

1 Peter 4:17

by John Gill

The sermon explores the theme of divine judgment beginning with believers, emphasizing the purpose of suffering and the importance of the Gospel.

Scripture: Psalm 30:5, Isaiah 10:11, Matthew 10:28, John 3:36, Romans 2:8-9, 1 Corinthians 11:32, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, Hebrews 12:6, 1 Peter 4:17, Revelation 20:15

Topics: "Judgment", "Suffering for Righteousness"

Description

John Gill emphasizes that judgment begins at the house of God, referring to either the temple in Jerusalem or the church, where God's presence dwells. He explains that this judgment is not punitive but rather a form of fatherly chastisement meant to purify believers through afflictions and trials. Gill warns that if God's judgment starts with His people, the fate of those who reject the Gospel will be far worse, leading to eternal destruction. He highlights the importance of understanding that these sufferings are temporary and serve a divine purpose, urging believers to glorify God amidst their trials. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a reverence towards the Gospel and a recognition of the consequences of rejecting it.

Transcript

Ver. 17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God,.... By the house of God is either meant the temple at Jerusalem, which is often so called, because it was built for God, and where were the symbol of his presence, and his worship; and now the time was come, or at hand, that God would begin at his sanctuary, and leave this house desolate, and not one stone should be left upon another, as Christ had foretold: or else the church of God, which is frequently called the house of God, because it is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his gracious presence, and which he beautifies, fills, repairs, and defends; and so may design believers in Christ, those that are of the household and family of God: and by judgment is meant, not punishment for sin, strictly speaking, because Christ has endured this in the room and stead of his church and people, and therefore in justice cannot be inflicted on them; but afflictions and persecutions, and which are fatherly chastisements, and different from God's judgment on the world, and condemnation with it; see 1Co 11:32 and these may be said to "begin" with them, because it is only in this life the saints have their afflictions; and which are in love to them, and therefore are early brought upon them to try them, and purge them, and make them partakers of his holiness: besides, wicked men are often made use of as instruments, by which God chastises his people; upon which account they are reserved till last, to be the objects of his vengeance, when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and then what is begun in love at the house of God, will end in wrath and severe punishment on them: and

whereas it is said, "the time" is come, or at hand, it may be observed, that as God has his set time to favour his Zion, so likewise to chastise her; all his people's times are in his hand, as of comfort, so of temptation, affliction, and persecution. The first times of Christianity, or of the preaching of the Gospel, were times of trouble and distress; for as it was necessary the Gospel should be confirmed by signs and wonders, so that it should be tried and proved by the sufferings of the saints for it: and the phrase also suggests, that these sufferings and afflictions were but for a time, and even as it were for a moment, for a little while; and is a reason why the saints should glorify God, as these words imply, being introduced with the causal particle, "for"; that they have their sufferings now, and not with the wicked in the world to come, which will have no end:

and if [it] first begin at us; either us Jews, for Peter, and those he writes to, were such; or us Christians, who believe in Christ, have embraced his Gospel, and profess his name:

what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? of which God is the author, and which contains things relating to him; as the grace of God, the righteousness of God, peace with him, pardon from him, justification before him, and acceptance with him; and which he commits to men, and qualifies them for preaching it, and succeeds the ministry of it; and it being his Gospel, as it makes it the more valuable in itself, so it is to be had in the greatest reverence and esteem; and the greater is the sin of such who despise and reject it, as did the unbelieving Jews, who seem chiefly designed, here; it was first preached to them, but they disbelieved the doctrines of it, and submitted not to its ordinances, and rejected Christ, the Saviour, the sum and substance of it; and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and what shall the end of such be? in this world wrath came upon them to the uttermost, ruin upon their nation, city, and temple; and in the world to come everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and eternal vengeance in flames of fire. The Jews have various phrases, and frequent expressions in their writings, which resemble these, and serve to illustrate them. When Noah told the old world of the flood, and called upon them to repent, they are represented as saying to him {o},

"where does punishment begin? hytyb Nm, "at the house" of that man does it "begin?" when Methuselah died, they said unto him, does not punishment begin at the house of that man?"

and elsewhere {p}, says R. Jonathan,

"punishment does not come into the world, but in the time that the wicked are in the world; and it does not begin (i.e. at them) hlxt Myqyduh Nm ala, but it begins at the righteous;"

and again {q}

"when God executes judgment on the righteous, he is praised; for if he executes this on them, how much more on the ungodly?"

see Isa 10:11.

{o} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 4. {p} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 1. Caphtor, fol. 70. 2. {q} Jarchi in Numb. 179. apud Grotium in loc.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net