

Getting Back, Getting Back, Getting Back

"O LORD, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth! Rise up, O judge of the earth; repay to the proud what they deserve!" (Psalms 94:1-2, ESV)

The same Word which speaks above says also, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:18, ESV) Also, was it not the sinking Captain Ahab of Melville's novel who screamed at his White Whale: "Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee"? As has been oft noted, Ahab's vengeance concerning his leg cost him his ship, his crew, and even his life. How much greater a life does a person have when she waits for the Lord's justice!

In scripture, it is noted many places that vengeance is something for which only Yahweh God has authority to take. (Rom. 12:9; Deut. 32:35) God swore that he would take vengeance on the one who would kill Cain. (Gen. 4:15) God said he would avenge himself through the covenant upon Israel if they turned from him. (Lev. 26:25) God avenged himself against the idolatry of the Midianites (Num. 31:3), the enemies of King David (1 Sam. 20:16; 2 Sam. 22:48), the Edomites and the Philistines in response to those peoples avenging themselves upon Israel (Ezek. 25:12ff, 25:15ff), and indeed all nations which did not obey Yahweh God. (Mic. 5:15) Even to the utmost, Yahweh God took vengeance on Jerusalem who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets. (Luk. 21:22; 1 Thes. 2:15) When Jesus returns, God has promised to afflict those who have afflicted all his people, even those who do not obey the gospel. (2 Thes. 1:5-10) The Hebrews Writer cautioned his readers not to take God lightly since the Lord has the right to judge his people especially, to repay them according to their actions. (Heb. 10:29-31)

Brethren, let us not even bear grudges, since grudges lead to acts of revenge such as the Edomites took against their brethren Israel. But, let us ask God to cleanse our hearts of hatred as we pray for our enemies. When we notice another's lawful authority to act in expedient liberty, let us not say, "If you do this, I will do this in retaliation!" Beware of legalism as a means of taking one's own revenge, of not submitting an issue to Yahweh God in prayer. Yahweh's treasury of vengeance is for his own appropriation: no child of Adam has the authority to pick and eat of the fruits of that tree. Let us strive for truth but with hearts purified from anger, malice, and strife. Remain on land. Sail not on the sea of reciprocation. Let Yahweh deal with your White Whale.