

Judgment

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[0:00] 1 Peter 4 verse 16 It says, Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf.

For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

It's time. Judgment must begin at the house of God. Judgment must begin at the house of God.

Peter wrote this during days of suffering and persecution.

Times of testing and trials to come. He said, it's time. He was saying, get ready for some more. Get ready for some more. Judgment.

I'd much rather preach something comfort, comfort. But it's judgment today. It's judgment. And it's a needful message. The Lord is a righteous judge.

[1:10] A righteous judge. He's intolerant. Intolerant. He's against some things. God is a jealous God. He doesn't want any rivals.

God is against idolatry. God is intolerant of sin. It's something he's against. And people today, our nation, has insulted the Almighty.

We live in an age without standards. A sick society. A corrupted culture. Just the headlines of late. Where our state stands.

Where our state stands. Where our premier stands. Moral standards are being broken down. All around about us. Corrupting influences abound. God's judgment will certainly fall on the ungodly. Aussies busy themselves. Caring little for the things of God. Chasing vain and worldly pleasures. With scarcely a thought of things that last.

[2:09] Of eternal things. Of things that really matter. Many treat the Lord's Day just like any other day. Millions of Aussies never attend church. Not that attending church is going to get you anywhere.

Necessarily. But God will judge Australia for neglect. Neglect. And what is going on in the churches in our land? The churches in Australia.

Most churches today are not preaching the gospel. And there's evident marks of a falling away. Of prayerlessness. Of a pride. Of a lack of love.

Of lightness. Of frivolity. Of laxness of life. Of doctrinal confusion. Of winners that eat like a canker. We've got faith movement prosperity preachers.

Saying all manner of crazy teachings. And people just jump on the latest bandwagon. God says the glory has gone. He writes Ichabod. The glory has gone. From such a church.

[3:07] From such a body. And there is a deadness. A coldness in many places. A compromise. And a worldliness that is endemic. Do we care?

Do we care about such things? About actually glorifying God? About actually what is offensive to God? Do we care about such matters? The time has come. That judgment.

Judgment. Must begin. At the house of God. And what is it that we devote our time. Our attention to? That we. God's people. Does the world and its charms attract us?

Obsess us? Possess us? I think sadly sometimes it is true. Could they be idols in our lives? Yes. It is happening.

Where the pop culture, the movies, the sports, the fashions, the materialism drags people with that magnetic attraction. People are drawn to what's supposedly cool or hot or both.

[4:08] Or sick. Yes. Truly sick. And the world is becoming more and more indecent. More immodest. More violent. And yet we're following the trends too.

By and large. Church folk, by and large, are not really much different from the world. Let's face it. But sometimes we just go along with the crowd, don't we? Let's be honest today.

Long you for the latest carnal creation from Hollywood. With some ever grosser display of graphic sites and obscenities. And our children are listening to those curse words as they come through the television set that we've got the control of.

Friends, it should not be so. But it's becoming more and more blatant. More and more daring. Until our world is heading really to that ultimate place where it's just like the days of Noah.

Just like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. As we read in Luke 17, verse 29. The same day when Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

[5:15] Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Friends, it's told that our Lord is coming and these are the days that we will notice.

Just like those days. The days of Lot. The days of Noah. I just received this report yesterday. It says, Hollywood and Bible-believing Christians. I'll read it here.

The influence of Hollywood upon the members of Bible-believing churches is greater than at any time in history. Its influence does enormous harm to our churches.

It makes spectators out of people. Instead of participants, it makes them couch potatoes. It fills their minds with sensual imagery. It teaches them that beauty and image are worth more than character. It projects upon their hearts and minds the perverted morals and values of the wickedest men and women in our world. It teaches them the language of the gutter.

[6:16] It makes them mock at sin. Whether fornication, adultery, sorcery, altered states of consciousness through drugs, alcohol and the occult.

It deafens the ear and the heart. Through mega decibels of trashy music. It indoctrinates them with ill-age philosophies. It creeps into our church members' homes via television, iPods, DVDs and computers.

It sets the scene for our people to be existentialists. Then he defines that existentialist by focused entirely on experience. That's what existentialist means.

I didn't know that until I read this. Focused entirely on experience. How much do we see that in churches today? Focused entirely on experience rather than realists who are focused on truth.

End quote. Friends, the time has come that judgment must, must begin at the house of God. What is it that's grabbing our attention? That's attracting us?

[7:15] That's taking us away from the Bible? Friends, it's the world and the things of the world. That is what we need to guard our hearts against and not set our hearts upon them. Are we using our God-given abilities and talents for the things of God?

