

# The End Of All Things



Given O. Blakely

## Part 1 - INTRODUCTION

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

## INTRODUCTION

Time is running out! Divine purpose is being brought to its culmination! Everything is moving toward the time of "THE END," when the sovereignty of God will become apparent, and His Son will be confessed by everyone and everything that has breath! God Almighty has scheduled the termination of time, and it is not possible for it to be delayed. All of nature will be concluded, having served its purpose. The totality of the created universe will go up in flames, as it is written: "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet 3:10). The spirits of all men, from Adam to the end of the world, will survive, and stand before "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen 18:25; Psa 94:2) to "give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12). At that time, God will be fully vindicated in all that He said and did. Thus it is written, "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom 3:4). All who have disagreed with God will be exposed before an assembled universe, and God will determine their eternal and unchangeable status. Those are simply the bare facts in the case.

Things will not always continue as they are now. Life is to be lived with these things in view. The Word of God is written with this in mind. The giving of the Law, the coming of John the Baptist, the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His present intercession were appointed with these realities in perspective.

I do not know why these matters are not declared with greater frequency and power – unless it is simply because they are not believed. Whether it is loudly professed, or held within the confines of the heart, myriad of Americans hold to the persuasion exposed by Peter: "where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet 3:4). Such people are on the precipice of eternal ruin.

Were men to believe this – that there is an appointed END – they would seek a Savior. Those who wear His name would more fervently seek for "mercy, and grace to help in the time of need" (Heb 4:16). If men were more conscious of "the end," the world would lose its attractiveness. Scripture would become the object of more earnest inquiry, and preachers of the Gospel would be in heavy demand.

Boiled down to its essence, transgression occurs when men are distracted from the consideration of "the end." When the present becomes dominant, sin is ready to enter the door! Eve did not eat

of the forbidden fruit until THE PRESENT, coupled with the belief of a lie, dominated her thinking. She did not ponder the "end" declared by the Living God, but thought only of the present advantage and present satisfaction. Her record cannot be ignored (Gen 3:1-6)! That single event – both Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit – impacted the entire human race, from then until "the end" of the world. Both sin and death entered the world at that time, and will remain as long as the earth remains (Rom 5:12).

The "here and the now" are enemies of the soul when they are in the forefront. We are "saved by

hope,” not by experience! It is not what you have NOW that is the most important, but what will remain with you in “THE END!”

I have grown weary of an emphasis on “the here and the now.” It has produced many careers, and purported specialists without number; but it has not made ready “a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk 1:17)! That emphasis has produced religious conglomerates, mega-churches, and media empires. It is the Divinely appointed future that gives relevance to present. “Then” gives meaning to “now.” “There” gives significance to “here.” An emphasis on things confined to “this present evil world” (Gal 1:4) leads to separation from God and eternal ruin.

This series of lessons will expound the impact of words, works, and circumstances in view of “the end.

– Given O. Blakely

## Part 2 - THE END!

"But THE END OF ALL THING is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

### Lesson 2 of 22

#### THE END!

The Holy Spirit employs a vocabulary conducive to watchfulness, faithfulness, and readiness. If you will "hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 22:16), He will leave you looking toward the future. His analysis of the past always fortifies the need to prepare for the future. His probing of the present is in order that men may cultivate their souls for the future. Take away the future, and there is no reason for the past, or point to the present. It is what is coming that validates and gives meaning to the past and present! As the Spirit declares, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor 15:19).

The expression "THE END" is a common one in the Word of God. It not only represents an appointed time, but is a focus of revelation. Whatever subject or circumstance is being addressed, Scripture always speaks in view of "THE END." A prelude to this type of emphasis was seen in Noah's day. God revealed to this holy man, "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Gen 6:13). There was going to be an abrupt termination to things as they were; they would be brought to a grinding halt. The consummation of Israel's bondage in Egypt was also referred to as an "END." "And it came to pass at THE END of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt" (Ex 12:41). In both cases, a conclusion of one era occurred, as well as the beginning of another. That is the way God works. What is more, what follows the conclusion is always "better" for those accepted by God—ALWAYS!

The Psalmist was motivated by a consideration of "THE END." "Teach me, O LORD, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to THE END . . . My heart is set on keeping your decrees to THE VERY END" (Psa 33:33,112). The prophets often announced the conclusion of God's tolerance of wickedness in His people. One of the most telling expressions of this Divine reaction is iterated by the prophet Ezekiel. "Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; AN END, THE END is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is THE END come upon thee, and I will send Mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations . . ." "AN END, THE END is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come" (Ezek 7:2-3a, 6). The Lord told Daniel the words of his book were "closed up and sealed until the time of THE END" (Dan 12:9). The Lord also told the prophet he would be advantaged at "THE END." "But go thou thy way till THE END be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at THE END of the days." (Dan 12:13).

The Divine manner of speaking is seen in these statements. They are made in view of THE END, or the objective that drove the mentioned occurrences.

The Gospels "THE END" repeatedly, uprooting men from the distractions of the present, and tearing them away from unlawfully clinging to the past. The words are as salient today as they were then. We will find it to our eternal advantage to give heed to them.

"But he that shall endure unto THE END, the same shall be saved." (Mat 24:13)

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall THE END come." (Matt 24:14)

"But Peter followed Him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see THE END." (Matt 26:58)

"In THE END of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." (Matt 28:1)

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto THE END of the world. Amen." (Matt 28:20)

"And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but THE END shall not be yet." (Mark 13:7)

"And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that shall endure unto THE END, the same shall be saved." (Mark 13:13); "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but THE END is not by and by." (Luke 21:9)

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto THE END." (John 13:1)

You cannot listen long to Jesus without becoming acutely aware of "THE END." "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to THE END shall be saved . . .

"The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is THE END of the world; and the reapers are the angels . . . As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in THE END of this world . . . So shall it be at THE END of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just . . . And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of THE END of the world? . . . And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but THE END is not yet . . . But he that shall endure unto THE END, the same shall be saved . . . "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall THE END come . . . But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see THE END" (Matt 10:22; 13:39-40,49; 24:3,6; 24:13,14; 26:58).

