

The Verdict
Pastor Anthony J. Shetley
Sunday, September 3, 2023

The Verdict: **1 Peter 4:12–19** (NASB)

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Here, Peter writes about the struggles and difficulties experienced by the ones who have “ceased from sin”. (4:1) When you obey the gospel in the complete surrendering of your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; when you are accepted by God to be His child; when you are baptized into His church; when you give yourself to Him as His servant; when you seek to live right (a righteous life as He is righteous), you will face much difficulty.

It is appointed unto man once to die and following death, we face the judgment. Judgment leads to a verdict. Preceding the judgment is the gathering of evidence; a proving of what is true or false; real or fabricated. My friend, faith must be proven, meaning that it will be tested.

The Desired Verdict of Faithfulness.

Peter’s audience in undergoing a “fiery trial.”

1 Peter 1:7,9 (NASB)

So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ...obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Where Judgment Begins.

1 Peter 4:17 “For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God.”

This judgment is the pronouncing of a sentence or a verdict, resulting from an investigation; it is the act of distinguishing and separating the faithful from the unfaithful, and ultimately, the righteous from the unrighteous.

Peter’s statement, “it’s time for judgment to begin at the household of God,” is reminiscent of the judgment which began at the temple in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 8-9).

In this vision, Ezekiel found himself standing at the temple in the court of the priests. The vision began with the presence of God moving and departing from the temple and, ultimately, from the entire city. God allowed Ezekiel to see the abominations, the idolatry, and the unfaithfulness of all the people of Israel starting with their spiritual leaders, their political leaders, and extending throughout the general population.

While in the temple courtyard, Ezekiel heard the voice of God calling out to six angels to whom He had given charge over the city to go throughout its borders to kill all its inhabitants. When they step forward, they are each armed with lethal weapons.

Beside these executioners stood another who was dressed in Linen, the garment of a priest, and instead of a weapon, he was armed with the writing tools of a scribe. To him, God instructed to go before the executioners and to place a mark upon the foreheads of all who were grieved by the abominations being done in the temple and the unfaithfulness of all the people of Israel.

Ezekiel 9:4–6 (NASB95)

⁴The Lord said to him, “Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst.” ⁵But to the others He said in my hearing, “Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. ⁶“Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary.” **So they started with the elders who were before the temple.**

Upon investigation, the verdict for those who were marked was - faithful, they were found to be faithful, and they were saved. Unfortunately, this was but a small remnant. The judgment which came began in the temple, the house of God. (eschatological implications)

Jesus said, Many are called, but few are chosen. (Mt. 22:14) see also (Mt. 7:21)

The Overcomer.

1 Peter 4:18 “It is with difficulty that the righteous is saved.”

- We must overcome our self: self-will; pride; self-centeredness; and self-deception.
- We must overcome this flesh which is sinful by nature and subject to evil desires and lust and weakness.
- We must overcome this world: the influences of the culture; the opposition of darkness to the light.
- We must overcome spiritual warfare: fear; depression; demonic oppression; persecution; temptation; and deception.
- We must overcome the trials of life: diverse struggles from the cares of life; sickness; death.

The Action of Faith; that which leads to a verdict of faithfulness.

1 Peter 4:19 (NASB95)

¹⁹Therefore, those also who suffer **according to the will of God** shall **entrust** their souls to **a faithful Creator** in doing what is right.

Nothing happens to a child of God apart from the love of God and His sovereign power.

The example of our savior: **(1 Peter 2:23)** While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

Entrust the life of your soul to God and always do what is right!!!