

Preparation for the End – I Peter 4:5-7

I. Introduction:

- A. When was the last time you heard, or you said, *“Well these ARE the last days!*
1. Maybe it was something like: *“We shouldn’t be too surprised at this new law, or that expression of wickedness, or Monday’s shootings at another school, after all, these are the last days.”*
 2. Those statements are justified, because there is reason to believe we are on the brink of the Tribulation when God will bring His creation into utter ruin.
 3. The Lord will come for His saints very soon, after which the Holy Spirit will withdraw His restraining hand and wickedness will flood the earth as completely as the waters did in the days of Noah.
 4. This time the world will be baptized in blood, and there will be no salvation in that kind of immersion either.
- B. While we hear references to the last days more and more often among the people of God, it needs to be remembered that this isn’t a recent phenomenon.
1. People have been saying that since the days of the New Testament.
 2. Whatever he meant by it, **Peter** said, *“The end of all things is at hand.”*
 3. **James** said, *“Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” – Ja. 5:8*
 4. **Paul** said, *“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand” – Philippians 4:5.*
 5. **Hebrews 10:25** reminds us that the day of the Lord is approaching.
 6. And **John** said, *“Little children, it is the last time” – I John 2:18.*
 7. We could multiply scriptures like these.
 8. We are in the last days, but there is a sense in which we have been in the last times since the Apostles.
 9. Nevertheless, you might say, very ungrammatically, *“We are in the lastest of the last days.”*
- C. What are some of the characteristics of the last days?
1. Paul told Timothy, *“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” – II Timothy 3:13.*
 - a. It might be argued that is more true today than at any other time in history.
 - b. Those seducers are found in every branch of society, from politics & education to religion & science.
 - c. People are being deceived on a regular basis by others who we are supposed to trust.
 2. Peter wrote that the last days will be filled with **scoffers** (II Peter 3:3).
 - a. Has the world ever been as filled with so many who contemptuously laugh at Biblical Christianity?
 3. Paul warned of people **departing** from the **faith in the last days** (I Timothy 4:1-2).
 4. He said, *“this know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”*
 - a. You can know; you can be assured, that perilous times shall come.
 - b. James Strong says *“perilous”* means *“hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous, fierce & even savage.”*
 - c. We should not be in terror about it, but we hear quite regularly of sinfully insane people walking into churches with automatic weapons.
 - d. These are indeed perilous, fierce and savage days.

II. Peter says, *“the end of all things is at hand.”*

- A. We might jump to conclusions, but notice that he doesn’t really define the end of which he speaks.
1. Doesn’t it speak of the *“logical conclusion of things?”*
 2. The Greek word is translated *“end,” “uttermost”* and *“finally,”* but occasionally it has a surprise translation.
 3. For example, **Romans 13:7** says, *“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; CUSTOM to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”*
 4. The Lord Jesus once asked Peter of whom it was that kings demanded *“custom”* (Matthew 16:25)?
 5. Even when translated *“custom”* the idea is that this is the logical conclusion of the king’s power.
- B. What is it that will be reaching its conclusion Peter?
1. He says that *“the end of ALL things is at hand.”*
 2. Does this mean *“all things”* as in everything, or should we limit the statement to something in the context?

3. Hasn't Peter just spoken about the attacks Christians endure during their lives upon the earth?
4. And doesn't he refer to the judgment that the lost will have to face?
5. Doesn't he also mention that the gospel has been preached to multitudes who have died, and that gospel is still being preached to the living?
6. Then he says that Christ is coming again to judge the quick and the dead.
7. Are there more than just these things reaching their conclusions, Peter?

C. Generally speaking, **time** as we understand it is nearing its conclusion.

1. There will be a new kind of calendar created when time shall be no more.
2. Days, years and even hours will no longer be governed by the rising of the sun and the movement of the moon. The Lord Jesus will be everything to us, including our schedules.
3. Eventually **sin** will be a thing of the past, and probably even the history of sin will be under the blood.
4. **Our earthly lives** – our lives as we have come to understand them – will be gone.

