

The Time Is Come

“Judgment Must Begin At The House of God.”

“For the time is 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?”

(First Peter 4:17)

Sincere, Scattered, And Suffering Christians

At first glance, this verse appears to be out of context. Peter wrote to *sincere* Christians who were “...scattered” (First Peter 1:1) because of the tremendous *suffering* they were enduring.

They were...

- **Ch.1:6** - “...in heaviness.”
- **Ch.1:6** - “...in manifold temptations.”
- **Ch.1:7** - “...the trial of your faith.”
- **Ch.1:11** - “...the sufferings.”
- **Ch.2:11** - “...they speak against you.”
- **Ch.2:11** - “...endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”
- **Ch.3:14** - “...ye suffer for righteousness' sake.”
- **Ch.3:14** - “...be not afraid of their terror.”
- **Ch.3:16** - “...falsely accused.”
- **Ch.4:12** - “...the fiery trial which is to try you.”
- **Ch.4:16** - “...suffer as a Christian.”
- **Ch.4:14** - “...reproached for the name of Christ.”

Peter Was Not Rebuking These Faithful Christians

Peter was telling them that they needed to have the ability to judge concerning what was happening in their lives. God wants His people to be able to discern the times and the seasons. In Malachi 3:18 we read, “*Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*”



JUDGMENT MUST BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD

The Greek word translated judgment in First Peter 4:17 is *krima*, from the root word *krino*, meaning to judge.

Making Judgments Requires Understanding

- **Proverbs 4:5** - “...get understanding”
- **Proverbs 4:7** - “...get understanding”
- **Proverbs 16:16** - “...get understanding”
- **Proverbs 2:11** - “...understanding shall keep thee.”

Jesus said...

- **Matthew 15:10** - “Hear, and understand.”
- **Matthew 15:17** - “Do not ye yet understand?”
- **Matthew 16:9** - “Do ye not yet understand?”
- **Mark 7:14** - “Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand.”
- **Mark 7:18** - “Are ye so without understanding also?”
- **Mark 8:17** - “...perceive ye not yet, neither understand?”
- **Mark 13:23** - “How is it that ye do not understand?”
- **Matthew 15:16** - “Are ye also yet without understanding?”
- **Matthew 16:11** - “How is it that ye do not understand?”
- **Matthew 24:15** - “...whoso readeth, let him understand.”

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.
(Proverbs 4:7)

A Lack of Understanding Results In Failure

Jesus said...

*"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and **understandeth it not**, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."*

(Matthew 13:19)

Jesus said...

*"...he that heareth the word, and **understandeth it**...beareth fruit..."*

(Matthew 13:23)

Jesus commanded us to...

*"Judge not according to the appearance but judge righteous **judgment**."*

(John 7:24)

Obviously, understanding is necessary if we are going to "...judge righteous judgment."

Paul said...

- **First Corinthians 14:20** - "Brethren, be not children in **understanding**...in **understanding** be men."
- **Ephesians 5:17** - "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding** what the will of the Lord is."
- **Colossians 1:9** - "...desire that ye might be filled with the **understanding** of his will in all wisdom and spiritual **understanding**;"
- **Second Timothy 2:7** - "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee **understanding** in all things."

Paul said...

"This know

(Translated "understand" 8 times)

...in the last days perilous times shall come."

(Second Timothy 3:1)

Paul said...

*"I would that thou mayest **understand**..."*

(Philippians 1:12)

"The House of God"

Paul and Peter, both referred to the local church as "...the house of God."

Paul wrote concerning how pastors are to behave "...in the house of God." (First Timothy 3:15)

Peter wrote concerning the congregation understanding and making proper judgments "...in the house of God." (First Peter 4:17)

The congregation will only be able to "...judge righteous judgment" if the pastor is obedient concerning his God-given responsibilities by declaring "...all the counsel of God."

Everything Paul said in his instructions to the pastor centered around the entire truth being foremost in everything done or preached in the local church.

First Timothy 2:4

*"...the knowledge of **the truth**."*

First Timothy 2:7

*"...I speak **the truth**."*

First Timothy 3:15

*"...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of **the truth**."*

First Timothy 4:3

*"...believe and know **the truth**."*

First Timothy 6:5

*"...men of corrupt minds, and destitute of **the truth**."*

The problem with preaching all the truths we are responsible to preach, is it has a tendency to decrease the attendance. At Ephesus, Paul was deserted by many; however, God recorded the fact that he was a faithful preacher, God did not record the weekly attendance. He did tell us that...

