

THE TOUCHSTONE

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Today I want us to look at a difficult subject.

Yeshua's judgment of our lives is often painful.

Why do we as talmidim have to go through such suffering?

Why can't we just live in His perfect Shalom?

Lets turn to ---

1 PETER Chapter 4(KJV)

1 Forasmuch then as Yeshua hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of Yahweh.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Lasciviousness - (Meaning: lewd; debauchery or living in debauchery; wantonness, licentiousness; lecherous; provoking or exciting lust; given to lust or expressing lust; filthy immorality / This word is derived from the Latin: lascivus or lascivia, meaning "lustful, lewdness, wantonness."

This word appears six times in the King James Bible, It is only used in the New Testament.)

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to Yahweh in the spirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent [charity](#) among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of Yahweh.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the [oracles](#) of Yahweh; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which Yahweh gives: that Yahweh in all things may be glorified through Yeshua our Messiah, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Yeshua's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Yeshua, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of Yahweh rests upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Believer, let him not be ashamed; but let him [glorify](#) Yahweh on this behalf.

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of Yahweh: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of Yahweh?

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 Yahweh commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

THE TOUCHSTONE

Most of us read our Bibles through thick glasses of church traditions, social conditioning, prejudices, and various other things which cloud our vision.

There is more hatred and prejudice in our hearts than we usually care to acknowledge.

This was the problem the Pharisees had when confronted with the object (Yeshua) of the Scriptures they had been studying all their lives. **When he came, they didn't recognize Who He was because of their traditions and cold hearts.**

Would you like to test what is in your mind and heart today?

You know that eventually all that is hidden will come to light. (1 Cor. 4:5) When Yeshua told them, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone?' **Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.**"

An invitation is given to you today to fall on the Rock_

It is much better to be broken to pieces, than to be crushed to powder.

The first choice invites our participation, the second comes unannounced, at a time when we least expect it.

1 Peter 4:6-11 speaks of the "trial of your faith being more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire." The Scriptures often speak of fire in a spiritual manner rather than natural.

Testing one's faith may produce much more heat than we often care to experience. But if we call on our Father, He will see us through the test.

The William Barclay translation says:

"The Elohim, whom in your prayers you call Father, does not arrive at his verdict on any man by favoritism; he judges each man by his actions. You are exiles of eternity, and you must therefore spend your time on this earth in reverent living, for you know well what it cost to liberate you from the slavery of that life of futility which you inherited from your fathers. The price did not consist of things which are doomed to decay, of silver or gold. The price was the precious life-blood of Messiah, who was, as it were, the sacrificial lamb with no flaw or blemish. He was destined for this task before the creation of the world, and for your sakes he came for all men to see as time comes to its end. It was for the sake of you he came, for you who through him believe Yahweh, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory. so then, your faith and your hope look to Yahweh. (1 Peter 1:17-21, William Barclay translation) Sacred Names added.

The Holy Spirit invites you today to test your faith and works to see what it is made of.

There is an interesting rock used in Biblical days to test the quality of precious metals called **a touchstone**.

It is quite unfortunate that most translations following the King James tradition have hidden the Biblical references to this stone from us. The King James Bible Concordances have also hidden its meaning. Using the Strong's or Young's Concordances, when looking up the English word "torment," we discover that the noun for one of these Greek words is basanos "basanos," Strong's number 931. Strong's number 928 "torture," and 929 "torment" are derivatives of this noun, "basanos," which Strong's Concordance says is a "touchstone."

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 5th Edition, tells us that a touchstone is "1. A black siliceous stone allied to flint;-used to test the purity of gold and silver by the streak left on the stone when rubbed by the metal. 2. Any test or criterion by which to try a thing's quality."

Will you strike your life on this Rock (Yeshua) and allow the results to be declared to you by your heavenly Father?

Will you allow it to reveal to you areas of impurity such as a false image of Yahweh, prejudice, hate, unforgiveness, bitterness, following tradition instead of Scripture and the Ruach HaKodesh, etc.

