

The Book of Revelation was written the Lord to you. He wrote it to you as an individual and corporately to us all. It is a beautifully crafted drama that firstly and above all deals with your personal relationship with Him, your victory over the enemy of your own soul and your rewards for overcoming the devil, and finally your eternal position in heaven and on earth. You are a great and integral part of His divine plan.

Secondly it is about us as a family, called by His name, globally conquering satanic mindsets and destroying every work of darkness. But victory must begin in you and me first. Look at the following Scriptures which is so easily quoted when any kind of trouble arises in the world and God gets blamed for it.

***For the time is ripe for judgment to begin in God's own household. And if it starts with us, what will be the fate of those who refuse to obey the gospel of God? (1 Pt 4:17 TPT)***

So many harsh and "punishment" messages have come out of this Scripture but here is my understanding of it.

Firstly, the whole chapter in essence deals with the unjust suffering Christians go through because they believe in Jesus Christ. Peter exhorts us not to be ashamed of our persecution and suffering because we refuse to be worldly and to rejoice and be happy because we are carrying the glory of God upon us. He encourages us not to let our suffering be because of sin, but rather because of our godly behaviour in the face of the ungodly. Nowhere in this passage of Scripture will you find anything about God being angry with His church!

Then, after praising them for their willingness to suffer for the name of Christ he makes his famous statement, "for judgment must begin in the household of God." The word judgment means DECISION. In other words, it is time for God to release His judgment regarding His church which is not to condemn her but to exalt her. God's judgments concerning the church are eternal and were decreed over humanity at the cross – that God is no longer holding men (how much more not the church) accountable for their sin.

**He further says that His grace – which is mercy, forgiveness, favour, love, kindness, etc., teaches you to say, "NO!" to sin and ungodliness and His goodness leads you to repentance! It does not say the harsh punishment of God will make you repent. Quite the opposite. God, when He comes to judge, judges in favour of His own people and if He has judged in our favour what will His judgement, or His decisions, be concerning the wicked that oppose and persecute His church? Satan is the accuser of the brethren and God's punishment is upon Satan. Sadly, those who align themselves with Satan will experience the pain of that judgment. Don't let that be you.**

This is important to remember especially as we look at Jesus' letter to Thyatira. Thyatira means suffering and Jesus comes to reveal Himself to her as the one whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet burn like burnished bronze. Jesus is extremely passionate and protective over His church. He loves her with His life and will defend and protect her against every attack of the enemy and bring her safely into His heavenly kingdom.

Our victory begins with knowing that our God loves us and is for us, not against us. If we think God is fighting against us, we're finished! But He is not. He is for us which means He is against the world – Satan and his systems.

However, just remember that if you are willingly or deliberately fooling around in the world and its systems you will find yourself under its punishment, not by God's choice but your own. If your heart is turned towards Him and you are working on your "first love" relationship with Him, He will arise to your defence and protect you because to Him you are holy, sanctified, pure and clean. Amen and amen!

**God is about to reveal Himself to us, you and me, like the world has never seen. Rejoice and be glad, even though you may be suffering. There is no greater honour in this life than that of laying your life down for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**Keep rejoicing! 😊**

**Yvonne**

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