



“Living In Light of the End” (I Peter 4:7-11)

Danny Hodges – NT3569

v.7a Keep in mind that Peter wrote this some 2,000 years ago. He was expecting Christ’s soon return (see 4:13; 5:5). As a matter of fact, every generation of Christians since has been expecting the second coming in their day. So what happened? One, the apostles expected Jesus’ second coming much sooner than it was prophetically planned. Second, “soon” to God is not the same as “soon” to us (Ps.90:4; II Peter 3:8). One thing is for certain, we are much closer to the “end of all things” than we were when Peter penned these words. How close are we?

- Israel is a nation
- Modern military capability
- Technology for the mark of the beast
- Iran and Russia have a military alliance (Ezekiel 38)
- The Temple Institute
- Middle East unrest
- No prophecies need to be fulfilled for the rapture of the church

First time in history clear signs for the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38-39

Ancient Nations	Modern Nations
Magog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal	Russia and the former Soviet republics
Persia	Iran
Cush	Sudan, Ethiopia, and possibly Eritrea
Put	Libya, Algeria and Tunisia
Gomer	Turkey and possibly Germany and Austria
Beth-togarmah	Turkey, Armenia and the Turkic-speaking peoples of Asia minor and central Asia
Countries with mountainous borders with Israel	Syria, Lebanon, and northern Jordan
Many peoples with you	Possible additional Islamic allies
[Sheba and Dedan]	[Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, and the Gulf states]

But let's suggest that the rapture will not take place in our lifetime. Then have you thought about death? Death means the end of all things related to this life. And the things we do in this life determine the life to come – in eternity (Eccl.3:11). "Only one life, will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."

In 1882 C.T. Studd was known as one of the best cricket players in the world. In his senior year at Cambridge he was captain of the team. He became a Christian at age 16, but for several years lived what he describes as a "backslidden" Christian life. At the height of C.T.'s athletic achievements, D.L Moody came to do evangelistic meetings at Cambridge. God spoke to C.T. at these meetings, and he came to realize that cricket would not last, but what he did for God would last forever. He felt a call to go to China as a missionary, so he traded a temporary future in sports for an eternal calling to see lost souls saved. Six other Cambridge students joined him, and they became known as "The Cambridge Seven." While in China, C.T.'s wealthy father died, and he inherited \$145,000. He gave it all away, some to D.L. Moody, and Moody used it to start The Moody Bible Institute, some to George Mueller for his work with orphans, some to George Holland for his work among the poor in London, and some to the Salvation Army for their work in India. Studd was a missionary in China, India, and finally Africa, where he died in the midst of his work.

"Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,
Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill,
living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last. "

— extra stanza —

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for
Thee."

Rom.13:9-14; I Cor.7:29-31; We need to live every moment of this life in anticipation of the coming of Christ. If he came today, would you be ready? If you died today, are you excited about seeing Him face to face?

So, here in these few short verses of I Peter are some very practical exhortations in light of “the end.”

1. Be clear minded

- The Greek is actually one word that includes the idea of being “in one’s right mind,” and as a result, to curb one’s passions.
- I Peter 3:21; A clear conscience begins through faith in Jesus Christ (Heb.9:9; 10:22). Once someone has repented and received Christ as Savior, the challenge is to maintain a clear conscience. See Acts 24:16; 23:1; I Tim.1:5, 18-19; 3:9; II Tim.1:3; Heb.13:18; Rom.13:5; II Cor.1:12a.
- What would defile my conscience? When I do something that is displeasing to the Lord, if I am truly born again, it will affect my conscience (I Sam.24:5). Whenever this has happened in my life, I lose the peace that was there before (see Col.3:15a). Now please note this: If I do not repent of what I have done to displease the Lord, over time my conscience will become seared (see I Tim.4:2). A seared conscience is a calloused conscience. This is synonymous with a hard heart (Matt.13:15). People that end up with a seared conscience/calloused/hard hearted will often end up justifying their sin. As a result of their calloused state, they no longer even detect the goading of the Holy Spirit, and do not heed the advice of fellow believers who lovingly confront them in their condition.
- Brothers and sisters, it is so vital that we maintain a clear conscience before God!