All these things and more will be dealt with one way or another.

It is better to fall on the Rock yourself than to have the Rock fall on you in judgment.

Another ingredient used to test the quality of gold is nitric acid.

The dictionary in Microsoft's Desktop program says of **acid test** "a decisive or critical test, as of worth or quality (from the testing of gold in nitric acid).

As we begin to add these concepts to our minds, perhaps we can begin to see Brit Chadasha images in a purer way than we have been taught in the past.

Perhaps we will begin to understand then, why the early teachers called the "lake of fire" a place of "purifying fire," or "divine fire."

In the book of Revelation in the **twentieth Chapter verse ten** we see the devil, the beast, and the false prophet cast into a lake of fire and brimstone where they will be "tormented day and night forever and ever."

Those of us who dig deep enough will discover that the early believers did not see the lake of fire as a place of "eternal torment."

They knew that the wording in this passage referred to a place of divine testing and not a place of "eternal torment."

The Greek word for "sulfur" is qeiou "theeion" which is akin to "theos," which means god.

Sulfur (brimstone) was used to purify temples in ancient days. It was also used for healing purposes. The fact that this passage of Scripture speaks of "day and night" proves that "aionas ton aionon" in this passage should not have been translated "forever and ever." Rather it should say: **They will be Divinely tested day and night.**

Divine fire will test the works of men and angels.

Revelation 20:12 tells us that the dead were judged "according to their works," not whether they "decided to follow Yeshua."

We know salvation is **"by grace, through faith, not of works, lest anyone should boast."** (Eph. 2:9)

We have made a serious mistake heaping dozens of different judgment Scriptures under the "Great White Throne judgment."

Throughout the Bible, we find all kinds of judgments occurring throughout all ages.

Many of these have been assigned to the final judgment. This has caused serious error.

There are judgments of unholy angels, of Satan, of Israel, of cities, of nations, of sin, of death, of the believer, of servants, of sons, of unbelievers, etc., etc.

Each takes place at different times, in different places, and with different outcomes.

Our mind-set about Biblical judgment has been severely warped.

We must disentangle this confusion, but it will take a great deal of study, something many Believers have neglected.

How few Believers realize that Death and Hades (Hell) will be emptied and thrown into the lake of fire.

This lake of fire is called in Revelation the "second death." Since "death and hell" are thrown into it, **one might say it is the death of death.**

Our entire teaching about people going to an eternal hell clearly contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible that Hell, whatever we might think it is, will ultimately be emptied!

I don't think there is a single passage of Scripture which tells us that "Hell" and the "lake of divine fire" is the same thing.

The very first verse in the Book of Revelation says this book is full of symbols.

Its message was sent from Yahweh by an angel who "sign-ified it" to His servant John. **If one does not understand that the "signs," that is, symbols need to be interpreted, one will never understand this book.**

The definition of the symbols are contained in the Tanakh.

Stars in a hand are not physical stars; frogs out of a prophet's mouth are not physical frogs, candlesticks are not really candlesticks. Do you really think there is a dead lamb laying on a throne in heaven?

If one understands these things are "signs," then understand that the Book of Revelation is full of hundreds of "signs."

The carnal mind, especially the religious carnal mind will only twist the words in Revelation into a pile of distorted confusion.

I will conclude this statement by saying that there will be far more "works" which will be cast into the "lake of fire" coming from even "orthodox" ministers who speak like a dragon while claiming to represent the slain lamb than many care to acknowledge.

Clerical collars and ordination papers are no guarantee that one is hearing the "Spirit of Yahweh."

Are you willing to test your faith?

Are you willing to strike it against the Rock, the Word of Yahweh and allow the Ruach HaKodesh to be poured out on that "gold" to see what quality your gold (faith) is made of?

Your Father will judge it "without partiality."

He will not take your years of being faithful to your denomination, your financial contributions, your devoted service to the organization into consideration.

Your faith will be struck against a slain lamb on a throne.

