

# Proverbs 25:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

## Analysis

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If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if thirsty, give him drink. For you'll heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you. The Hebrew 'oyeb' (enemy/hater) and 'gachelet esh' (coals of fire) create striking image. Respond to enemies with kindness, not retaliation. The 'coals of fire' likely means producing shame/conviction in enemy's conscience, potentially leading to repentance. God rewards this counterintuitive generosity. Romans 12:20-21 quotes this, adding: 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.'

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern ethics typically embraced lex talionis (eye for eye) or vengeance against enemies. Israel's law was revolutionary: 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again' (Exodus 23:4). Jesus intensified this: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you' (Matthew 5:44). Enemy-love demonstrates kingdom ethics.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

1. Who are your 'enemies' and how might you practically demonstrate kindness toward them?
2. How does enemy-love reflect God's character and advance His kingdom?
3. What prevents you from feeding/giving drink to those who oppose you?

## Interlinear Text

לְיְהוָה כְּבָשָׂמִים  
H3588 coals of fire H859 For thou shalt heap H5921 upon his head H7218 and the LORD  
H1513 H2846 H3068

לֹרֶן וִישְׁלָם  
shall reward H7999

## Additional Cross-References

**2 Samuel 16:12** (References Lord): It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

**Matthew 10:13** (Parallel theme): And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

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