

DYNAMICS OF GODS JUDGMENT, 3 pgs

Occasionally, we find out that someone we would never have thought leaves Christ. I've seen this happen to **women who thought they were marrying Christian men** only to find out later that those men petered out with respect to Christ and His church. These women seem to engage in **wishful thinking**, taking every little thing as a positive indication of true faith in Christ [there are books touching this subject, ex. What He Must be ... if He Wants to Marry My Daughter by Voddie Baucham Jr.]. In those few instances I am aware of, it's not a question of what drew them away or what did they turn from Christ to pursue as the Jews were warned in Hebrews. Rather the question seems to be what happened to you that turned you off to Christ (also discussed in Hebrews). **The parable of the sower in Mt.13** speaks of people who welcome the Gospel but later fall away because of trouble or persecution. There are also **those whose attention to spiritual things is diverted**. They are distracted, get caught-up in the concerns of life and deceitfulness of wealth (success) and never show fruit commensurate with their profession.

The issue of perseverance in the faith [c.f. Journey, p.4-5; GT#6, p.2; 10; 19-20] comes with great encouragement and stern warning (**Heb.11:1-12:17**). At first, there doesn't seem to be much relation between perseverance and the parable of the vineyard workers in **Mt.20**, but a plot of our lives tells a different story.

Birth ----- Conversion ----- Death

The workers hired earlier in the day understood that they were expected to work all day. **They only became disgruntled with the master through false reasoning once they compared their wages with those of the later hires. They considered his payment of the later hires justified their getting more.** They were content with their wages until they looked at them in comparison with those of the later hires. This led them to the erroneous conclusion that the Master was unjust. When we turn to Christ, we understand that we don't deserve His forgiveness at all and that **our salvation necessarily requires continued trust in Christ until we die** ... through all attendant circumstances, however long that is. For the thief on the cross who turned to Jesus, it was not long. Do we begrudge him salvation because of this? **When someone quits following Christ, it seems to be because of discontent with the way things are going** in their lives. It seems to be that they had expectations that were not met. In other words they came to the place where they doubted the goodness of God or felt that the ways of the Lord are not just – **they became disenchanted with God.**

The following OT background helps us with this

*The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: Arise, and go down to **the potter's house** ... So I went ... he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, **as it seemed good to the potter to do.***

*... O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel [Like the master and workers of **Mt.20**, the prerogative of God is foundational.]. **If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation ... turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare***

concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and **if it does evil** in my sight ... then **I will relent of the good** that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. **Return**, every one from his evil way, and **amend** your ways and your deeds. [In other words, God is always ready to forgive as long as people repent. These prophecies function as statements of intent rather than as absolutes.] But they say, That is in vain! We will follow our own plans, and will every one act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart. [But there is another voice contradicting God that people listen to.] **Jer.18:1-12.**

In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD ... Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak [this conditional warning] to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD ... **It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds** [God's desire is to forgive – not to punish]. You shall say to them ... If you will not listen to me ... and to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, then I will make this house like **Shiloh**, and ... a curse for all the nations of the earth. [Shiloh was the site of the tabernacle which the Philistines destroyed when they defeated and captured the ark, **2 Sam.4:1-10**. God says He will do the same thing to the temple, **Jer.7:12-15**.] Then Jeremiah spoke ... The LORD sent me **to prophesy against this house and this city** ... Now therefore **mend** your ways and your deeds, and **obey** the voice of the LORD your God [a window of opportunity], and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you, **Jer.26:1-6, 12-13**.

The word of the LORD came to me [Ezekiel]: What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? [Evidently this is a challenge to God's righteousness, referring to the fact that the generations before them had brought on their generation exile to Babylon.] ... this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine ... the soul that sins shall die, **Ez.18:1-4**. [Normally this would be seen as proper and be agreed with.]

[Omitted are descriptions of the conduct God is referring to. It becomes obvious that **He is not speaking of an occasional sin**, but a whole life-course, either in faith following God or not.]

Yet you say, Why should **not** the son suffer for the iniquity of the father? [Yet these people seem to find fault with God's judgment either way.] When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live ... **The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself, 19-20.**

But if [condition] a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and **does what is just and right**, he shall surely live ... None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him [guarantee]; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. **Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?** [Here we catch a glimpse of God's heart and motive in this whole matter.] But when a righteous person turns away from his righ-

teousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does ... for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die, **21-24**. [Here there is a principle laid out - **One's Final Estate** (legal position or status) **is What Matters**. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised, **Heb.11:13**. Jesus refers to this principle in the parable of the two sons (**Mt.21:28-29, 31**).]

Yet you say, **The way of the Lord is not just** ... When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it ... Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life ... O house of Israel, are my ways not just? ... **25-29**

Therefore I will judge you ... every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and **make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit!** ... For **I have no pleasure in the death of anyone**, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live, **30-32**.

And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, Thus the LORD has said, Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt, subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest ... I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel? ... I [had] promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me **forever**, but [that was dependent upon how they acted] now the LORD declares: Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house ... And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed **forever**. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread ... **1 Sam. 2:27-36** [The existence of promises doesn't mean one is home free. **Perseverance in faithfulness** is still required to secure them to oneself. Remember that in **Heb.11**, they all died waiting for the promises, and so will we. Otherwise as stated here and in Esther, God will raise up another and give the promise and blessings to him.]

Brothers and sisters, if a person is discovered in some sin, you who are spiritual restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness ... Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ [love one another by supporting each other] ... Now the one who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with the one who teaches it. Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool [mocked, ridiculed]. For a person will reap what he sows, because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So **we must not grow weary in doing good**, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who belong to the family of faith, **Gal.6:1-10**