

1 Peter 4:17-19

17) 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?

18) And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19) Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

What was Peter saying?

Verse 17...

God has a standard whereby He saves believers and unbelievers—one standard for all. God first sets His standard with the church. In other words, God first measures the church by bringing her up to His desired position for a spiritual purpose, as to then turn and begin dealing with sinners to save them by that very prescribed standard. The judgment or standard of truth that is first established in the church becomes the witness that the world is required to reach up to. The Spirit of truth operating in us and manifested externally through us becomes their spiritual guideposts.

Verse 18...

If the believing Spirit-filled church needs every merciful provision of Grace to be saved, how much the more do sinners who have no understanding of the Law of the Spirit or of righteousness be in need of the same? If God would discipline or even condemn a believer who refused to measure up to His standard, what fate befalls unbelievers? What hope do they have? What will be their end? We have a monumental responsibility to maintain God's standard. Perish the thought.

Verse 19...

So let them that are passionately striving to measure up continue doing so faithfully by reaching up with all due diligence to maintain that standard earnestly. Serve God with all thy heart, soul, and might, and by doing so, one pleases God their creator unto the saving of their souls.

Asbury Unveiled!

The current spiritual movements by God in the world today are now affecting Asbury. This global wave of spiritual operation is the continued hand of God, stirring all men. This spiritual shaking most recently began with the COVID virus. God allowed and perhaps even ordained the pestilence to plague men to, first and foremost, stir the church into action.

However, we know all too well what the church did. We are still paying for our pitiful response or lack thereof. If, however, the sleeping church could quickly re-awaken to the obvious spiritual shaking going on right now and for the last three years, we could partake in a mighty unprecedented harvest. But alas, the church is regrettably induced into a paralyzing spiritual coma.

This one last global shaking during the church era, as we now stand on the threshold of the rapture, along with this current universal hunger by honest and sincere men, find these same hungering people responding in Asbury to a force they define as inexplicable. Be sure Satan is also working to bring about confusion wherever and whenever he can. His demonic force is at work, and this we can be confident of. What was initially designed as a spiritual movement to first awaken the church unto renewed power has now become more of a spiritual awareness experience for unbelievers. They simply are feeling the effects of spiritual activity intended first and foremost for the church, and they are merely reacting to that spiritual administration.

The consequences of this recent spiritual awareness in Asbury have the most likely potential to become destructive in the long run. Not necessarily just to those in Asbury but more so for the potential damage in the church. We are so disengaged today that we do not recognize God sought first to shake the church and to stir us up towards him, but we as a whole would not respond. This shaking by God, which again began during the virus, was subsequently rejected by the church within our very own ranks. While we sleep through this process, those hungering in the world are unknowingly feeling God's dealings with the church.

Why do I unforgivingly continue focusing this conversation on the church? God's will is to work through the church, and not around the church, through His people first, then unto sinners, not vice versa. Some may judge the seekers critically, but assuredly, their hunger is not misguided—rather, their direction may be. This is not their fault. They may even inherently retreat to traditional norms eventually. Where could they turn right now? Who is matching their hunger? What immediate spiritual movement besides what they are experiencing is being fleshed out before them right now? Who is matching them? Where is their example? Where is there another Asbury right now? We have the doctrine; they have the hunger. Reflecting upon the Pharisees, God chooses hunger over doctrinal tradition every time.

While they currently desire a 24/7 prayer meeting, we have been finding ways for three years now to eliminate more services. While they are flying in from around the world to pray, we are booking our next vacation to play. Some measure of accountability must fall on the shoulders of the righteous. We are intended to be their example. Where is our ongoing Asbury today? Why is this current event not stirring us to new spiritual heights?

Are we to sit in the seat of the scornful and judge them harshly all the while we, like drunken men, sleep and slumber through it all? They are simply doing what hungering men traditionally do; they want to feast. If they see no genuine hunger nor any legitimate current response in the church to guide them, likened unto their hunger and response, they, as unbelievers, will have no current standard to reach up to, no compass other than their own volition. They cannot trust their own traditions right now. They cannot look to the sidelines at other dead religious denominational men right now. They, unfortunately, cannot even trust a doctrinally correct church that is dead, either. They find themselves navigating the perfect storm. This will ultimately result in spiritual chaos or, worse, save for the mercies of a faithful God.

Thank God for the sincere remnant among us who are faithfully striving, and for the righteous souls who are earnestly contending for the faith. However, the current failure of the church to immediately stand up and match them, hunger for hunger, right now, will be the demise of these men. It truly is a time to put up or shut up. Stand out, or get out.

Evil men will mock them. Denominational groups will condemn them. Most will hold them in suspicion, even contempt, to a great degree. The charismatics will certainly descend upon them with vim and vigor and guide or rather misguide them; we can be sure.

What could be worse? Plenty. The greatest potential tragedy will be the cultivation of arrogance within our ranks as we smugly justify our spiritual lethargy. After all, some spiritual elites are beholden to an ancient attitude that proclaims:

“They are poor misguided sinners that are most likely being controlled by a demonic spirit, of whom are probably not even sincere. But thankfully, we are the spiritual children of Abraham. We have truth. If they are indeed sincere, they will come get it. If God is in all of this, they will find us out because the Spirit will lead them to us. We’ve got it; you want it, come get it. For we have an inalienable right to revival whether we pursue it or not.”

Does any of this sound familiar? Yep. Jesus heard the same religious poison and rhetoric his entire earthly ministry. Casting stones is so easy to do when you assume you are in some lofty, elevated spiritual position above men.

I ask once more, where is our very own Asbury today? Why can we not match hunger for hunger? This is our grand moment. It is our finest hour.

For the time has come that judgment must first begin at the house of God.

Please allow me, however, to be clear. As we already know, any authentic move of God will always be preceded by a call to fervent prayer and transformative repentance, a godly sorrow unto repentance that produces an insatiable desire to change, an undeniable hunger to become like Christ, stretching and reaching forth towards a new nature. This radical change of nature can only be fully realized and dutifully maintained as a result of Spirit baptism in conjunction or response to the repentance that brings forth fruit worthy of repentance. Any move of God void of heartfelt prayer and thorough repentance is not a legitimate move of God.

At least initially, as a whole, Asbury is not having a scriptural move of God based on current reports. Obviously, time will determine more. But I feel rather than this being a biblically based move of God through them; it is simply a spiritual awareness among the seekers that God is moving around them. There is a difference between the two, in my opinion. The sincere and hungering are reacting to an awareness that God is desiring to move.

They are not responding to a move of God amongst them but, again, merely reacting to an awareness around them that God wants to move. Faith and obedience cannot be separated. Obedience is the fruit of faith. Faith without works is dead. I can be aware God is moving and only go through religious protocols by reacting to that awareness through my volition, yet never arriving in my spirit to a place of complete scriptural obedience and submission by responding biblically. There is a sharp difference between responding and reacting. There is a definitive difference between a move of God and an awareness God is moving.

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Bill Pitman