Therefore, God's people must not allow present circumstances, or things pertaining to "this present evil world" (Gal 1:4), to be the locus of their thought. Understand that a staggering percentage of today's "Christian" preaching and teaching is firmly anchored to this time and realm – and such an emphasis is simply wrong.

Given O. Blakely

### Part 3 - THE PROMINENCE OF "THE END" IN SOUND DOCTRINE

"But THE END OF ALL THINGS is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 3 of 22

#### THE PROMINENCE OF "THE END" IN SOUND DOCTRINE

The Apostles also spoke with "THE END" in perspective, a view all too often absent from contemporary preaching. Remove "the end" from your thinking, and all Scripture suddenly appears irrelevant.

"Who shall also confirm you unto THE END, THAT YE MAY BE BLAMELESS in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:8). Is there really any valid anticipation of glory that is not contingent on the glorified Christ keeping us to THE END? And, is that something Jesus does independently of our personal involvement?

"Then cometh THE END, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24). Is salvation really finalized before the glorified Christ delivers the Kingdom to God? And, if Jesus is active, can any professing believer justify being inactive in His Kingdom?

"But Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto THE END" (Heb 3:6). Is it really possible to remain part of Christ's "house" if we do not keep a conscious grip upon confidence, coupled with firmly holding on to the rejoicing of the hope?

"But Christ as a son over His own house; whose house are we, IF WE HOLD FAST the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto THE END." (Heb 3:6); "For we are made partakers of Christ, IF WE HOLD the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto THE END" (Heb 3:14). Who is the person who imagines they can remain "partakers of Christ" without holding "the beginning of our confidence" steadfastly to the end?

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE unto THE END" (Heb 6:11). Can a vacillating and inconsistent professing Christian obtain glory without having the sort of diligence that results in "full assurance" to the end of their life?

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, BE SOBER AND HOPE to THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). Is it really possible to obtain the grace Jesus will bring with Him if we are not sober, and hoping to the end?

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth MY WORKS unto THE END, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev 2:26). Who can justify NOT keeping "the works" of Jesus to "the end." The "works" of Jesus include His atonement, reconciliation, washing, justifying, and much more. How can a person who fails to keep those works be praised by God (1 Cor 4:5), and hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matt 25:21)?

Is there any lack of clarity in these promises. Do they allow debate on whether or not a person can start, and yet not finish? Has not the Lord spoken plainly? Is there any ambiguity in His words? If they are clear, then why are multitudes of professing believers ignoring them? I will let Jesus answer that question: "Why do ye not understand My speech? Even because ye cannot hear My word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When

he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:43-44). There you have it, THE WORD OF THE KING, before whom all men will eventually stand.

Faith, by its very nature, anticipates THE END – the conclusion. There is an appointed “END” to persecutions and sufferings. The conflict with sin will end. Our earthly probation and orientation for glory will conclude. Confinement to seeing “through a glass darkly” will terminate, and we will “know as we are known.” Were it not for the anticipation of “THE END,” life would become intolerable, and we would “faint” from spiritual exhaustion. Almost without exception, those who despair of life have failed to contemplate “THE END”– the eternal destiny to which they have been appointed by the grace of God.

Good teaching is delivered with “THE END” in perspective. Bad teaching leaves “the end” in obscurity. The godly teacher will not drape the cloth of temporality over his teaching, majoring on life in this world. Rather, He will preach and teach with eternity in view, thereby giving his listeners the advantage.

A theology that does not leave men with an acute awareness of “THE END” cannot be from God! When individuals are left anchored to this world and focusing on life in the body, they have been greatly handicapped. It is tragic that such results are often produced in the name of the Lord. The role of spiritual leaders is to prepare men for “THE END,” which is inevitable. This does involve the past and present, BUT they are not the preeminent considerations. They are always subordinate matters. Some sophists are teaching men how to cope with the present. Far better to teach them to cope with “THE END.”

## Part 4 - THE LANGUAGE OF NEARNESS

"But the end of all things IS AT HAND: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 4 of 22

### THE LANGUAGE OF NEARNESS

When speaking of "the end," the coming of the Lord, and the judgment, THE LANGUAGE OF NEARNESS is often used. To some, men of God wrote as though they expected the conclusion of everything to occur very shortly in time. Our text is a case in point, and we will deal with several other texts that are so characterized. "The end of all things IS AT HAND."

Some have chosen to believe this type of language rules out the consideration of the passing of the heavens and the earth. According to them, this kind of expression is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the passing of Jewish dominance. Jesus did speak of the judgment of Jerusalem (Matt 23:36-37; Lk 13:34-35; 21:19-24), but did not confine His remarks concerning "the end" to that event (Matt 10:22; 13:39; 24:6).

FAITH has a perspective that cannot be embraced by the flesh. TIME IS NOT ITS PRIMARY REFERENCE POINT! It assumes the posture of God, with Whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (1 Pet 3:8, NIV). What appears lengthy to the flesh, actually is brief and transitory to the spiritual mind. The affliction of a believer, although it may stretch over many years, and even decades, is perceived as "but for a moment" (2 Cor 4:17). An entire lifetime is seen as breath in the nostrils (Gen 7:22; Isa 2:22). From another point of view, the brevity of life is confirmed by the assessment of Abraham: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen 18:27).

Think of some additional expressions of Scripture that show this attitude.

"That the triumphing of the wicked is SHORT, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a MOMENT?" (Job 20:5). Other versions read, "a lifetime" (NIV).

"For yet A LITTLE WHILE, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Psa 37:10).

"In a LITTLE wrath I hid My face from thee FOR A MOMENT; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer" (Isa 54:8) – that "moment" was 70 years).

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is A LITTLE WHILE, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts" (Hag 2:6-7) – spoken 500 years before Jesus was born, and more than 2,500 years from our time). "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see NOT YET all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the

grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb 2:7-9). There you have a synopsis of over 6,000 years.

