

1Pet 4.17-19—Entrusting Ourselves to God in Suffering

Now is the time for God to try His people, v.17

- I. What does Peter mean by saying judgment begins in God's house? And what does he mean by saying the righteous are scarcely saved?
 - A. According to the context, Peter's been talking about God ordaining fiery trials and the blessing of sharing in Christ's sufferings, vv.13-14. He's also told us not to be ashamed to suffer because that's how God judges His house, vv.16-17.
 - B. This proves that the judgment which comes to God's house is not a condemning judgment, but a refining judgment, 1.6-7, designed to purify our faith, strengthen our graces, and sanctify our souls.
 - C. That means the flames of our trials are a token, not of God's anger, but of His love and faithfulness, Jer 30.11; Amos 3.2.
 - D. Believers are sure they'll never come under final judgment because the Lord takes care to judge them now, 1Cor 11.31-32.
 - E. That's why v.16 says if a Christian finds himself suffering trials at God's hands, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God because it's a testimony to him that he's precious to God, 1.6-7, a child of God, Heb 12.6-7, and belong to God's household, v.17.
- II. Peter says *now* is the time deemed good by God to judge His house.
 - A. The work of our redemption by Christ is completed, Rom 8.31-34 and there's nothing left but the Spirit's work to apply that redemption thoroughly to our lives, Phil 2.13; Eph 5.26; 1Th 5.23; Heb 10.14; 12.10.
 - B. That means *now* is the time for God's people to suffer for Christ's sake, to be persecuted by the ungodly, to be insulted for the name of Christ, etc.—because God is cleaning His house, 1Th 5.23-24.
- III. So to say the righteous are scarcely saved doesn't mean their entrance into glory is in question. Rather, it speaks to the many dangers and trials and afflictions that fill the way to heaven for the Lord's much-beloved sons, whom He disciplines and subjects to purging fires.
 - A. That's why v.12 tells us not to be surprised—because if we're sons of God, then God will surely bear testimony to that by treating us accordingly, Heb 12.9-10. That's also why we're to rejoice under the rod and not be ashamed to be under God's judging-rod—because He never looks upon us as anything but His children, whom He loves, Ps 103.8-14.

We should therefore calmly bear our afflictions, v.19

- I. Once we know what God's doing in our suffering and that every affliction we suffer is according to the will of God and a token of His faithfulness to us as a Father, then there's only one proper response.
 - A. We should calmly bear our afflictions and entrust our souls to our faithful Creator while pressing on in a life of loving obedience to God, 1Pet 2.21-23.
 - B. This is one of only 3 places in the NT where God's called Creator.
 1. Do you see how significant that is? In this context of suffering, persecution, and purging, it's a radical reminder that the God we're trusting is the Architect of all things.
 2. He has no problem accomplishing all His will in all this world. How much more, then, can He care for the souls of His children and keep them safe against that Day, when we've entrusted them into His hand, 2Tim 1.12; 1Pet 1.5.
 - C. We commit ourselves to this God, not in flight from the sufferings we endure, but as we endure them, as we continue doing good.

If God judges His people, how will He treat the wicked? vv.17-18

- I. If God subjects His own people to fiery trials, persecutions, and sufferings, as a way of dealing with the remnants of their sins, then what can the wicked expect on the day of judgment? What'll happen to those who live a life of sinful rebellion against God until the day they die?
- II. It's a comfort to believers because it puts all our suffering in gospel perspective, but it's a sober warning and gospel invitation to the wicked, Mk 9.49; Jn 3.36.

Exhortations

- I. See what good cause you have to entrust yourselves to so good a God in all your suffering. You are God's house, His Spirit dwells in you, and He takes care to purify you. How humble and thankful should you be?
- II. If you're the Lord's child, see that you let God clean your house.
 - A. Let Him have His way with you. Don't quench the Spirit. Don't harden your heart to the ministry of His Word. And be sure to open every room of your heart to Him.
 - B. He loves you and knows what He's doing. Don't stand in His way.