The results may be absolutely shocking to you.

It may be very painful when our works are compared with the Lamb's works, but it must be done.

His judgments are mixed with mercy, and when we ask Him to judge us, **He also will empower us to conform to His Word, His Will, His Ways.**

So often people judge us in areas we know we need to improve in, but their comments are not helpful because we seem to be incapable of changing those areas in our lives.

But the Ruach HaKodesh will not only reveal those areas we fall short in, He also gives power to change in those very areas.

As you go to the Rock, the Lamb, the Word of Yahweh, and the Scriptures, invite the Ruach HaKodesh, the Spirit of Truth, Who the Scriptures declare will lead you into all Truth, to reveal to you the fullness of the nature of our Father.

Remember, He has many attributes; omnipotence (all-powerful), omnipresence (all-present), omniscience (all-knowing), and justice. These are His characteristics, but His nature is Love, for Yahweh is Love!

As you strike your doctrines, church traditions, your very life against the Word these Scriptures allow the Ruach HaKodesh to reveal the Word through the eyes of Love.

Then, and only then, will all the Word conform perfectly with all the characteristics of our Father.

His Love is the Key.

Ask for it! Since we want to see if all the characteristics of Yahweh are in harmony with all of the Bible so that we may be able to conform our lives to it, concentrate on the word **all**. As you study them, keep all the characteristics of our Father in mind.

Before beginning the test, please pray that your Father and mine will allow you to read the Scriptures with His eyes and not through man-made glasses clouded with church traditions, cultural prejudices, or personal emotions.

Then, after having prayed for this in sincerity in your own words, slowly read the Scriptures and allow the Spirit of Truth to lead you into all Truth.

In FIRST PETER 4:15-19 we see the theme: "Especially In Trials, Commit Yourself To Your Faithful Creator."

Peter is encouraging Believers to realize that despite how the world may treat us, because of our faith in Yeshua, we should rejoice that we have the opportunity to represent Him and that in our rejoicing we may show how Yahweh is at work in and through us for His good pleasure.

. . . but rejoice to the extent that you partake of
Yeshua's sufferings . . .
—1 Peter 4:13

If you are going to be used by Yeshua, He will take you through a number of experiences that are not meant for you personally at all.

They are designed to make you useful in His hands, and to enable you to understand what takes place in the lives of others.

Because of this process, you will never be surprised by what comes your way.

You say, "Oh, I can't deal with that person." Why can't you? Yahweh will give you sufficient opportunities to learn from Him about that problem; but if you turned away, not heeding the lesson, because it seemed foolish to spend your time that way then the task will be hard.

The sufferings of Yeshua were not those of ordinary people.

He suffered "according to the will of Yahweh" (1 Peter 4:19), having a different point of view of suffering from ours.

It is only through our relationship with Messiah Yeshua that we can understand what Yahweh is after in His dealings with us.

When it comes to suffering, it is part of our Christian culture to want to know Yahweh's purpose beforehand.

In the history of the Christian church, the tendency has been to avoid being identified with the sufferings of Messiah Yeshua.

People have sought to carry out Yahweh's orders through a shortcut of their own.

Yahweh's way is always the way of suffering—the way of the "long road home."

Are we partakers of Yeshua's sufferings?

Are we prepared for Yahweh to stamp out our personal ambitions?

Are we prepared for Yahweh to destroy our individual decisions by supernaturally transforming them?

It will mean not knowing why Yahweh is taking us that way, because knowing would make us spiritually proud.

We never realize at the time what Yahweh is putting us through—we go through it more or less without understanding.

Then suddenly we come to a place of enlightenment, and realize—"Yahweh has strengthened me and I didn't even know it!"

**Let those who suffer according to the will of
Yahweh commit their souls to Him in doing good .**

—1 Peter 4:19

Choosing to suffer means that there must be something wrong with you, but choosing Yahweh's will—even if it means you will suffer—is something very different.

No normal, healthy believer ever chooses suffering; he simply chooses Yahweh's will, just as Yeshua did, whether it means suffering or not.