"For yet A LITTLE WHILE, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb 10:37 - over 2,000 years since spoken).

"Wherein ye greatlyrejoice, though now FOR A SEASON, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Pet 1:6).

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered A WHILE, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet 5:10).

"For our light affliction, which is but FOR A MOMENT, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor 4:17) – a perspective of the entirety of life).

The above texts reflect the manner of the Kingdom. When things are viewed in the light of eternity, time is no longer the principle thing. Only faith – justifying faith – can stand the test of time. Those who “depart from the faith” do so because they have not been able to endure THE TEST OF TIME (Luke 8:13).

Some are persuaded the Apostles wrote as though the coming of the Lord and the end of all things were imminent – to take place in their generation. However, this was not an intellectual view, but the view of faith. You cannot approach the Bible in a scholastic, or mere academic manner, and get the sense of the text. For some, that appears unreasonable, but only because they do not know the superiority of faith! Abraham believed God and lived by hope, even when, from an earthly point of view, it was not reasonable. Thus, it is written, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" Rom 4:18).

In Scripture, the next important Divine working – whether it is the end of the world, the coming of the Lord, or the day of judgment – is considered to be “at hand.” That is, WE ARE TO LIVE WITH THAT APPOINTED EVENT IN MIND, allowing nothing in this world to make that event a secondary matter. In this case, perspective replaces time in our thinking. With the promises of God in our hearts and minds, life is considered brief, and the end is perceived as near.

## Part 5 - CONSIDERING AND PRESENTING THE END OF ALL THINGS

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 5 of 22

### CONSIDERING AND PRESENTING THE END OF ALL THINGS

The "end of all things" is an intriguing subject, tantalizing the intellect of men – the carnal intellect. Two kinds of intellect are present in the believer – one is found in "the old man," and the other in "the new man." One kind of thinking is to be "put off," and the other kind "put on." Thus it is written, "But ye have not so LEARNED CHRIST; If so be that ye have HEARD HIM, and have been TAUGHT BY HIM, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye PUT OFF concerning the former conversation THE OLD MAN, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be RENEWED in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on THE NEW MAN, which after God is CREATED in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24). In Christ Jesus, valid thinking and reasoning always take place in "the new man," who "has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph 4:24, NASB). This is the result of being "born again" (1 Pet 1:23).

Thinking and reasoning that proceeds from "the old man," is totally unacceptable – even when men throw the drapery of religion over it. It is written, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:7). The NASB reads, "because the mind set on the flesh IS HOSTILE TOWARD GOD; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so" (Rom 8:7). That mind can be educated, trained, and function according to the strictest form of discipline – but it is still "hostile toward God."

Now, I will affirm, that it appears as though the majority of contemporary teaching concerning "the end of all things," is actually the result of "the carnal mind." We know this is the case because it has not produced a holy and devout people, and has even resulted in division, rather than "the unity of the Spirit" (Eph 4:3).

This condition requires extraordinary spiritual discipline. We must allow the Word of God to speak to our hearts, MAJORING on believing its testimony – which is submitting to "the law of faith." If it seems unreasonable, believe it anyway! God will not talk about "the end of all things" like a twentieth century reporter. He will speak WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW. He will lay the temporalities of this life along side eternity, and call them "short," "brief," and "momentary." He will speak of the passing of the heavens and the earth as though it were going to take place in the next moment. He will call upon you to view the return of His Son and the conclusion of your suffering as though it were the next thing to occur. FAITH MUST HAVE A MESSAGE LIKE THIS! It must live in view of eternity, and perceive the temporary handicaps of life in the flesh as brief and momentary. That simply is the nature of spiritual life.

It would not have been comforting to Adam and Eve to hear God say the promised Seed would come in 4,000 years! God did not tell Abraham Isaac would not be born for 25 years. Haggai did not say the "Desire of all nations" would not come for 500 years, nor did Isaiah promise the gift of a Son in 700 years! The Lord did not tell David He would raise up One to sit upon his throne in 1,000 years. Jesus did not say He would return to take His disciples to Himself over 2,000 years LATER. See, that is not the manner of the Kingdom. The Lord does not appeal to our

heads, or our analytical abilities, but to our hearts and our faith! The heart is superior to the mind, and faith is superior to logic. It is important to see this!

## Part 6 - A WORD ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY

"But the end of all things is at hand: Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 6 of 22

### A WORD ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology is the study, or knowledge, of last things. By its very nature, it tends to thrust men into speculation and profitless areas of thought. Curiosity and intellectual novelty often find an open door when men approach the subject of "eschatology." Such a "study" allows for an astounding amount of speculation, surmisings, human opinion, and fanciful imagination.

Notwithstanding this propensity, we must not draw back from a sober consideration of the grand conclusion of "all things." We will find that it is not approached in a manner that satisfies the curious and the disinterested. There is a tone in the way the Spirit speaks of "last things" that are designed to prepare men for the passing of the present heavens and earth, and the coming of a new heaven and a new earth quite unlike the present ones.

### AN OBJECTIVE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God is an objective one. Divine PURPOSE is being fulfilled among the sons of men! The present earth is not simply a place where a variety of things – both good and evil – are taking place. Rather, it is the place where God is working out His "eternal purpose," readying those who are reconciled to Him, to be forever with Him in an untainted and pure environment of light.

A plan conceived before the foundation of the world is in the process of completion within the very domain governed by Satan, the "prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:20; 16:11).

"Principalities and powers in heavenly places" are privy to the fulfillment of this objective, as they behold the Lord Working in the church (Eph 3:9-10) – and it is a grand sight to behold.

The Scriptures provide us with key events pertaining to the fulfillment of this purpose. They verify that "nothing is too hard for the Lord" (Jer 32:17). In Scripture, as well as personal experience, it is confirmed, "the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear" (Isa 59:1).