D. I think we might say that the end of **everything** that **isn't eternal** will soon be here.

1. That means Peter isn't talking about the eternal God, or the eternal decrees and covenants of God.
2. They are not coming to an end – ever.
3. And our souls, which are eternal will never end.
 - a. The wicked and unbelieving will not be annihilated or exterminated; they will be under eternal judgment.
 - b. And those made righteous through the grace of God will not come to an end either.
 - c. *“We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” – I Thessalonians 4:17.*
4. Nothing which wasn't created by God to be eternal will, in the end, be brought to an eternal conclusion.
5. Therefore, we shouldn't put much interest or love into those things.
6. *“The end of all things is at hand.”*

III. What does Peter draw from this?

A. *“Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”*

1. He goes on, and we will gone as well, but our Bibles put a **full stop** at the end of **verse 7**.
2. What sort of lives should we live in the light of the soon end of all things?
3. Peter gives us some divinely inspired suggestions, but he does leave out several things.

B. In this and in the next few verses there is nothing said about **living in fear**, because all things are ending.

1. Even in the midst of perilous times, we have nothing really to fear, because we know that *“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.”*
2. Also under this consideration, our work is still unfinished.
3. We should not put our tools away, dust ourselves off, sit on our hands and wait for the end.
4. In this verse and a few yet to come, Peter tells us how to spend our few remaining days or years.

C. In the midst of many things that I'd like to say, I'm going to try to confine myself to Peter's words.

1. I'd like to say, we must spend our few remaining days in glorifying the Lord through worship, godly living and evangelism
2. I'd like to say that we need to put our houses in order.

D. Peter tells us to be **“sober.”**

1. This does not specifically refer to the opposite of drunkenness, even though that is a good application.
2. We've just been reminded that in those days before our conversation, we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings and banquetings.
3. One might accurately say that we were intoxicated with a great variety of sins.
4. But now, we are children of God and we need to live soberly, throwing off our previous inebriation.
5. To be **“sober”** is the opposite of loose lasciviousness and wantonness.

- E. Literally this Greek word “sober” refers to having **a sound mind**.
1. Do you remember the demoniac of Gadara of whom Bro. Austin so vividly brought to our attention not long ago?
 2. After the Lord healed him, many from his home town “*went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid*” – **Luke 8:35**.
 3. Peter used the same word that Luke used in that description of the man.
 4. What those neighbors found was a **sober-minded Christian**; one who was in his right mind.
- F. Here is the first thing Peter tells us all as Christians: be right minded, because the Lord has healed you.
1. You need not be under the influence of the demons of our day.
 2. You don’t need to fear the government or the Republicans and Democrats.
 3. You don’t need to fear the return of Satan or his demons.
 4. You shouldn’t be chasing rabbits into every bush and conspiracies under every rock.
 5. “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*” – **Philippians 4:8**.
 6. This sort of thought life will enhance your sober and right mind.
 7. This sort of sobriety and right mindedness will provide a testimony before our neighbors, just as did the healed man in Gadara.
- G. Peter’s second exhortation in regard to the soon-to-arrive end of all things is to crank up your prayer life.
1. And to have strengthen in prayer comes from strengthening our fellowship with the Lord.
 2. In the light of the last days and the end of all things, draw nigh unto the God who is filled with eternal love.
- H. There is an interesting use of words in this verse which is hidden by our English.
1. The word “sober,” *sophroneo (so-fron-eh’-o)*, is translated “sober” four times and “of a sound mind” twice.
 2. But then added to that Peter says, “*watch unto prayer.*”
 3. The word “watch” is *nepho (nay’-of)* and it too is translated “sober” as well as “watch.”
 4. But this second word means “*to be calm and collected in spirit; to be temperate, dispassionate, and circumspect.*”
- I. When God’s people are as close to the Lord as they could be – ought to be – there will be a calm in the soul.
1. When that Christian comes into the throne room of the Lord in prayer it will not be with the frenetic spirit that might fill the less experienced prayer soldier.
 2. Earnestness is one thing, but since the world doesn’t revolve around us, we can be at ease before the Lord
- J. If you would like to take the interpretation this way, watch for things about which to pray.
1. Yes, pray for those lost people you know, remembering that the end of all things is near.
 2. Pray for the Lord’s glory, because the end of all things is at hand.
 3. Pray for protection from your enemies, local criminals and even kings and princes, but we know that the Lord turns the heart of the king whithersoever He chooses.
- K. Consideration of the end of all things should make us look at the world around us soberly and rationally.
1. And that includes aspects of the temporal world which we hold dear to our hearts.
 2. While we loosen our grasp physically and mentally on the world, we need to draw closer and closer to the Lord.
 3. “*The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*”