

1 Peter 4:7-11 – March 21, 2021 – THE END IS COMING

In the book of 1 Peter much is said about how we will suffer for the Lord. Now this suffering doesn't mean we'll be persecuted all the time, but that we realize we're the Lord's servant, the Lord's slave, the Lord's soldier, and therefore, we'll be living, not for ourselves, but for Him. We'll be sacrificing our life, denying ourselves, and taking up our cross on a daily basis, knowing that there will be times when we will be persecuted for being a Christian.

- And I really believe a lot of the persecution that we will be facing in the future relates to unbelievers trying to cancel Christians, trying to keep us from living our lives the way God wants, from being able to teach the truth, and preach the gospel.

Last week we looked at 1 Peter 4:1-6, another passage that talks about suffering. But today we will be looking at vss. 7-11, and this talks about how we are to be living for the Lord even if we are suffering, even if people are trying to cancel us. And it tells us four specific things: 1) that we are to be praying, 2) that we are to be loving the believers, 3) that we are to be loving the unbelievers, and 4) that we are to be using the spiritual gift God gives us so we can serve Him and the church.

1 Peter 4:7. Now the fact that the "*end of all things is near*" should really motivate us to be living for the Lord, and doing these four things. Well, let's examine this phrase, for it's important to know what it means. The word "*end*" doesn't mean cessation or termination. It doesn't mean the complete end of this world, that this world is going to be completely destroyed, that wars, famines, plagues, or climate change will cause this world to cease to exist. In this context, "*end*" means fulfillment, a purpose attained, or a goal achieved.

Now specifically, this word "*end*" is referring to the end of this age, and Christ's coming. And in this epistle, Peter talks about His coming. 1 Peter 1:3-5, 10-11, 13 - Matthew 24:3, 6, 13. In all these three vss., this word "*end*" is referring to the end of this age. Now this word age is referring to this "*present evil age*" (Gal. 1:4), an age that began with the sin of Adam and Eve, which was a long, long time ago. But we also know that we are now living in this church age, an age that began on the day of Pentecost, which was 40 days after Christ ascended into heaven. - And so, whether we talk about the end of this evil age or the end of the church age, we are talking about the same thing, the same "*end*," and we are getting closer to this end, and it's going to happen on a particular day, at one particular moment in history.

Matt. 24:29 – God wants us to know that there'll be these sudden and dramatic signs that will signal the end of this age, that it's over. And everybody living on earth at that time will see this, and unbelievers will be afraid, will be scared out of their minds. Luke 21:25-26 - Matt. 24:30-31 – All of a sudden, we will see these signs in the heavens, the signal that this age has ended, and then we will see Christ and He'll rapture the church.

1 Peter 4:7. Now it says the “*end of all things.*” As I said before, this does not mean that all things will cease to exist, that this whole world will be completely destroyed. What it does mean is that Christ’s coming will affect everything on this earth.

1. All the Christians will suddenly be raptured and glorified.
2. All the unbelievers will be punished during the day of the Lord. Rev. 8-9
3. The whole world system will be destroyed – Rev. 18:8
4. The earth will be renovated, restored, renewed. Acts 3:20-21, Rom. 8:19-22
5. The devil’s control of the world will come to an end. Rev. 11:15

That is, this age will end, and all things will be affected, everything will be different, will be changed, and a new age, one in which Christ will rule and reign, will begin. - Rom. 13:12 – “*the night is almost gone, and the day is near.*” Now it is night in this world - it is a sinful world, it is darkness, it is an evil age, and the devil is in charge, but day is coming, and then it will be a new age, a glorious age, and this earth will be under new management for Christ will be in charge. It will be so exciting to see and witness and be a part of this dramatic change that is coming upon this entire world.

1 Peter 4:7 – “*The end of all things is near.*” The phrase “*is near*” is better translated as “*has drawn near.*” It means a process that will come to an end, that will be finished, that will come to a conclusion. In eternity past, God predestined and foreordained all His purposes and plans for this age, and they are now being carried out. We’ve already seen close to 2000 yrs. of church history, and God’s plans for the church have been fulfilled every one of those yrs. And in the near future all his plans for the church will be carried out and completed.

And because God’s plans are being carried out, then we can say that the end is getting near, is approaching, is getting closer and closer. And this is what every Christian should know and be convinced is going to happen, and therefore should be excited about, should be expecting, and should be looking forward to. This church age then is coming to an end, or as the KJ says, is “*drawing near.*” And so the end result is near, that time when Christ comes back and takes over, raptures the church, judges the world, and begins reigning over this world.