Think of how the Lord's Christ was brought into the world in spite of the focused murder of holy people from "righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah" (Matt 23:35). Obstacles, like the people of God in hard bondage, barren women, the slaughter of infants, and a deluge of false and aggressive prophets could not stop the coming of the Savior into the world. Jew and Gentile were brought into one God-glorifying body in what appeared to be impossible circumstances. Satan was defeated by means of death, and the Law that was against us was taken out of the way. All of this was the fulfillment of DIVINE INTENTION. His purposes are always brought to a culmination, and are never frustrated or abandoned. How well it is stated through Isaiah the prophet. "Remember the former things of old: for I AM GOD, and there is none else; I AM GOD, and there is none like me, DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, MY COUNSEL SHALL STAND, and

I will do ALL my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I WILL ALSO BRING IT TO PASS; I have purposed it, I WILL ALSO DO IT" (Isa 46:9-11). It is not possible to profitably consider "last things" without this revealed perspective.

When we address of "the end of all things," we are dealing with the GRAND CULMINATION of God's purpose in all its details. We are not merely viewing things that will simply happen. When "the end" has come, God will then be "justified in all of His sayings." He will "overcome" in an obvious manner (Rom 3:4). What He has determined shall be brought to completion in the most precise manner. Not one jot or tittle will be omitted in the fulfillment of His will.

## Part 7 - SHROUDED BY MYSTERY?

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 7 of 22

### SHROUDED BY MYSTERY?

Because of the tendency of men to speculate in the consideration of "last things," some have chosen to ignore "last things." Such individuals take the position that little or nothing can be known of these "things." There are no real and applicable signs of "last things," they affirm, and therefore they treat them as though they were inconsequential. There is a principle declared in Scripture that touches upon this subject. "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). Whether it is for blessing or cursing, reward or judgement, the Lord takes measures to ensure people can be ready. If they are caught "unawares" by what He does, it is NOT because they had to be. Hardness of heart and a lack of faith obscure Divine intent more than a lack of revelation.

This principle is seen in the appearance of Jesus to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb 9:26). When Jesus was born, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." Because of that expectation, and the presence of the Holy Spirit upon Him, "it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:25-26). When he saw the "Holy Child" and blessed Mary and Joseph, an elderly widow named Anna, who fasted and prayed continually in the temple, came in while Simeon was blessing the Babe Jesus. Because she was expecting she "coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). If people were sensitive to the working of the Lord, there was evidence of the appearing of the Messiah.

John the Baptist was sent to "prepare the way of the Lord" by bringing that expectation to a peak. That is how the Lord works.

When Jesus was challenged by the religious leaders to show them a sign, He upbraided them for being obtuse, and unable to detect the signs around them. "He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" (Mat 16:2-3).

There were indicators, Divinely appointed, that loudly declared the Messiah was among them – but they could not perceive them. Their hearts were hard, and thus their perceptive powers were dull and incapable of seeing the signs God had given. If that was true of Christ's first appearance, is there a soul amongst us naive enough to believe Christ's "appearance the second time" (Heb 9:28) will have no indicators? I suppose some learned scribes could have cited previous periods of time when similar signs existed. They could have reasoned there was nothing truly unique about the times in which they lived. However learned their explanations might have been, they would have been 100% wrong!

The point to be seen is this: God does not burst upon men without warning. They must, however,

be alert and sensitive. Their ears must be pointed toward heaven, and their eyes looking upward. If the mighty God readied men for the entrance of Jesus into the world the first time, is there a thinking person that will dare to assume He would not do the same in regard to the Lord's appearance "the second time" (Heb 9:28)? I have often heard men say Christ's second coming and the end of the world will not be attended by signs or indicators. Some dare to chide people for believing such things, offering paltry explanations of passages of Scripture that contradict their stilted opinions. It is not possible to overstate the seriousness of such misrepresentations, or the damage they bring to the hearts of men. We will find this approach contradicts the thrust of revelation, and the nature of God as well.

When John the Baptist was preparing the way for the Lord's Christ, "the people were in a state of expectation" (Luke 3:15). They sensed something was in the wind, so to speak. The power and preaching of John the Baptist brought that expectation to a high level. The reason for his ministry was the preparation of the way of the Lord! It is God's manner to do things this way! Divinely appointed events are preceded by Divinely appointed preparations and signs. Blessed is the person who can see them.

## Part 8 - "THE END" EMBRACES SEVERAL PRIMARY REVELATIONS

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 8 of 22

### "THE END" EMBRACES SEVERAL PRIMARY REVELATIONS

A review of "the end of all things" is all-encompassing. Time will not allow an adequate coverage of the matters involved. It will be of profit, however, to mention SOME of the areas addressed by "the end of all things." This involves more than an abrupt conclusion, although it is certainly that. Words like "fulfillment," "determination," "completion," "finish," "accomplishment," "achievement," and "realization" are associated with "the end."

The very idea of "THE END" postulates the working out of a purpose. In this consideration that purpose, intention, or resolve, is God's "ETERNAL PURPOSE" (Eph 3:11). It an objective that will be thoroughly completed, and universally witnessed.

For the elect, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to HIS PURPOSE" (Rom 8:28). It is God's "good pleasure which He hath PURPOSED in himself" (Eph 1:9) that will be fully realized. In Christ Jesus the saved "have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph 1:11). God is described as He "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own PURPOSE and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim 1:9). "THE END" testifies to the completion of that "purpose."

At "THE END," The grand objective of God will be brought to a culmination. Some of the matters associated with "the end of all things" are good to ponder. They speak of a heavenly objective that will be brought to a full, final, and God-glorifying conclusion.

1. The Return of the Lord Jesus will be realized (Heb 10:37).
2. The Destruction of the Heavens and the Earth will take place (2 Pet 3:10-13).
3. Divine Objectives for the Jews and Gentiles will have been realized (Rom 9-11).
4. The Overthrow of Apostate Christendom (Rev 14:8; 16:19).
5. The Removal of the Devil will take place (Rev 20:10).
6. In "the end," the Final Overthrow of Death will take place in the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:54-55).
7. Then, faithful stewards will receive "praise from God" (1 Cor 4:5).
8. Then, those to know not God and obey not the Gospel will be punished (2 Thess 1:8).
9. When the end comes, The Fulfillment of all of the Prophets will have been realized (Rev 10:7).
10. In "the end" there will be the Complete Frustration of Satan's Intentions (Rev 20:10).
11. When "the end comes," The Glorification of the Saints will take place (1 John 3:1-2).
12. Ponder "the end" as the time when God in will be "justified in ALL of His Sayings" – and that before an assembled universe (Rom 3:4).