Do we get our values? Do we set our values from the slick propaganda of modern media? Godless media? Of worldly culture? Does that tell you what to think?

Or is it rather God's sure word that tells us what to think of what to do? Friends, let's make the scriptures that which sets our worldview, our thinking, our thought patterns, what we love.

Let it be the word of God that defines that. Let it be that which defines that. When the world all around us is redefining, redefining, dare they, redefine marriage, God forbid.

Redefine religion, Christianity, you name it. The world will redefine such things such that we don't know what the truth is anymore. If we get away from this, then that's the case.

[8:20] So who are we going to follow? Friends, I urge you, brothers and sisters today, God calls us to a devotion to Him and to His truth. That should shape what we are and do.

To a faithfulness to biblical standards. These are things that are rock solid. That should not change. That we should not veer away from. Whenever the Israelites backslid, they would start following the idols and the false gods of the pagan culture all around them.

What of today? What of today? Do we follow the false gods of the pagan culture that is all around us? Nowadays, the modern backsliders don't sit in front of some big totem pole, some big carved statue of metal or wood.

Instead, now, the modern worshippers, the modern backsliders sit rather in front of a big TV set or a computer monitor. Soaking in without thought, without discernment, that which is sensual, a violent entertainment and teaching our children to do the same.

Friends, let's be alarmed, alerted and made aware. Made awake. Where do we place our affections? I'm preaching to me. I'm preaching to the corporate church.

[9:42] The church of God needs to be awakened. And judgment is going to begin at the house of God. The Lord wants us to hold steadfastly to Him. Not joining ourselves, allying ourselves with that which is against Him.

The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. Why so? Why is this so? God's judgment is against us because we have neglected His word.

That is why God's judgment is against the modern day compromising church. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

Amos 8.11 We have neglected the hearing of God's word, of reading it, of studying it, of obeying it. The gospel word is a two-edged sword.

It says it's a two-edged sword. A double effect, as we could see here, that God's judgment means a saving of some, but a condemning of others.

[10:51] There's a dividing line, there's a cutting, there's a division, a dividing between the saved and the unsaved. And friends, we need to be very alert to such things.

There's two kinds of judgments here. The corrective judgment of the saints and the condemnatory judgment of the sinners. How can we be prepared?

God's judgment, but God's grace. We see his judgment. We see his salvation. There's wonderful hope.

There's wonderful joy. There's wonderful relief and peace that we can know. Who was it that our Lord poured his anger against? Who was it that he was wrathful against when he was on earth? He gave grace to the sinful and he gave his wrath to the religious. It was the religious crowd of his day, the religious establishments of his day, astray from his word that our Lord judged and judged harshly.

[12:02] He saw how far away they were from his truth. Getting all caught up in man-made interpretations and binding people up in dogma that wasn't word-based, yet missing the whole point of his salvation message.

Friends, much of the blame for world conditions today lies at the feet of the church. It lies at the door of the church. Our indifference, our neglect, our failure to cry out against sin.

I was listening to a preacher and he expressed this. He talked about Prince William and Kate Middleton. They lived together for many months before they got married.

Prince William will likely be the head of the Church of England. Of course, we know the head of the church is Christ, not of any man. Sad, isn't it?

The future Church of England head would live together before they got married. And in their wedding, they chose an updated version of marriage vows in which the bride, amidst the word obey.

[13:09] It's all too common today. Wives, obey your husbands, it says. Of course, it says much more to the men. Husbands, love your wives. Friends, marriage is something that's lost its meaning.

It's lost that preciousness of it. And we ought to be alerted to that. What message is this sending in our world today? It's the church in general has lost the plot.

And God's house has become a den of thieves, as our Lord called it, as he came with the whip of judgment and rebuked the church, as it were the religious establishment of his day.

And friends, the church here and now, our church, the church corporate, worldwide, needs to get ready for the judgment to come. Where we see unfaithful preachers, where we see all manner of wacky doctrine, of modernism, of formality, of worldliness, creeping in and taking over, of unholiness, disgracing the church of God.

Look back through history. At the time of Hitler, only 5% of pastors in Germany resisted Hitler. Only 5% resisted this evil man.

[14:26] Only 5% dead speak out against the dangerous cause that he was setting for the nation. Likewise, many will not speak up today. They will not speak out. But we must, judgment must begin at the house of God.

We're engaged in a battle with the forces of hell. And we must preach the truth boldly and plainly. Not only a tickling, but an earth-shaking message.

A soul-disturbing message. So that we can get right with God. Friends, all of us, this is not to rebuke any here present, but it is for us all to be shaken out of our complacency, shaken out of our apathy. A preacher of old Lyman, Beecher, was part of the second great awakening in America, a time of revival. And as he lay dying, they asked Beecher this. They said, Dr. Beecher, you know a great deal.