- "**Some**" ...turned aside. (First Timothy 1:6)
- "**Some**" ...made shipwreck. (First Timothy 1:19)
- "**Some**" ...departed from the faith. (First Timothy 4:1)
- "**Some**" ...turned aside after Satan. (First Timothy 5:15)
- "**Some**" ...sinned openly (First Timothy 5:24)
- "**Some**" ...sinned secretly (First Timothy 5:24)
- "**Some**" ...coveted after money. (First Timothy 6:10)
- "**Some**" ...erred concerning the faith. (2 Timothy 5:24)
- "**Some**" ...had their faith overthrown. (2 Tim 2:18)
- "**Some**" ...were vessels to dishonour. (2 Tim 2:20)
- "**Some**" ...were vessels to honour. (2 Tim 2:20)

The defectors outnumbered the faithful, ten-to-one. The quitter Christians at the local church at Ephesus, could not handle the pressure of being a Christian, nor could they stand the preaching of someone who preached "...all the counsel of God."

If Paul had preached only that part of the Word that pleased his listeners he could have built a large church at Ephesus; however, he would not have been able to say, before God, *"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*

The Bible says...

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

(First John 2:19)

When God's purifying process becomes a reality, the sincere are always separated from the phonies. It is what God calls *"...the fiery trial which is to try you."* (First Peter 4:12)

Keeping It Pure

When people quit because of the persecution or they leave a church because the pastor is preaching, *"...all the counsel of God,"* it is God's way of keeping the church pure. (First John 2:19)

When a pastor refuses to preach the *"...whole counsel of God"* so that he can keep a crowd, he can expect to lose the young people to the influence of his carnal, disobedient, worldly, church members.

The Purifying Must Begin At God's House

When God was purifying the city in Ezekiel 9:6, He told the one carrying out the purification process to *"...begin at my sanctuary."*

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, the Jews, including His disciples, wanted Him to clear out the Romans; however, Jesus began His ministry clearing the phonies out of the temple. He also ended His ministry doing it again.

The people Peter wrote to were sincere Christians who were strengthened as they suffered *"...for righteousness sake."* As noted in First and Second Timothy, it is always a small minority that are God's *"...vessels to honour."* (Second Timothy 2:20)

The church is a place to exhort sincere Christians to live for the Lord, not a safe haven for disobedient, worldly, Christians who will influence our young people to a life of disobedience.

No Shortage of Instructions

First and Second Timothy, and Titus, give us God's standards for pastors and deacons. There are at least twenty other Books in the Word of God concerning the responsibilities of all church members.

When the enemy comes in like a flood, we need to lift up a standard against him, not make it easier for the enemy to infiltrate. First Corinthians 5:6 says, *"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"*

This Is Not A Time For Generic Preaching

Something that is *"generic"* is something that is not specific. Much of what passes for preaching in many of our so-called fundamental churches is anything but specific. It is not necessarily false preaching. We may preach the truth while refusing to be specific concerning what the Word of God says about separation from Christians who are promoting apostasy. We may preach the truth while refusing to be specific concerning what the Word of God says about women dressing modestly.

The seeds of apostasy will not grow without fertile ground. The seeds of apostasy will sprout like weeds when pastors refuse to preach *"...the whole council of God."*

As pastors, we have an awesome responsibility because we are not dealing with programs we are dealing with people. First Timothy 4:16 warns the pastor to *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*

Paul said, *“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”* (First Thessalonians 2:4)

The Comfortable Pew

Pastors know that most professed Christians are going to find a church where they feel comfortable, as a result, many pastors are offering them a comfortable pew. Ninety percent of the people in most of our congregations feel very comfortable sitting in church week after week doing nothing for the cause of Christ.

When a congregation becomes accustomed to the peace and harmony of generic preaching, they will become unprepared, and uninterested, in putting on the armour of God and fighting any battles. When Christians refuse to fight the battles, the enemy takes over and apostasy comes in like a flood.

The Pastor Is Responsible

It was to the pastor of the church of the Laodiceans that Christ said, *“...thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”* (Revelation 3:15)

It was to the pastor that Christ said, *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”* (Revelation 3:20)

It is a fact that we will not be deceived if we are in fellowship with Christ.

The pastor at the church of the Laodiceans was busy for Christ, he had a crowd to preach to; however, he was not in fellowship with the Lord. Apostasy prevails when pastors are too busy working for the Lord but have no time to spend with Him.

Jeremiah Preached Faithfully In The Face of Apostasy For Forty-Two Years

Jeremiah said, *“But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.”* (Jeremiah 7:24)

In spite of that Jeremiah continued. Why didn't he quit? It wasn't a surface result that kept him going it was his love for the Word of God that compelled him. He said, *“...his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones...”* (Jeremiah 20:9) He said, *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...”* (Jeremiah 15:16)

God's Leaders

Did Not Acknowledge God

The Bible says, *“...they that handle the law knew (yada) me not: (yada - translated “acknowledged” six times) the pastors also transgressed against me...”* (Jeremiah 2:8) To transgress against God is to go beyond the bounds of His established behavior for us as leaders.

Like Jeremiah, let us focus on being faithful as God's remnant. Jeremiah said, *“...pray for us...even for all this remnant; for we are left but a few...”* (Jeremiah 42:2) They were small in number; however, Jeremiah also said, *“Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not...”* (Jeremiah 50:2)

Let us “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 1:3)