We have come to a "large room" (Psalm 31:8) in the consideration of "the end of all things." This is something those who are living by faith and walking in the Spirit anticipate with great and glad expectation. This is why they refuse to court the world, become overly-involved in transitory

things, reject ungodliness and worldly lusts (), and “count it "count it all joy” when they “fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of [their] faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3).

For anyone living by faith (Heb 10:38), and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16), the thoughtful consideration of “the end” is an appointed antidote for fear, despair, a troubled heart, and a host of other things.

## Part 9 - OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 9 of 22

### OVERVIEW OF THE TEXT

There is a sound of urgency in our text. No stilted theology here! We are speaking about something all-inclusive! Peter is not writing about an isolated point in history, after which the world will go on, just as at other times. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Pet 4:7). Other versions read, "The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled SO THAT you can pray" (NIV). He states the end of "ALL THINGS" is at hand – imminent, or looming. The word "all" means precisely that! It is not restrictive, nor does it represent something fragmentary. It comes from a word that means "all, any, every, the whole: . . . thoroughly . . ." This RULES OUT the view that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Jewry was the point of reference.

"All things" means everything as it is now – ALL that exists within the framework of time. They will ALL come to an end – an abrupt and conclusive end! Everything that is physical will end.

Present moral requirements involving the will and consciousness, will come to an end. The need for decision will end. The need for discipline will end. The lack of awareness of God will end.

Temptation will end. Men will no longer be confronted with good and evil, and with the obligation to make a choice. All of those things are confined to time – and time itself will end.

Christ's intercession will end. The devil's domain will end. Flesh and blood will come to an end. Insurrection against the Most High will no longer exist. War will end. The struggles of the godly will terminate, together with the ease of the ungodly. For the saints of the Lord, sorrow, pain, death, weariness, perplexity, and struggle will end. Their crying will end, and they will no longer have within them "another law, warring against the law of their mind." No more will they be "absent from the Lord," nor will they require deliverance! "ALL THINGS" are coming to an end!

Blessing will NOT come to an end, but first-fruit blessing will! We will no longer have samples from the homeland, but will be in the homeland itself. "THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND." For both the godly and the ungodly, their present status will be enhanced – brought to its intended fruition. Believers will be brought closer, and unbelievers will be thrust away COMPLETELY. The enjoyment of Divine favor will increase for the saints, and the wrath of God will increase for the wicked.

THIS IS WHY saints are to be "sober, and watchful in their prayers."

THIS IS WHY they are to "have fervent charity among" themselves (1 Pet 4:8).

THIS IS WHY they are to "use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Peter 4:9).

THIS IS WHY "as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet 4:10).

THIS IS WHY "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet 4:11).

THIS IS WHY "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet 4:12-13).

Now, those in Christ Jesus are to LIVE with that END in mind. They are to PRAY with that end in mind. They are to "PERFECT HOLINESS" with that in mind. That is precisely why Peter gave this message. Living with "THE END" in mind will equip you to fulfill all other exhortations.

## Part 10 - THE IMPACT OF THE AWARENESS OF "THE END OF ALL THINGS"

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 10 of 22

### THE IMPACT OF THE AWARENESS OF "THE END OF ALL THINGS"

The Spirit's exhortation, in light of "the end," is arresting. Observe how the Spirit speaks of PRAYER in this word!

"But the end of all things is at hand: BE YE THEREFORE SOBER, and WATCH UNTO PRAYER" (1 Pet 4:7). Other versions read, "therefore be serious and watchful IN YOUR PRAYERS" (NKJV), "be of sound judgment and sober spirit FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER" (NASB), "Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled SO THAT YOU CAN PRAY" (NIV), "therefore be serious and discipline yourselves FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR PRAYERS" (NRSV); "therefore keep sane and sober FOR YOUR PRAYERS" (RSV); "so be serious in your behavior and keep on the watch WITH PRAYER" (BBE); "Be prudent therefore, and WATCH IN YOUR PRAYERS" (DOUAY); and "But the end and culmination of all things has now come near; keep sound minded and self-restrained and alert therefore FOR [THE PRACTICE OF] PRAYER" (Amplified).

There is one thing to be said about PRAYER – the charlatans cannot exploit it, or use it to fulfill their carnal ambitions. Few preachers and teachers stress prayer. By way of comparison, Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me IN YOUR PRAYERS to God for me" (Rom 15:30). And again, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS I shall be given unto you" (Philemon 1:22). Peter wrote, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; THAT YOUR PRAYERS BE NOT HINDERED" (1 Pet 3:7). The early church continued steadfastly "IN PRAYERS" (Acts 2:42). Paul wrote "I exhort therefore, that, FIRST OF ALL, supplications, PRAYERS, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; THAT WE MAY lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim 2:1-2). In the Revelation, the saint's "PRAYERS" are set forth as "golden vials full of odors" (Rev 5:8), or "golden bowls full of incense" (NIV).

You see, then, the significance of prayers in the fabric of spiritual life.

Now, our text affirms an awareness and persuasion of "the END of all things" bears directly upon our prayers. It will shape them, and grant a proper perspective when praying. When you pray in view of "the end of all things," you pray differently. It causes the person who is praying to think more of "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10; Lk 11:2). It will move a person praying for the deliverance of a soul (1 John 5:16), or for increased "spiritual understanding" (Col 1:9), to pray more fervently.

Few congregations are noted for their prayers together. By way of comparison, Jesus spoke about "WHEN YE PRAY." "But WHEN YE PRAY, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt 6:7); "Therefore I say unto you,

What things soever ye desire, WHEN YE PRAY, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24); "And He said unto them, WHEN YE PRAY, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth" (Luke 11:2).

