREATMENT THAT WE RECEIVE FROM OTHERS IS NOT THE STANDARD THAT IS TO REGULATE OUR BEHAVIOR! It is instinctive in man to justify his own sinful reactions and behavior by the sinful behavior of others. WHATEVER WRONG SOMEONE ELSE DOES, NEVER JUSTIFIES A SINFUL REACTION! The Word of God gives an alternative to vengeance [Leviticus 19:18; I Thessalonians 5:15; I Peter 3:9]. This coincides with *Christ's* teaching [Matthew 5:38-48]. THIS IS NOT OUR INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE, BUT IT IS WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE US TO DO!

Paul gave the instruction in **Romans 12:21** (in the context of doing good to your enemy) "*Be not overcome* (defeated and conquered) *of evil* (done to you), *but overcome evil with good*" (the good spoken of in **verse 20**). THIS GOES AGAINST THE INCLINATIONS OF HUMAN NATURE, BUT IT IS WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE US TO DO! A person who is **vindictive**, and seeks **revenge**, **retribution**, and **retaliation** is never a person who is close to God, but a person who is withdrawing from God, and such a person brings much unhappiness and sin into their lives.