

Doctrine of Vengeance

1. The word for vengeance ‘*naqam*’ means, "*to avenge, take vengeance, punish.*" This root and its derivatives occur 87 times in the Old Testament, most frequently in the Pentateuch, Isaiah, and Jeremiah; occasionally it occurs in the historical books and the Psalms.
2. Following Cain’s murder of Abel he was concerned that his brothers and sisters would retaliate against him. In sovereign grace God moved to protect Cain by threatening to move against anyone who took offense for Able.
 - *Genesis 4:15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*
3. Lamech, a descendant of Cain, in a sword song announced a scornful challenge to others while making a blatant attack on the justice of God with mockery: "*...for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold*" (Gen 4:23-24).
4. God has always reserved the ultimate level of accountability to Himself.
 - *Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste*
 - *Deuteronomy 32:41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.*
5. Generally, the Mosaic Law prohibited personal acts of vengeance:
 - *Lev 19:18. "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord"*
6. However, the law did allow for a man to call for "vengeance" at certain times.
 - When another man committed adultery with a man’s wife:
 - *Prov. 6:34 "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance".*
 - When a murder occurred.
 - *Exodus 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished" In Israel, this responsibility was given to the "avenger of blood".*

- *Deuteronomy 19:6. He was responsible to preserve the life and personal integrity of his nearest relative.*
- When a man was attacked because he was God's servant, he could rightly call for vengeance on his enemies, as Samson prayed for strength, "...that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes" *Judg 16:28.*
7. God's people have always rested in the fact that no one gets away with evil in the eyes of the Holy God.
- *Deuteronomy 32:43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.*
8. A remarkable woman by the name of Jephthah understood the concept of divine vengeance and forsook her life with that concept in mind. The enemies of her people had been defeated in battle and it was enough. Such is the strength of patriotism and piety.
- *Judges 11:36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.*
9. There is a lawful satisfaction of the soul when a just verdict is rendered upon the ungodly.
- *Psalms 58:10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.*
10. It is not wrong to pray for God's vengeance to be made manifest.
- *Psalms 94:1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*
 - *Jeremiah 11:20 But O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.*
 - *Jeremiah 20:12 But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.*
11. Therefore, the Lord's people commit their case to Him as David did.
- *1 Samuel 24:1 "The Lord judge between me and thee [Saul], and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee"*
12. There can be a divine harmony between vengeance and forgiveness. God deals with the results of sin while loving the soul.

- *Psalms 99:8 Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*
13. One of the attributes of God is that He administers justice in time among the affairs of men.
- *Psalms 149:7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;*
14. Great passion is associated with the act of taking vengeance. The word itself seems strong, forceful, and menacing.
- *Proverbs 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*
15. While God may delay in avenging His own, He will not delay forever.
- *Isaiah 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.*
16. A high confidence that God will deal with the ungodly will help to calm the passions of the heart when a grave injustice has been received and there is fear that evil will prevail.
- *Isaiah 35:4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*
17. When God does take vengeance upon a soul He does so as the omnipotent Sovereign of the Universe and not as a man.
- *Isaiah 47:3 Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.*
18. When God does move to deal with evil He wraps vengeance around Himself like a garment.
- *Isaiah 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.*
19. The coming of Christ fulfilled the promise that God would take vengeance against Satan for the evil he has done. The greatest strength of Satan was destroyed by Christ at the Cross.
- *Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*
 - *Isaiah 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

20. It is a fearful matter to be the object of God's vengeance.

- *Jeremiah 46:10 For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.*

21. One way that God's wrath is vented upon a nation is through the use of the military.

- *The Lord said to Moses: "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites.... And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian" Numbers 31:2-3. Military vengeance for national Israel reflects the Lord's vengeance for spiritual Israel.*
- *Jeremiah 50:15 Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.*
- *Jeremiah 51:11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.*

22. Another way that God exacts vengeance is through nature.

- *Jeremiah 51:36 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.*

23. The message of a vengeful God must be told and gladly received.

- *Jeremiah 50:28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.*

24. Those who do not want to be a target of God's wrath must repent and flee from the place of evil, death, and destruction.

- *Jeremiah 51:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*

25. It is not wrong for the hurting heart to tell the Lord about the evil which others do including acts of unjust vengeance.

- *Lamentations 3:60 Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.*

26. In the hour of divine visitation God will reveal why He is exacting vengeance.

□ **God told Edom.**

- *Ezekiel 25:12 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Ezekiel 25:14 And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.*

□ **God told the Philistines.**

- *Ezekiel 25:15 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred;*

□ **God told Israel.** In the covenant, God warned that His vengeance may fall on His own people:

- *Leviticus 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant..." Isaiah thus says of Judah: "Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts... Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of my enemies" (Isaiah 1:24).*

27. Through acts of divine vengeance the wicked come to understand there is a just God.

- *Ezekiel 25:17 And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them.*

28. The foolish heart that fears not God will wish it had.

- *Micah 5:15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.*
- *Nahum 1:2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.*

29. Christ predicted a New Testament era example of God's vengeance.

- *Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

30. The worldview of the unbeliever attributes vengeance to a personified fate.

- *Acts 28:4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.*

31. In His dealings with man God never does wrong even when He takes vengeance.

- *Romans 3:5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)*

32. Generally, the position of the New Testament is to suffer injustices for righteousness sake.

- *Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

33. The Second Advent of Christ will be glorious for the Christian but terrible for the unbelieving community.

- *2 Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

34. Constant reminders of God's watchful care are stated in the New Testament in order to subdue anger and counsel patience.

- *Hebrews 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.*

35. The past acts of God's vengeance serve as a fearful warning to the present generation.

- *Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*