In today's Western world, these words have a strange sound. They simply do not blend with the modern mind set. Humor, distraction, novelty, light-heartedness – these are all demands of the time. The person who does not live on the surface of life is viewed as peculiar and strange. The truth of the matter is that those living on the surface are the strange ones. They are living without "THE END" in view, and thus it will catch them unawares and unprepared. Their prayers are less effective – if, indeed, they are effective at all – because they are not considering "THE END OF ALL THINGS."

## Part 11 - SOBER-MINDEDNESS

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 11 of 22

### SOBER-MINDEDNESS

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober . . .”

Seriousness, or sober-mindedness, does not equate to moroseness, melancholy, or hardness. Rather, it means we are alert, attentive, and awake. In view of “the end,” we live so the devil cannot catch us unawares, and thus bring us down to perdition. Suffice it to say, this frame of mind is exceedingly rare in our day, when entertainment and shallow thought dominate even the religious world. There is no Gospel for such a mind-set!

The word “sober,” or “serious,” means “to think straight,” or be in a “sound” state of mind. This is an alert mind that is not caught off guard by the devil. It is a spiritual state of mind, where the things of God are not vague or in the background of our thinking. Things that contribute to our sober mindedness are assets. Things that jeopardize that frame of spirit are our hindrances. It is interesting that the word “sober” is not found in the Old Testament Scriptures. The word “serious” is only found once in the NRSV Old Testament writings, and the term “clear minded” (NIV) is only mentioned in our text.

This is the mind God “gave us” – a “sound mind” – “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of A SOUND MIND” (2 Tim 1:7) – and it is our business to maintain it. Because of their propensity to foolishness, “young men” are exhorted to be “sober minded” (Tit 2:6). The NIV translates this word “self controlled” in Titus 2:6, and “sober judgement” in Romans 12:3. The latter conveys the idea more precisely. It is “self control” in the sense of maintaining a proper focus; not allowing distractions or intrusive thoughts to divert us from seeing things as they really are. Few things are as conducive to sound-mindedness, or sobriety, as a proper consideration of “THE END OF ALL THINGS.” Temptation is ALWAYS an appeal to the “now.”

### SELF CONTROLLED

In Scripture, self control is more than a mere regimen. It is controlling the part of us that is unregenerate – the “old man” (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9), or Adamic nature – “the flesh” (Rom 8:4-12). It is refusing to give the reins of life to the part of our persons that is “perishing,” or “wasting away” (2 Cor 4:16). Testifying of his activity in this connection, Paul wrote, “But I keep under my body, and BRING IT UNDER SUBJECTION: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a CASTAWAY” (1 Cor 9:27). Other versions read, “disqualified” (NKJV). The NRSV and NIV accentuate the manner in which this was done: “I punish my body and enslave it . . . No, I beat my body and make it my slave.” Paul did not pamper his body, but refused to let it have the dominance. He was strict with it, forcing it to serve him rather than him serving it. An indulgent society cannot comprehend this mind set, but it is the only one that is acceptable in the Kingdom of God.

In view of the imminent “END OF ALL THINGS,” it is the height of absurdity to accent the temporal and condemned part of our persons. Believers must not allow this to happen! It is not that they should attempt to not allow it to happen, they MUST not allow it to happen! How appropriate are the words of the Spirit. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:11-12).

Our minds are to be fixed on the things of God, and our lower nature subdued in the power of the Spirit. That is the intent of these words, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom 8:13-14).

Our text infers that contemplating “THE END OF ALL THINGS” is indispensable to the formation and maintenance of sober mindedness, and self control. The absence of this perspective, therefore, thrusts one into jeopardy. It absolutely gives the devil an advantage.

If this is a proper assessment, and it unquestionably is, the current emphasis on this world that is found within the professed church, is one of the most effective delusions ever perpetrated by our adversary, the devil. It has compelled men and women to live in a disarmed state, vulnerable to the devices of the wicked one. Thus, people exist without a lively awareness of the impending “THE END OF ALL THINGS,” giving themselves to what will end, and ignoring the things that will not end. This is a tragic circumstance!

– Given O. Blakely

## Part 12 - THE IMPACT CONSIDERING “THE END OF ALL THINGS” UPON PRAYER

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH UNTO PRAYER. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 12 of 22

### THE IMPACT CONSIDERING “THE END OF ALL THINGS” UPON PRAYER

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and WATCH UNTO PRAYER."

It is common to hear people speak of being deficient in prayer. In fact, I know of no one who is thoroughly satisfied with their participation in this aspect of spiritual life. How does one improve their prayer-life? For some, it is a matter of personal discipline, routine, or habit. It is not unusual to hear of prayer journals, prayer-chains [and other disciplinary approaches to prayer] as superior achievements. Peter looks at prayer from a fresh perspective – PRAYING WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW – “The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled SO THAT YOU CAN PRAY” (NIV).

Can a person pray effectively without an acute awareness of “THE END OF ALL THINGS”? Remember, simply uttering words is not all there is to prayer. It is important “in everything” to let our “requests be made known unto God” (Phil 4:6-7). That must never be underplayed. That is the revealed alternative to allowing the cares of this world to crush us, driving us out from the presence of the Lord. The admonition is preceded by the words, “Be carefully for nothing!” Other versions read “Be anxious for nothing” (NKJV), “Do not worry about anything” (NRSV). Worry is not to be the impetus of our prayers.

The purpose of this injunction is to ensure the possession of “the peace of God,” which “will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NRSV). There is, however, another dimension to prayer which must not be neglected. James reminds us, “The EFFECTUAL fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Other versions read, “The EFFECTIVE prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (NASB), “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and EFFECTIVE” (NIV). Prayer is not merely a disciplined exercise! It is an EFFECTIVE prayer that “can accomplish much” (NASB).

