

Divine Payback: (part three of a five part series)

The prophet Jeremiah was one of the most persecuted men of God in the Old Testament. His message of impending judgment was thoroughly rejected by the people to whom he ministered in the Southern Kingdom of Judah; resulting in times of imprisonment, as well as threats upon his life. Throughout it all, Jeremiah remained faithful to His calling. Why? Because that call was issued in conjunction with the following warning and promise from God, recorded in Jeremiah 1:19 –

“They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you,’ declares the Lord.”

Did Jeremiah experience the negative impact of that warning? Of course! Did his personal sufferings and persecutions prompt him to claim that promise? Most certainly! One significant example of Jeremiah’s claim upon the promised deliverance of God, so reminiscent of Romans 12:19, is recorded for us with astounding clarity in Jeremiah 20:11-13 –

“But the Lord is with me like a dread champion; therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. They will be utterly ashamed, because they have failed, with an everlasting disgrace that will not be forgotten. Yet, O Lord of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart; let me see Your vengeance on them; for to You I have set forth my cause. Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord! For He has delivered the soul of the needy one from the hand of evildoers.”

What was true for Jeremiah under the Old Covenant, was also true for the apostle Paul in the New Covenant. Since Paul was the one who wrote Romans 12:14-21, it begs the question: “Did he practice what he preached?” One example which answers that question in the affirmative is found 2 Timothy 4:14, 18 –

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds . . . The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

From what Paul writes here, we can conclude two things. He had the utmost confidence that God would take care of him; and an equal amount of assurance that God would also take care of Alexander the coppersmith.