

The Judge Is Standing at the Door

Introduction and Review

- A judgmental attitude & slanderous words damage relationships between Christians (4:11-12).
- Pride corrupts the way Christians plan for the future particularly in financial matters (4:13-15).
- Pride corrupts the Christian's view regarding the consequences of sin. The **sin of omission** is a serious matter before the Lord (4:16-17).
- The Christian must live with an eternal perspective (2Co. 5:10). Judgment is God's response of approval or disapproval toward His created beings – human or spiritual.

I. Judgment For The Unrighteous Rich (v. 1-6)

A. The coming misery (v. 1-3)

Wealth does not make a person unrighteous – there were/are many wealthy believers. “you rich” in this text means wealthy nonbelievers who were oppressing believers & unjust towards them (2:6-7). Material wealth is temporary & of no benefit in the final judgment before God (v. 2-3; 1:9-11). People who die loving & serving wealth will be eternally separated from God. Eternal separation from God is eternal misery (v. 1; Mt. 13:42, 50) – fiery furnace, eternal fire, punishment, destruction, lake of fire, place of torment...

B. The reason for the misery (4-6)

James then gives three reasons why these wealthy unbelievers will be eternally condemned: 1) they defrauded their workers or employees (v. 4), 2) they lived a godless self-indulgent lifestyle (v. 5), and 3) they oppressed & killed Christians (v. 6). People are never condemned simply because they are materially rich, but because they did not love God while rich (Lk. 12:21; 16:13).

APPL: The Lord takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked, so He reasons & warns – “Come now” (Ez. 33:11). But all that do not love the Lord will be eternally condemned. There will be no opportunity for change or forgiveness after death (Heb. 9:27). Repent & believe...

II. Judgment For The Righteous Poor (v. 7-12)

A. Exhortation for patience in suffering (v. 7-9, 12)

Poverty & oppression does not make a person righteous – there were/are many poor unbelievers. “brothers” means these were suffering believers. Believers must wait for the return of Christ to see true justice & judgment – “until the coming of the Lord” (v. 7). Therefore believers are told to: 1) Be patient (μακροθυμέω) – means to willingly endure suffering without vengeance until relief comes, 2) Do not grumble (στενάζω) - means do not complain against another believer (v. 9) = making yourself a judge & forgetting the Judge, and 3) Do not swear – means do not carelessly make an oath (v. 12; Mt. 12:36-37).

B. Examples of patience in suffering (v. 7, 10-11)

The farmer waits for the results after he has done what's under his control – preparing the soil & planting (v. 7b). God controls the weather which determines the results. The prophets spoke for God in obedience & endured suffering while leaving the results to God (v. 10) – obeying God may cause the suffering & we may not see the results in our lifetime. Job endured in faith even though he was confused, discouraged & even angry at times = steadfastness (v. 11). Endurance to the end is essential – the fact that you are suffering intensely & it gets worse & last a long does not mean that it will end that way! The Lord is compassionate & merciful while we suffer and regardless of the outcome.

APPL: We live in anticipation and hope of all things being made right. There's only one who can make all things right – He is the Righteous Judge, the Holy One, Our Savior, King & Lord! He conquered death & declared “All authority...” (Mt. 28:18; 2Th. 1:5-10). And He is standing at the door – no one knows when Jesus will open the door & return. So always be ready, do not procrastinate with sin (4:17); His coming is certain, His judgment is certain & w/o bias...

CONCLUSION

Therefore my beloved brothers & sisters are you ready for Jesus to come? Can you say with the Apostle John, “Amen, come, Lord Jesus”? Is your house in order? Is your life in order? Are you patiently waiting for justice; not grumbling, complaining & slandering other believers; not carelessly making commitment that you cannot & will not keep? Are you treating other believers right; your eternal brothers & sisters; your siblings in the blood of Jesus? Are you expecting the police, Mayors, Governors, Congress, Senators or even the President of the USA to bring about justice when only the True Judge of all time & eternity can do it? By the power of the HS you can live in peace as you wait; live in joy as you wait... (Gal. 5:22-23). Jesus our King & Lord is with us here & now through the presence & power of the HS, but soon He Himself will return to rule & reign over the new heavens & earth with glorious power (1Co. 15:58)!

If you are not a Christian, I want to remind you that now is the time to trust Jesus for salvation – before he returns. Jesus has given His life to save you from the penalty of your sins. Will you trust Him today for salvation; will you believe...?

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