A due consideration of “the end of all things” will contribute to our own righteousness, and the fervency of our prayers, as well as their effectiveness. The text in James deals with a spiritual approach to sickness. Those who are sick are to call for the elders of the church. They are assumed to be godly men. They are to pray over the person, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The promise is, “The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven” (James 5:15). The conclusion of the writer is that SIN should be dealt with, not sickness. “Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.” [Remember, this was not a gift limited to the Apostles, for James was not an Apostle.] It is then that James reminds us of the effectiveness of an earnest prayer coming from a righteous man. I realize some have taken this text to establish a liturgical approach to sickness. That is NOT the intent of the Scripture. Rather, it is to show us the impact of godly character upon our prayers. FEW THINGS AFFECT PRAYER AND OUR CHARACTER AS COMPLETELY AS THE CONSIDERATION OF “THE END OF ALL THINGS.” It tends to bring more clarity to our minds.

I remember, as a young believer, being confused about things that were lawful and things that were unlawful for the believer. This particularly applied to matters not directly mentioned in Scripture. Many times I was counseled by godly people to look at the matter from the viewpoint of “the end of all things.” I was wisely told to ask myself this question, “Would you like to be found doing that when Jesus comes again?” As I reflect back on those times, I am staggered by the effectiveness of that interrogation. I was always able to come up with the right answer, regardless of the nature of the activity being questioned. The contemplation of “the end of all things” brought with it an awareness of right and wrong that could not otherwise have been obtained.

Effective prayers can be traced, in part, to an acute awareness of the temporality of everything that is seen. When we pray, looking at the things that “are NOT seen” (2 Cor 4:17-18), we pray differently. Life’s situations are seen differently in view of the “the end of all things.”

## Part 13 - THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 13 of 22

### THE END OF ALL THINGS IS NEAR

"But the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet 4:7)

Our text is clear on the matter, "The end of all things is near!" He does not say it MAY be near, but that it IS near! Those who are uncomfortable in the consideration of "the end" like to tell us why they do not think "the end of all things is near." However, after they have let us behold their unbelief, the text still stands! The point is not to predict WHEN "the end of all things" will occur, but that it WILL occur – and that we are to prepare ourselves for it! We are not to give our attention to date setters, but neither are we to close our ears to the words of the Spirit.

Some have concluded that "the end" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, fulfilled in 70 A.D. Their view neutralizes the text, removing its power and lulling men into spiritual sleep. It is a very foolish view that affirms everything ended with the destruction of Jerusalem! From the standpoint of Divine purpose, very little (proportionately) ended at that time. Death did not end. Sin did not end. The heavens and the earth did not end. Sorrow, pain, and death did not end. The struggles of the faithful did not end. War, famine, and pestilence did not end! Those are only part of the "all things" that are going to totally cease when "the end" comes!

God's people need to hear about "the end of all things." For them, it is the beginning of unhindered fellowship with the Lord, an unveiled view of the King, and an uninterrupted reign with Christ.

The word "near" means "at hand," "imminent," or "approaching." This is a word of purpose, an expression of Divine objective. The heavenly time table is being fulfilled in the most precise manner. The word "end" comes from a word that means to set out for a definite point or goal; the point aimed at as a limit, i.e. (by implication) the conclusion of an act or state (termination, result [immediate, ultimate or prophetic], purpose) . . . finally, uttermost. Things are not winding down like a clock, but progressing to an appointed "end" or objective – and it is NEAR! The Spirit does not tell us HOW near – that is not the point of His affirmation. For the people of God, things are being worked "together" for their "good" (Rom 8:29). That will be made clear in "the end."

Life may appear to be jumbled, with no visible pattern or discernible purpose in the events that surround us. That is, however, only a delusion! The truth of the matter is this: God's purpose IN YOU is being brought to a culmination. If you are in Christ, you are being prepared for the inheritance that is "reserved for you in heaven," and for which you are being "kept by the power of God." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again UNTO a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, TO AN INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are KEPT by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed IN THE LAST TIME" (1 Pet 1:4-5).

The purpose for which you were born again is near! Lift up your head and be glad! Permit me to

put it in words taught by the Holy Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual words.

"The LORD WILL PERFECT that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands" (Psa 138:8).

2.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you WILL PERFORM IT until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

1. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will DO IT (1 Thess 5:23-24).

2.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, MAKE YOU PERFECT, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (1 Pet 5:10).

The next truly significant thing to happen is "THE END!" Lesser things that will occur – by Divine appointment – are subordinate to that! You must NOT fasten your eyes or set your heart upon things LEADING TO "the end," BUT ON "THE END" ITSELF. As it is written, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and HOPE TO THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you AT THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:13). The time of "the end" is the time when "the glory that should follow" will be fully experienced by the saints (1 Pet 1:9-11).

Drawing near is not an automated process, but a Divine purpose being fulfilled by His "determinate counsel." It is not that "the end" is simply coming near, God is BRINGING it near! We do not know the day or the hour, but we know it is fast approaching! The word has gone out from the mouth of the King. "And what I say to you I say to all: "WATCH!" (Mark 13:37). Keep awake" (NRSV) .You cannot afford to let this day "come upon you unawares," or "come on you unexpectedly" (NKJV), or "come on you suddenly like a trap" (Luke 21:34. NASB).

## Part 14 - THESE ARE THE LAST DAYS!

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 14 of 22

### THESE ARE THE LAST DAYS!

"And it shall come to pass in THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

"This know also, that in THE LAST DAYS perilous times shall come" (2 Tim 3:1); "Knowing this first, that there shall come in THE LAST DAYS scoffers, walking after their own lusts," (2 Pet 3:3)

The first of the above texts refers to the COMMENCEMENT of "the last days" – the final period of earthly history. The second texts point to the close of that final period, when Satan will unleash a barrage of delusion. We have now been in that period for over 1500 years. During that time thousands of denominations have been birthed, and a deluge of "divers and strange doctrines" (Heb 13:9) have been spawned in Christendom. These answer to the statement of Peter, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in THE LAST DAYS scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Pet 3:3).

