

When Does God Withdraw His Grace?

The following is part two of my article “Why Some Have Already Been Judged By the Courts of Heaven, Part I.”

The apostle Paul actually says that at a certain point God gives people over to the sinful desires of their hearts, gives people up to their shameful desires and to a depraved mind so that they do what ought not to be done (see Rom. 1:24-29). Consequently, it seems from the above that God actually gets to a point with some people in which He says, “enough is enough—I will give you over to what you want if you continue to persist in your own ways and resist my Holy Spirit.” (Thus, the verdict has been cast.)

This is why the writer of the book of Hebrews warns believers “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Heb. 4:7a). Paul said, “knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). Unfortunately, there is a general lack of the fear of the Lord in the body of Christ today. This is true in part because of the recklessness of some of the hyper-grace teachers that say a person can live any way they want because their past, present and future sins have already been forgiven once a person asks Jesus into their hearts. This renders forgiveness and confession of sin unnecessary for anyone post- conversion, in spite of the fact that the apostle John told believers to confess their sins after they were already saved as noted in 1 John 1:8-10.

Paul answered that pernicious posture in principle when he wrote “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase? ² God forbid! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” (Rom. 6:1-2) and “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live

soberly, righteously, and in godliness in this present world, as we await the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself a special people, zealous of good works" (Rom. 6:1-2; Titus 2:11-14).

To summarize, the apostolic writings of the New Testament teach believers that the proof of grace is that we are eager to live godly and pure lives, not as a license to sin, as the apostle Jude also warned us against when he wrote "they are ungodly men, who pervert the grace of our God into immorality and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).

Getting back to the main point, I am not sure what all these "dualists" do with the above New Testament passages since they align with the Old Covenant ways of God who rendered a final verdict from heaven regarding physically alive sinners on the earth in several instances, including when He decided to bring the flood upon the earth (see Gen. 6:6-8, and judge the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; see Gen. 18:20,21;19:13-25).

Since Jesus is the image of the invisible God who changes not (Col. 1:15; Heb. 13:8) and reflects exactly the express nature and being of God (Heb. 1:1-3), He demonstrated His justice and holiness when He rendered a verdict on some even before they passed away physically. (If you don't believe me, see Revelation 2:21, where it says He gave someone time to repent and when they chose not to, He rendered a verdict upon them and decided their judgment—which may possibly include eternal judgment as well as earthly suffering and pain.)

The writer of Proverbs has an ominous warning that is in line with the above:

Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me early, but they will not find me. Because they hated

knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof. Therefore they will eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices (Prov. 1:28-31).

Consequently, there are such acts of disobedience and hearts so hardened in a people that they cross an invisible line which is why God told Jeremiah not even to pray for certain people (See Jer. 7:16,11:14,15:1). These passages sound a lot like 1 John 5:15-16, don't they?

Finally, the apostle Paul makes the point of this article abundantly clear when he said, "Some men's sins are evident, pointing to judgment, but other men's sins are revealed later" (1 Tim. 5:24).

The above passage is as clear as tar on snow regarding the fact that temporal and eternal verdicts are rendered *before* a person passes away from the scene on earth.

I cannot end this troubling article without a great caution to all readers. Although I stand by the above, I *never* take the position that God is finished with someone or that His eternal verdict has already been cast. Only one time in my life did God stop me from praying for an individual because He showed me they would die because they refused to repent (consequently, my friend died within six months of the word I sensed in my heart). However, even in that case, it had to do with a physical death so their spirit would be saved (see 1 Cor. 5:5). So even when God takes a believer's life prematurely, it is often an act of mercy to keep them from further sin and unbelief so their spirit will be saved eternally.

Since we do not have the full mind of God, we are not called to proclaim eternal judgment on anybody, even as Paul says, "I do not even judge myself. ... Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time until the Lord comes. He will bring to light

the hidden things of darkness and will reveal the purposes of the hearts" (1 Cor. 4:3b-5a).

The purpose of this article is not for us to judge others, but to motivate us to walk in the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7, 3:7). Truly, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 1:10).

May the Lord visit His church again with a healthy dose of the fear of the Lord, and may we never take advantage of the amazing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.