Tell us, what is the greatest of all things? And the dying preacher replied, It is not theology, it is not controversy. It is to save souls.

[15:34] We must declare the soul-saving gospel. Not a corrupted form of it, but an uncompromising message of salvation through the blood of Christ.

There's no other hope for man than the saving gospel. All else that men and churches and preachers can tell you cannot save. It's the blood.

It's the saving blood. It's the saving grace. It's the saving gospel of a repentance, of a heart change, of faith in a real saviour, wholehearted change.

And you can know that today. You can know that now for time and time and eternity beyond. You can know that you know that you know that you have eternal life as you put your faith in Christ.

There's no other hope for you. It's not a matter of attending a church and singing some songs and thinking you've done your religious bit for the week. We are entering into the last days.

[16:28] It's going to be a time of sifting, a time of separating of the chaff from the weeds. God is sifting his people. In Hebrews 10, 30 and 31 it says, The Lord shall judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. There's a separating going to go on.

There's a judgment to go on. A judgment between the great crowd of Sunday morning church goers and those who really need business with God.

May you be found in that number, friends, today. There's a great danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, of quenching the Holy Spirit. It's needful that we repent.

Corporately, the church of God, repent. Friends, if you're not part of the church, if you're not saved, you can trust him now and be saved for time and eternity.

Don't think, as you join in with those of whom it was said, they draw nigh to God with their lips, but their heart is far from being. As was referred to earlier, God wants to write on our hearts and minds his truth.

[17:35] He wants to write within our souls, within our very core of our being, that which is true and right. Not in honouring him with our lips, but our heart is far from him.

We need to be very guarded against that mistake, that we could join in that great hodgepodge, that great mass of the apathetic and unbelieving, that great messed up mixture of the apostate church that is prophesied of.

Friends, we need to be part of the faithful remnant who will hear the Lord and follow him, no matter what the cost, who'll brave the times of testing and stand strong and true.

The time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God. The storm is close, it's ever closer, and I urge you, friends, to set your house in order.

Confess your sin, get back to God, get back to the book, and watch unto prayer. Commit your soul to his keeping, and your life to his purposes.

[18:37] An old-time preacher, James Stewart, said this, he said, the vast majority of Christians are living a sub-normal Christian life. The New Testament characteristics of power, invincible, joy, unspeakable, glory, immeasurable, and peace, incomprehensible, are strangely lacking in their lives.

The Christian experience of the church isn't deep, intense, or vital enough to meet her own needs, let alone the needs of our world. We are so sickly and feeble that we're not able to discharge the functions for which we exist.

We're as powerless as a burnt-out volcano, as useless as a deserted ship, swinging at anchor, covered with barnacles, awaiting destruction, or an old locomotive rusting on the sidings.

We have an invalid's groan instead of the warrior's shout. We are absolutely powerless before the appalling conditions of the world today. The church herself must be saved, or she cannot save the

world.

End quote. Friends, we need to be alerted. These are truths that are very evident in the days we live. Most Christians today care more for the sports and Hollywood than about the things of God. [19:57] Our churches are prayerless and powerless and have hardly any influence to the lost sinners that live among us because we've settled for less than the best, than God's best.

Will we settle for substandard Christianity? Will we seek God rather and build up our most holy faith? Hosea 10.12, it says, Break up your fallow ground for it is time to seek the Lord till He come and rain righteousness upon you.

Break up your fallow ground. It's the picture of a farm that is a lame fallow and needs to be dug up and prepared for the harvest.

It's the picture of a hard heart, of a man, of a woman, of a Christless one, of a disobedient one. Friends, we need to break up that hardness of our heart.

Let the softness come back. Let God break up the fallow ground. Hosea said this, the true Christian faith has all but passed away and in its place is a circus-like, busy, active, noisy crowd that pushes into the sanctuary and forces the Lord to take second place.

[21:18] We've got the equipment, we've got the harp, but we haven't got the song. We have banquets, we have conferences, we have projects, we have everything.

We're the busiest crowd of little eager beavers but we are not worshippers. There is scarcely a church service where we can feel God is there.

And he said the devil's two methods of attack are alliance and antagonism. Alliance and antagonism. The hour of greatest peril for the church was not when they put Paul in prison but when the spirit of divination told the truth.

In Acts 16 verse 17. Wow! Signs and wonders. Here's someone saying here's the great prophets but it was the enemy using that one. Friends, alliance and antagonism.

The devil can use both. He's joined the church in many quarters and we need revival today. We need revival. All too often we're not willing to pay the price that a revival costs.