You may wonder why God uses the word “*near.*” The word “*near*” makes us think the end will be happening soon, not long from now. Now this verse and others like it were written about 2000 years ago, all using this same Greek word for “*near.*” Rom. 13:11 – “*Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near.*” Rev 1:3 – “*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it, for the time is near.*” Phil. 4:5 – “*The Lord is near.*”

This is how Christians back in the first century were instructed to live, and this is how, here in this 21st century, we are instructed to live. And how much more so should we be excited about the return of Christ than they were, and for two major reasons:

1. It's been 2000 years since Christ came the first time, and so we're 2000 years closer to Christ's 2nd coming than they were back in the 1st century. Rom. 13:11-12. If the night was almost gone 2000 years ago, then what is it now? If it was one hour to midnight 2000 years ago, then it is one or two minutes to midnight now, to Christ's coming.
2. We know we're in the end-times, for the Jews are back in Israel, the #1 sign that Christ's coming will be very soon. Back in years past, Christians knew that Christ was coming again, but now we can see events taking place that are signs from God that make it clear to us that Christ is coming in a very, very little while. We don't know exactly when He's coming, that is, how long before He comes but we know it won't be much longer. Heb. 10:25, 37

Luke 21:28-31. This chapter talks about all these things that need to occur, all these signs and different events that need to happen before Christ's return and the rapture. And again, this word "*near*" is used, that our redemption, our glorification, is drawing near, and that the time when Christ sets up His kingdom is drawing near. Heb. 10:25. Imagine if Paul or Peter or John were here, and they saw all these things happening – they would be shouting it from the rooftops – telling everyone, texting everyone, emailing everyone, calling everyone, writing about it, and preaching about it all the time. "*Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior is coming again, and it is really soon. And He's going to rapture the church, judge the world, and then begin His reign over this earth.*"

1 Peter 4:7. In view of the fact that the "*end of all things is near,*" how you should you think? You should "*be of sound judgment.*" This means to "*be in one's right mind*", to be thinking rightly, to be clear-minded, to be self-controlled, to be sober. Mark 5:15. The Christian mind should be focused on the truth, on Christ, on your priorities as a Christian, and on this truth that we have right here, that "*the end of all things is near.*" This word "*sober*" is the response, the result of having sound judgment, of thinking rightly. It means being watchful, being spiritually observant and alert. With regards to His 2nd coming, Jesus told His disciples, "*be on the alert*" and "*be ready.*" Matt. 24:42-44

Rom. 8:11-14. We still live in this sin-prone flesh, and in this sinful world, and it is by the word of God, the Spirit of God, and the grace of God that we can be holy like this, can be sober, clear-minded, and alert, and can then live like God wants us to be, and especially in view of the fact that Christ's coming is very soon. And the first application is that we are to pray, which means walking closely with God, and asking Him to meet our needs. We need to ask Him for the grace, peace, wisdom, and strength we need to live for Him, to do the work He wants us to do. James 5:8 – "*Be patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.*"

And so Christ's return was near 2000 yrs. ago, and it is near today. And it's how this word is defined that enables us to say that. As I said before, the word near means a process that will come to an end, that will be finished, that will come to a conclusion. And whether a Christian lived in the year 100, the year 1000, or in 2020, he could always say that the end was near, or as it is better translated, "*has drawn near.*"

To help us understand this even more, let's back up and look at the big picture. A long time ago, Adam and Eve were created, and then there was the time of Noah. And then came Abraham, and the Jewish nation was born, which was followed by 2000 years of Jewish history. Then Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came and lived on this earth, and then He died and rose again, and then He ascended into heaven. And once the church age began, it could then be said, "*the end of all things is near,*" meaning, in effect, that Christ will build the church, and then this age will end, and Christ will return. And God wants us to see this big picture, to have this perspective.

Acts 1:9-11. The disciples saw Jesus go, but they were told He would be coming back, and knew He would be coming back. And that's seeing the big picture.

- Acts 3:19-21. Peter is preaching about how Jesus had died and now they were in that age when people were repenting and returning to Christ, were getting saved. And then God would send Jesus and the earth would be restored. And that's the big picture.

- In 1 Thess. 1:10, Paul says Christians need "*to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*"

And that's the big picture, that Christ was raised from the dead and is coming again.

- Matt. 24:14, 28:19-20

Heb. 9:28. "*Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a 2nd time for salvation.*" Christ came once and He's coming again and that's the big picture.

We need Christ's coming in view of all of human history and now in view of the fact that this church age is the last part of this evil age that started with Adam and Eve. 1 Pet. 1:5, Acts 2:17.

The whole point is that we need to see this big picture - God wants us to see the major events that have taken place - what happened in the OT times, that Christ came the 1st time, that we are now in the church age, in the last days.

And now Christ's coming is drawing near, is approaching, and it's the next major event to take place in our world, and we need to know it will be taking place and be thinking about it and be excited about it and be looking forward to it. We need to live for Christ, and be waiting for Christ to come in the clouds and then take us home to heaven.

We need to think about what it'll be like when this present evil age comes to an end, and when the devil is no longer in charge, and Christ is reigning.