

## Repaying My Enemy By Putting Coals of fire on His Head

(Romans 12:14-21)



“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: **for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head**” (Rom. 12:20). The expression “coals of fire” refers to burning coals or red-hot charcoal. In feeding and giving drink to your enemy you are piling up burning coals on his head!

Obviously, we should not literally put burning substances on the heads of our enemies. However, for illustration, let’s take this statement literally. Suppose you were at a picnic, and someone intentionally throws a football at you from close range, hits you hard on the head, throws dirt in your face and then spits at you. You could then take some red-hot burning charcoals when he is not looking, and pile them up on his head. Do you think he would like this? Obviously not! That would be a terrible kind of treatment to inflict upon your enemy! It would be unbearable and would really hurt!

The point is this: If you want to get back at your enemies, then do good to them. That would be unbearable treatment! That would be the most effective thing you could do. *It would involve “killing” people with kindness; “avenging” them with virtue, “destroying” them with deeds of love and “persecuting” them with peace.* Consider Stephen. His enemies would probably have preferred that he hurl profanities and curses at them instead of praying for them! Next time you are wronged, try giving your enemy the “love treatment,” persecute him with kindness, and trust God to work in his heart.

Burning coals heaped upon a man's head signifies intense agony and pain. But as Albert Barnes says, “the pain will result from shame, remorse of conscience, a conviction of the evil of his conduct, and an apprehension of divine displeasure that may lead to repentance.”

*For more articles see,* <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/inserts/index.htm>

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