And no believer should ever dare to interfere with the lesson of suffering being taught in another believer's life.

The believer who satisfies the heart of Yeshua will make other believers strong and mature for Yahweh.

But the people used to strengthen us are never those who sympathize with us; in fact, we are hindered by those who give us their sympathy, because sympathy only serves to weaken us.

No one better understands a believer than the talmidim who is as close and as intimate with Yeshua as possible.

If we accept the sympathy of another believer, our spontaneous feeling is, "Yahweh is dealing too harshly with me and making my life too difficult."

That is why Yeshua said that self-pity was of the devil (see [Matthew 16:21-23](#)). We must be merciful to Yahweh's reputation.

It is easy for us to tarnish Yahweh's character because He never argues back; He never tries to defend or vindicate Himself.

Beware of thinking that Yeshua needed sympathy during His life on earth.

He refused the sympathy of people because in His great wisdom He knew that no one on earth understood His purpose (see [Matthew 16:23](#)).

He accepted only the sympathy of His Father and the angels (see [Luke 15:10](#)).

Look at Yahweh's incredible waste of His talmidim, according to the world's judgment.

Yahweh seems to plant His talmidim in the most useless places. And then we say, "Yahweh intends for me to be here because I am so useful to Him."

Yet Yeshua never measured His life by how or where He was of the greatest use.

Yahweh places His talmidim where they will bring the most glory to Him, and we are totally incapable of judging where that may be.

Attitude is everything when we encounter various trials in this life because it shows how we can depend on and trust in the faithfulness of our loving Elohim and Savior Yeshua.

As we come before Him in trust it's amazing how He can fill us with His Spirit and lift us up or take us through.

Yahweh wants the world to see that faithful loving attitude in our lives as we look beyond the circumstance and look to Him seeking to please Him instead of wanting to please self in a self-pity mode.

When we take the latter attitude there's nothing lovely the world sees and wants to have.

They simply see what the rest of the world has and that is a lack of hope and joy because they have no assurance that what lies beyond tomorrow will be any better.

In Yeshua we have the assurance of eternal life and the assurance that Yeshua is with us today.

And that is where we derive our joy if we're willing to trust and abide in the One who's given us this life.

Peter was giving these Believers the hope that despite the fact that they may have to suffer for their faith they are not forgotten or abandoned by Yahweh.

Just the opposite is true. **1PE 4:14 "If you are insulted because of the name of Yeshua, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of Yahweh rests on you."**

But Peter also wants us to understand that Yahweh doesn't smile on sinful behavior. **1PE4:15 "If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler."**

Many of these people prior to coming to Yeshua had sordid past's, just as you and I.

In fact, the apostle Sha'ul made mention of this in his letter to the Corinthians. **1CO 6:9 "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of Yahweh? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders
10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of Yahweh.
11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of Messiah Yeshua and by the Spirit of our Elohim."**

As new creatures in Messiah we are no longer to be driven by the old nature which manifested itself in some of these ways which Sha'ul mentions.

If we do and we suffer for it we deserve to suffer the consequences and Yahweh will not be pleased. This is Peter's point.

16 "However, if you suffer as a Believer, do not be ashamed, but praise Yahweh that you bear that name."

To suffer as a Believer means to suffer for the name of Yeshua or as the result of faithfully representing Yeshua.

The NIV takes the last part of verse 16 and puts the emphasis on praising Yahweh that you bear His name under trials.

Though this is a truth of Yahweh's word the more literal translation here in Peter would give the sense of actively glorifying Yahweh with your actions before the world in that situation.

The NAS puts it **"but if anyone suffers as a Believer, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify Yahweh."** **The sense here is to show your praise in obedience despite the trial.**

This next verse is rather interesting. **1PE 4:17 "For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of Yahweh; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of Yahweh?"**

Here again Peter is making a contrast between believers and unbelievers and how Yahweh is actively involved with both groups as He holds both groups accountable to Him.