[22:24] One preacher said this, at times we hate our deadness, our lack of spiritual life but we hate still more to be bothered. To be bothered.

Now this is not an easy message to deliver. It's not an easy message to hear. We'd much rather preach some warm and fuzzy things I suppose. But judgment must begin.

And friends, judgment is on the horizon. Our Lord is coming soon and He's wanting to judge His church in that He's wanting His church to be corrected.

He's wanting His church to be straightened and made right with Him. There's many doubtless who would like to have a revival provided we have it without serious trouble but such is not the case. A revival is costly. It always has been. It always will be. We need to be shaken so that the things that remain can be strong. The time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God.

[23:28] There's no more time. There's no more time to play church. There's no more time to play games with God. The time has come and it's now to get right with God.

God's judgment is for our good. We read in the Word where God's Word is described as a plumb line as a plumb line that a builder would use a stream that would be weighted and would have a straight up and down nature and God hangs the plumb line so that the building can be made straight.

Now I was just talking to a neighbour he's bought a bargain across the road for \$150,000 but it's full of cracks. It's a building that is cracking.

The walls are moving aside. It's not straight. And the fault lies in that building in the foundations. The fault in that building lies in the foundations that it is built upon.

And this neighbour was telling me how he's going to get some excavator and some special concrete to underpin the house so that the cracks can be repaired.

[24:36] We've got to get the foundations right. We've got to get the foundations right, church. And that means getting back to the book. It means having that plumb line that guides what is right and what is wrong.

It's by that which we set what we follow and what we do not. And God's judgement is an important thing. It's a helpful thing. God's judgement will be like the plumb line.

It's helpful for that building to have something to measure right and wrong, to know what is up and down and what is not. And friends, God's judgement is for our good.

It's judgement that is a correcting that will make us right. It's why we correct. When we can help, we will correct those that need correction so that they can learn, so that they can be made right.

You know, some people who minister here and I try to give them little tips now and again and I welcome that for myself. We need correction so we can improve. God's judgement will help us improve.

[25:34] It will help us if we correct it, it will help us to be made right. God's judgement as a restoring, as a restoring so that we can be made well. We see in Galatians where those that are in error that they are corrected gently to restore, to restore them.

There's a restoring in the sense of the word is as the resetting of a bone. I know a brother was telling me how he's got to reset his wife's bones sometimes and it hurts when he does that. He's got to pull those bones and dislocate them so he can locate them where they should be. That's the picture here of a restoring of a brother who's gone astray. It's going to hurt when someone brings that gentle reproof but it is a restoring that will see good done.

It's needful for our healing and likewise God's judgement is needful. We need to hear the truth so we can adjust our lives to the truth. God's judgement is going to help us as a restoring as the resetting of a bone is needful for our healing and God's judgement is a refining again that will bless us and encourage us whether it be the trials the trial of our faith your faith will grow more golden brighter stronger more purer as we see the men and women in many lands where persecution rules we see the faith that glows we see the faith that shines it's a refining that will bless you and make you brighter and stronger and God's judgement will bless you God's judgement will be as a blessing as the chastening of a child as the chastening of a child as the correcting of a child as that child will listen they will learn as that child listens they will grow they will learn something will happen they will be educated they will be trained by that loving discipline and likewise our loving father uses his loving discipline because he cares it's because he cares we want to be a church that cares enough to tell you the truth

I want to be a pastor who cares enough to tell you like it is not because I want to hurt you or offend anyone but I don't want you to offend the holy God judgment must begin at the house of God friends let's be urged let's be encouraged today to seek hard after his face to seek his face to find that correcting that restoring that refining that chastening that plumb line that must be the foundation must be his word the foundation must be Christ as the foundation stone and that is what we don't want to get away from we don't want to lose that we don't want to miss that today friends be encouraged to break up your fallow ground and seek the Lord for it is time to seek the Lord while he may be found let us pray heavenly father we thank you for each soul he gathered we thank you lord for your word that provokes us lord it stirs our hearts lord it ought to be written on our hearts our minds lord help us that it be a blessing to each soul today help us as parents as mums and dads as children help us to be corrected of you help us to be led of your spirit lord open our eyes guide us help us to make choices that are wise lord not to have false idols that will take our time away from you help us lord to be a people disciplined and godly learning growing most of all saved today if there's any not saved yet lord today they might trust they might bow their knee for the first real time they've ever done so and say master

[29:30] I'm yours because of your blood I want to be yours today and help us as Christians too to be refreshed in that love lord refresh that love we pray refresh that walk help us lord forgive us where we failed you help us to be encouraged today in Jesus name amen amen a