**Eternal Answer of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd RUTC:**

**The Judgment That Begins in God’s House (1 Peter 4:12-19) 12/15/2024**

The passage explains three reasons why God’s people face suffering in the last days. We must find answers from this.

**First, it says the purpose of suffering is to refine the saints (12).**
Through suffering, we become purer, more complete, and develop deeper fait (compared to gold refined by fire in 1 Peter 1:7).

**Second**, **it says it is a process to participate in Christ’s glory (13).**
Christ did not reach glory right away. He went through the suffering of Calvary, which led to the glory of resurrection. We are co-heirs with Christ, and to share in His glory, we must also share in His suffering (Romans 8:15). It says that on the Lord’s Day, the disciples will rule the world with Him (Luke 22:30). After passing through suffering, they will gain that qualification.

**Third**, **because there are blessings (rewards, crowns) prepared for those who suffer for the name of Christ (14).** It even says that if we lose or suffer injustice for His name, we will receive 100 times more in this life along with eternal life (Mark 10:29-30). Therefore, it warns us not to suffer for things like murder, theft, evil acts, or interfering in others' business. To interfere in others' business here doesn’t mean helping but slandering, judging, and condemning others. Only God has the right to judge and condemn (Romans 14:10, James 4:12).

**After explaining the meaning of suffering, the passage gives an important message.** “The time has come for judgment to begin with God’s household” (17).

**Surely, Christ will return, and a day of judgment will come.** The unbelievers will face judgment for punishment, and believers will face judgment for comfort and rewards (Galatians 6:7-8, Revelation 20:11-15).

**1. What we have to give attention to is that the judgment starts with God’s house (the church).**

This is a terrifying statement. The church is the gathering of the saved and a spiritual family. Why must He do this?

**1) Because there are too many unsaved people in the church.**

**① Many attend church but have never realized Christ’s grace or been saved by faith.** Salvation is by grace alone, through faith in His atoning sacrifice (Ephesians 2:8-9).
**② Simply attending church is not enough. Many live zealously or do good works but are unsaved. There are more people like this among unbelievers.** For them, Christ was never necessary. God wants to distinguish this.

**2) Because there are too many people opposing the gospel in the church.** Last week’s pulpit message mentioned people like scribes, priests, and Pharisees inside the Jerusalem temple.
**① They deny that Jesus is the Christ. They reject Him as the only way to salvation (ecumenical movements).** This is said to be the gravest sin: “The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 12:31-32).
**② Meanwhile, they constantly hinder those who preach the gospel.** They are like goats disturbing the sheep and weeds hindering the wheat’s growth (Matthew 13:36-43, Matthew 25:31-33). They do this inside the church.

**3) Because many do shameful acts within the church.**

**① Anyone can momentarily fail. We can be tempted, stumble, and fall, but we can sincerely repent and start anew.** God waits patiently, forgives, and gives us another chance (referring to “cities of refuge” in Numbers 35:11-12).
**② However, some persist in doing evil acts (like King Saul and Judas Iscariot). God will judge them (Hebrews 6:6).** Repeated failure may occur, but if one believes in Christ’s atonement, they will escape hell’s judgment. Yet, as stated in the text, this will be “barely saved” (18) or a “shameful salvation” (1 Corinthians 3:15).

**2. Now we must focus with a trembling heart (Philippians 2:12).**

**1) Focus on the gospel. It is the secret to saving myself.**

**① The gospel is about how the Son came down because our efforts, zeal, and good works cannot save us.** By dying on the cross, Christ accomplished perfect and eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12), ending all curses. Through the gospel, we are saved, sealed by the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), and made children of God (Romans 8:15).
**② Be imprinted, rooted, and natured in the gospel and experience three things. This blessing is the secret to saving myself.** Continuously experience grace (the “gospel of grace” in Galatians 1:6-8). Receive the power of the Holy Spirit (the “life-giving gospel” in John 6:63). Heal hidden weaknesses, scars, and chronic habits (the “healing gospel” in Isaiah 61:1). If our church proclaims and focuses on this gospel, all individuals will come alive.

**2) Focus on evangelism. It is the secret to saving the field and people.** God who saved me desires to save the field and others through me. We can evangelize in three ways.
**① Evangelize with spiritual strength (Isaiah 60:1-5).** Enjoy Jehovah’s light and glory within you through 24-hour prayer (7,7,7 blessings). Everything will return to you.
**② Evangelize by delivering the accurate message of Christ (Romans 10:13-14).** As the true Priest, He resolved our curses (Romans 8:1-2).As the true King, He destroyed fate and hell’s authority (1 John 3:8).As the true Prophet, He opened the way to meet God and the eternal doors of heaven (John 10:9, John 14:6).That’s why the Lord told us to pray for laborers (disciples) to be sent out to preach the gospel (Luke 10:2).
**③ Evangelize through the fruits of your goodness in life (Ephesians 5:8-9).** We are called children of light, and the fruits that children of light bear are goodness, righteousness, and faithfulness. Remnant Joseph bore these fruits even as a slave, and David showed this testimony while shepherding sheep.

**3) Focus on missions. It is the secret to saving the 237 nations and 5,000 tribes.**

**① Those who will be saved and will help save the world together are prepared all over the world.** That’s why Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:18). The One with all authority in heaven and earth promised to be with us forever. He will make none of our words will fall to the ground. This is the blessing we enjoy in the mission field. Multicultural ministry and TCK ministry taking place where you are is the start of your missions.
**② God will give the five strengths for this (Acts 1:8). This is the absolute reason He will give strength like eagles soaring with wings.** God will provide the economy of mission and economy of light to save the 237 nations and 5,000 tribes. This is the absolute reason He will bless our studies and businesses.

**Conclusion** - When judgment begins in God’s house, may it become a time of eternal comfort and blessings for us.