On the one hand judgment begins with us in the Body of Messiah and then from there it will come against the world at large.

Most translations use the English word **"with"** when they translate "For it is time for judgment to begin **"with"** the family (household) of Yahweh. The Greek word for with is *apo* and it literally translates **"from"**.

In fact there is an English version of the Bible called "A literal translation of the Bible, LTB for short and it reads, "Because the time has come to begin the judgment from the house of Yahweh." Keep in mind that Peter is a Jew and much of his background takes into account the Tanakh.

The imagery here in first Peter takes from two Tanakh books, Ezekial chapter 9 and Malachi chapter 3.

In both of those sections Yahweh is dealing specifically with the nation of Israel. **And in both cases Yahweh comes to Israel and promises that He will destroy those who disobey and rebel but that all who would repent and turn to Him will be blessed.**

In Ezekial 9, Ezekial sees in a vision avenging angels sent from Yahweh to destroy those who rebelled. And in **verse 6 of Ezekial 9 it reads. "and you shall start from My sanctuary . So they started with the elders who were before the Temple."**

The phrase **"from My house"** in the Septuagint is the same phrase Peter uses when he says **"Because the time has come to begin the judgment FROM THE HOUSE OF YAHWEH."**

Yahweh is ever in the process of acting as a refiner of precious metals as He refines His people and desires to conform them into His image.

But notice where He starts. He starts with the elders who were before the Temple. The leaders of Israel were more responsible for leading the nation and so Yahweh begins with them.

In fact in Malachi we see this imagery of Yahweh being the refiner:

MAL 3:2 "But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.

3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then Yahweh will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,

4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to Yahweh, as in days gone by, as in former years.

5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says Yahweh Almighty.

6 "I Yahweh do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."

Yahweh has always desired a people to represent Him in a way that brings glory to His name.

He knows we have a tendency to go our own way and so in His grace and mercy He refines us and changes our hearts to show forth His working in our lives. And so it's necessary to begin judgment from the house of Yahweh where Yahweh dwells with His people.

Peter isn't saying that Yahweh is judging in the sense of condemning.

The word judge here in our text is *krimain* in the Greek, and Dr. Grudem makes the point that "this word for judgment does not necessarily mean condemnation (which would be *katakrima*) but is a broader term which can refer to a judgment which results in good and bad evaluations, a judgment which may issue in approval or discipline as well as condemnation.....

The picture is that Yahweh has begun judging within the assembly, and will later move outward to judge those outside the assembly.

This refining fire of judgment is leaving no one untouched, but Believers are being purified and strengthened by it -- sins are being eliminated and trust in Yahweh and holiness of life are growing."

We see this attitude from Yahweh in the Tanakh in many different places where He loves His people enough to make judgments based on their behavior, not for the sake of condemning, because remember, in Yeshua there is no condemnation.

Our guilt for sin was paid for with Yeshua taking our penalty and nailing it to the cross and then gloriously raising from the dead defeating sin and death.

You and I are truly forgiven of our **sin that we have done teshuvah for**, but the Spirit's work of sanctifying us, so that we may represent our Elohim in this world, is **continually taking place.**

Once we have done teshuvah for a sin, it is rebellion to bring it up again.

If we know that someone has requested forgiven of a sin and we bring it up to them in condemnation, **we are committing deliberate sin against that person.** We are rebelling against Yahweh and His forgiveness. I think I have read that Yahweh tells us not to bring a forgiven sin before His face again.

And don't think for a moment that Yahweh somehow looks the other way when we decide to rebel.

You only need go to the 7 assemblies of Revelation. **REV 2:1 "To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in**

his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:

2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.

3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.

5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of Yahweh."

Yahweh was making it clear that He was not only aware of what the Ephesian assembly was doing but that He was going to intervene if necessary to make sure they stayed faithful, and if they didn't He was willing to take their lampstand away, which means He will take the light of His grace from them and give it to another who would be faithful to do His work.

And even there in Revelation notice **who** Yeshua addresses.