2. Be self-controlled

- Once again, one Greek word that carries the idea of being “in one’s right mind” and as a result curbing one’s passions, or being self-controlled toward godliness.
- I Thess.4:3-4 (power point); II Peter 1:6; Unfortunately, one of the things the Bible says we will see more of as we get closer to the end is people who have a form of godliness and yet lack self-control (I Tim.3:3).
- While Gold’s Gym seems to be doing great, God’s gym seems to be on the decline. See I Timothy 4:7-8; Exhort on spiritual training. If I do not continue to train spiritually, I will never develop or maintain self-control in areas of sinful passion.

3. Keep your prayer life effective

- I can only continue to have success in prayer as I maintain a clear conscience and self-control regarding sinful passions. If I am acting improperly toward my spouse, it will negatively affect my prayer life (I Peter 3:7). If I am involved in sexual sin,

pornography, it will affect my prayer life. If I cheat on my taxes, on school exams, it will affect my prayer life, etc. etc.

4. Love deeply

- Only other time this word translated “deeply” here is used in NT is Acts 12:5 where it refers to the church praying “earnestly” for Peter who was in prison. It could also be translated “without ceasing.”
- Heb.13:1; I Thess.4:9; II Thess.1:3; I John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; II John 1:5.
- This is the kind of love that denies self for the sake of others, the kind of love that serves others rather than serving self. This is the kind of love that sacrifices. In a marriage, it is the kind of love Christ had for us, his church (see Eph.5:25). It is also the kind of love that forgives as Christ has forgiven us.
- Unfortunately, II Tim.3 tells us that this love will be rare as we get closer to the end (II Tim.3:1-3a). In Matt.24:12 Jesus said “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.”
- Do not come into my office and tell me you do not love your spouse any more, or that you never have. You are married, and though it may not have been God’s will for you to get married, it is God’s will that you STAY married. And the husband has the greater calling to sacrifice himself for his bride, because Jesus sacrificed himself for us. But we are living in a day when that kind of love is extremely rare. I talk to husbands, and my pastoral staff talk to husbands regularly, that seek to justify a divorce because they are unfulfilled in the relationship, and the wife is not willing to change in order to meet their expectations. But what does the Scripture say?

5. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling

- This is an act that focuses its attention on the needs of others; In the culture of the day this was especially practical, because generally speaking there were not hotels and motels like we have today. A traveler would go to the town square in hopes of being invited to the home of a gracious resident.
- There is no way that we can ever love one another deeply if we have no real relationships with one another, or if those relationships are simply shallow. The NT makes it clear that the early church was relational to a degree that most local churches in America never experience. See Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35. I want to note something here that I think is extremely important, and it is that they already were meeting daily in the temple courts. The primary purpose of this large assembly was to hear the teaching of the Word of God. It was in the more personal atmosphere of someone’s home that relationships developed and deepened. This relational emphasis continues throughout the NT. See Rom.16:3-5; I Cor.16:19; Col.4:15; Heb.3:13; 10:24-25.

6. Serve others with the gifts God has provided

- Note: This is not referring to someone's gifts as a physician, a lawyer, an astute business person, etc. We are talking about gifts that either serve the body of Christ, or proclaim a witness for God in the world.
- Gal.5:13
- All of God's gifts to his saints are divided here into two broad categories. They are not itemized nor expounded upon. Why? Because the emphasis is simply on making sure we are serving in some capacity. I believe the greatest was to discover your gift(s) is by serving. Isn't this what Jesus taught His disciples? Isn't this what happened with the first deacons of the early church? See Acts 6:1-6; Stephen became a great preacher, and he gave only one sermon! (Acts 7). Philip became Philip the evangelist. But his ministry began by "waiting on tables." My ministry began as a janitor, then a drummer, then an opportunity to testify publicly...amazing what the Lord has done!
- When the Prodigal "came to his senses," he experienced godly sorrow for the foolishness of his actions, and with a heart of repentance returned home. And he went with the attitude of a servant (Luke 15:19). Some of us need to come to our senses, realize the waywardness of our path before God, and begin to serve.

v.11b We started with "the end of all things is near," and we end with "To him be the glory and the power *forever and ever*. Amen." Amen means "so be it," or "it is true." This final statement is meant to get our focus on eternity, and the supremacy of Jesus Christ throughout eternity. As we focus on eternity in light of how temporal our time here is, we should ask ourselves, "What are we *doing*?"

CONCLUSION

- II Cor.5:6-10
- "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."