He starts by saying, "To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus..." The word angel can be translated messenger. **Yahweh is addressing His messenger in Ephesus who is to bring the truth of His word and that would be the Pastor and the elders.**

Again, the leadership is held accountable by Yahweh, and so Yahweh starts judgment from the House of Yahweh so that those who dwell with Yahweh, and in whom Yahweh dwells, will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Elohim and Savior Yeshua for the specific purpose of shining for Him.

Sometimes that judgment will take on a disciplinary action in the lives of Yahweh's people as we saw in Revelation. But even there it was because Yahweh loved them as He loves us.

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way. **HEB 12:5 "And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of Yahweh's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because Yahweh disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." (Prov. 3:11,12) 7 Endure hardship as discipline; Yahweh is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?"**

None of us like discipline.

But without it we would be like that proverbial prodigal son who wanders away. And yet even then Yahweh is able to draw us back, but not without changing the heart, which sometimes is a hard lesson to learn.

What Peter is saying is meant to encourage his readers because some of what they were experiencing was a refining process Yahweh was using to build them up not tear them down, and in the process of explaining this Peter adds that it's better to be judged by Yahweh as one of His people, which will bring you forth as gold refined by fire, rather than to receive judgment from Yahweh as an unbeliever which does result in condemnation if they do not repent and turn to Yeshua.

That's why Peter asks the question in verse 17 "For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of Yahweh; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of Yahweh?"

Of course the outcome is what Malachi speaks of in MAL 3:5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says Yahweh Almighty."

In other words all people being described here, both inside and outside the assembly, who have not placed their faith in Yeshua and whose lives demonstrate that they do not fear Yahweh by desiring to please Him, will face judgment.

Judgment begins from the house of Yahweh and there will be those who will find that that judgment will be condemnation.

MAT 7:19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Yeshua is speaking of those religious people inside the assembly.

But these are people who are paying lip service to Yeshua while their hearts want nothing to do with the reality of living for Yeshua.

Now I don't mean to scare anyone here this morning by suggesting that we can't know for certain if we have salvation.

In fact, if these words of Yeshua cause you to stop and consider, "Lord could I be one of those who fall into that category?", that's a good indication that you do belong to Yahweh and have a heart to follow Him.

True, you may have lapses, as we all do at times, but your heart will always feel the pain of displeasing Yahweh and wanting to get right with Him.

It's when you don't care about the things of Yahweh and you don't care when you sin and you don't care to grow in Yeshua that you should be concerned.

These are the people whom Peter refers to when he says at the end of verse 17 "those who do not obey the gospel of Yahweh?"

Dr. Hiebert points out, "The character of such people is described by their continuing activity. They do not obey, are continually refusing to obey the gospel of truth, not merely do not believe the gospel. Mounce observes, The truth of the gospel is not at issue. People either reject the truth or obey the truth. They do not decide on its truthfulness."

He continues to comment on the phrase "Gospel of Yahweh" "The Gospel of Yahweh marks the depth of their guilt. "Of Yahweh," stresses that the good news they rejected by its very nature is Yahweh's, sent by Him as His authoritative message of salvation to mankind.

In their response to the gospel lies the stark contrast between them and the readers who accepted that message and rejoiced in Yahweh's salvation amid their sufferings."

Even for those who have continued to disobey the message of the gospel, it still continues to go forth that they might repent and obey by believing on Yeshua as Messiah that they may have this forgiveness and eternal life.

Yahweh's grace is still extended even in the midst of their sin.

ROM 5:20 "The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Messiah Yeshua our Elohim."

Peter wanted these Believers to know that they may have had to suffer for their faith in Yeshua but it's nothing in comparison to the suffering there is for eternity outside of Yeshua.

And so he says in 1PE 4:18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

Here Peter is not suggesting that our salvation is hard in the sense that it's difficult to work our way to Yahweh's presence (no it's not difficult, it's impossible).

Rather, he means that there are difficulties in this life in Yeshua despite the fact that we have the assurance of our salvation and despite the fact that we are the children of Yahweh.

Sha'ul puts it into context when he describes this walk with Yeshua which sometimes is very hard because we are Believers. **ACT 14:19 "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Sha'ul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20 But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. 21 They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, 22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of Yahweh," they said.**

This is what Peter is talking about.

He's saying that we need to be prepared to stand up for Yeshua when the world wants to knock us down.

And if we get knocked down Yahweh is able and willing to pick us back up. But we need to be willing to get up as we rely on His grace and strength.

And I know that sometimes we would prefer to stay down for the count and say I don't want to go on.

But that still small voice from the One who loved us so much that He died for us, cries out, **"Follow me"**. And we look up and take His hand and we get up and follow because we know that we love Him because He first loved us.

And though there may be difficult times in life as we follow Yeshua it can't compare to the joy set before us and the satisfaction of being able to represent the living Yahweh in this world knowing that this world needs to see the love of Yeshua in our lives.

That's why Sha'ul got up and went back to Lystra. He loved Yahweh enough to love those people with the truth.

Because you see, Sha'ul knew what Peter writes, which is a quote from **PRO 11:31 "If the righteous receive their due on earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner!"**

Sha'ul knew what he deserved from Yahweh and yet he received mercy instead.

He knew what all men deserve from Yahweh and so he labored for Yeshua to bring this message of mercy.

He said in 1 TIMOTHY 1:12 "I thank Messiah Yeshua our Elohim, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.

13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

14 The grace of Yahweh was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Messiah Yeshua.

15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Messiah Yeshua came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst.

16 But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Messiah Yeshua might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Yahweh, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

When we consider what we have been given in Yeshua it should cause our hearts to soar, even during those times when this life in Yeshua seems difficult.

And this is why Peter ends this section the way he does because he knows how hard it can be at times.

IPE 4:19 "So then, those who suffer according to Yahweh's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good."

Peter doesn't want us suffering for sinful behavior, but he assumes that we may have to suffer according to Yahweh's will for following Yeshua. But in those times he says commit yourself to your faithful Creator.

The word "**commit**", which is also translated "entrust" in the Greek, is *paratithesthai* and it's a technical word as William Barclay points out, for depositing money with a trusted friend; to give to someone that which is very important for safe-keeping.

And what Peter wants to bring to the forefront is you can trust your Creator who gave His only begotten Son to secure your salvation.

You can trust Him with your eternal life and you can trust Him to be with you in this life and be your Protector and Provider.

Yes, this life will at times be difficult and yes if you will follow Yahweh there may be times of testing but it's all used by Yahweh for His glory to mold us in a way that allows Yeshua to be seen in us as we have the privilege of being His ambassador.

But I'll tell you when you love Yeshua and you do follow Him, the times of testing can still be times of experiencing the joy of your salvation, as during those times He often draws even closer with His loving arms to comfort if we won't push Him away.

And that's why Peter ends with the words "doing what is right."

We can't use the excuse that life is too difficult and therefore we won't do what is right.

Doing right may not be the same for one person as it is for another in terms of serving Yeshua, but it's exactly the same in one sense.

All of us are still called to trust our Elohim.

All of us are still called to love Yahweh above all and all of us are called to follow Yeshua. If we will do this, the right thing will be Yahweh's thing according to His will.

William Barclay puts it this way, "If a man entrusts himself to Yahweh, Yahweh will not fail him. If such a trust is sacred to men, how much more is it sacred to Yahweh? This is the very word used by Yeshua, when he says, **Father into Your hands I commit My Spirit (Luk.23:46)**. Yeshua unhesitatingly entrusted His life to Yahweh, certain that He would not fail Him -- and so may we. The old advice is still good advice -- trust Yahweh and do what is right."

Do not fear what is to come.

Let's build our relationship with Yahweh to the point that we are totally committed to His will.

Let Him use our lives to glorify His kingdom.

THIS IS TRULY THE TIME TO "TRUST" AND "OBEY".