There is no question about the times in which we are living, or how they are to be approached. The Spirit has affirmed we are in the closing period of time (which has proved to be an extremely lengthy period, that only the genuine people of God will survive), and we all do well to give heed to His words. Technically speaking, the "day of salvation" began in a time God called "THE LAST DAYS." In his first sermon Peter said, "And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

The ministry of the Son of God is during the time called "LAST DAYS." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb 1:1-2). When the appointed duration of "the day of salvation" occurs, the earth and all that is in it will go up in flames (2 Pet 3:10-13). "The day of salvation" is why the world was created, and why it has continued to this day. By Divine intent, it is the stage on which the drama of redemption is being accomplished.

The times of apostasy, a departure from the faith, and spiritual coldness, are identified with "THE LAST DAYS." "This know also, that in THE LAST DAYS perilous times shall come . . . Knowing this first, that there shall come in THE LAST DAYS scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3).

The time during which the Gospel is preached is called the "LAST TIMES." "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in THESE LAST TIMES for the

sake of you . . . “ (1 Pet 1:20, NASB). Jude, the brother of our Lord, identified the rise of “mockers” with “THE LAST TIME.” “They (the Apostles, v, 17) told you there should be mockers in the last time . . . “ (Jude 18, NASB). John the Beloved has pointed out in his inspired assessment of the time. "Little children, it is THE LAST TIME: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is THE LAST TIME" (1 John 2:18).

This is “the last times” of “the day of salvation” – and they stretch over many generations. They are the times when Satan is initiating his final effort to overthrow God’s appointed King, and the people that King is bringing to glory (Heb 2:10).

Understand that this is a high view of things, not a low view. It is part of a Divine panorama of God “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Psa 74:12). In the segment of time in which we are living, the same exhortation is given as was delivered to the first century church: "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom 13:11). It is speaking about God’s calendar, not the calendar of men. The “last days” stretch from the time of Paul’s exhortation to this present time.

## Part 15 - IT IS TIME TO AWAKE!

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 15 of 22

### IT IS TIME TO AWAKE!

"And that, knowing the time, that now IT IS HIGH TIME TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore CAST OFF the works of darkness, and let us PUT ON the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But PUT YE ON the Lord Jesus Christ, and MAKE NOT PROVISION for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom 13:11-14).

There is every reason to wake up!– To be alert, sharp, and quick-witted. This is not the time to be "slow of heart to believe" (Lk 24:25), lethargic of spirit, and insensitive of what surrounds us, and what is coming. This is one of the great hindrances of much of the entertainment of our day. It is an artificial and surface form of distraction. It quickens the flesh, but lulls the soul into sleep. These reasons should stab us awake, and cause us to think more deeply and profitably: "Our salvation is nearer!" "The night is far spent," or is running out! "The day is at hand!" – that is, the day of the Lord.

The Lord summons His people to awaken from spiritual slumber! "AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (1 Cor 15:34). "Wherefore He saith, AWAKE thou that sleepest, and ARISE FROM THE DEAD, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph 5:14). Perceive the revealed condition of those who are in a state of spiritual sleep! They are DEAD, and must "arise FROM THE DEAD. That is, such are in a state where they cannot receive from the Lord, for God "is NOT the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt 22:32). Such people are subject to the plundering of the devil who is known for working "while men slept" (Matt 13:25).

The time is short, requiring alertness and vigilance. This exhortation is based on believers' awareness of the time: "KNOWING THE TIME." This is no time for spiritual sluggishness or sleep. It is inexcusable for professed believers to be ignorant of the period in which they are living. The time of obscurity is drawing to a close! "THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT." Other versions read, "The night is almost over" (NKJV), "The night is almost gone!" (NASB), "The night is far gone" (NIV). You cannot look at this from a linguistic point of view, or with an academic perspective! This is addressed to faith, not to calculating intellect! It is not intended to arouse the desire to count years and calculate time tables! This is "an hour" for alertness and spiritual sensitivity! "The end of all things is at hand!"

One of the marks of false teaching and unsound doctrine is that it dulls the sensitivity of the heart, and does so in a manner that causes the receiver to be unaware of what is happening. It does to those who hear such teachings what Delilah did to Samson (Judges 16:6-18). Often coming in the name of intellectualocity and practicality, it actually throws a mantle of darkness over the soul, inducing "the sleep of death" (Psa 13:3). Through Jeremiah the Lord warned the people: "In their heat [their excitement, NKJV] I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep A PERPETUAL SLEEP, and not wake, saith the

LORD." (Jer 51:39). And again, "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep A PERPETUAL SLEEP, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts" (Jer 51:57). As you can see, God is not indifferent to the indifference of men. When men drift from Him, He will give them a banquet to eat that will induce a perpetual sleep. That is what He said.

There is reason to believe that some of this kind of judgment is taking place in our time. There is a marked decline in the interest of professed Christians in "the things of the Spirit of God" (Rom 8:5; 1 Cor 2:14). No preacher or teacher can afford to get caught up in this decline. The same God declared to Israel, "For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath HE COVERED" (Isa 29:10).

## Part 16 - THE DAY IS AT HAND

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 16 of 22

### THE DAY IS AT HAND

"The night is far spent, THE DAY IS AT HAND" (Rom 13:12). "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5).

"The day is at hand!" — the day of the Lord's return, the day of the new heavens and the new earth, the day of judgment! Do not reason within yourself that this is not true of every generation, and therefore has no special applicability to you! These are the words of the Spirit, and they are designed to bring you into accord with the manner of the Kingdom. "The end of all things is at hand!" This word is for all generations from the first century until today.

Every deed that is promoted by spiritual ignorance and aloofness from God is to be abandoned!

Believers, "knowing the time," are to arm themselves with spiritual light – "the armor of light" (Rom 13:12) – being discerning of the things of God. This is not the time for self-indulgence, loose living, and friction with your brethren! "The end of all things is at hand!"

Indeed, it is possible to be ignorant of the times, and therefore miss the blessing. It was so with Jerusalem, when they were visited by "the Dayspring from on high" (Lk 1:78). Hear the lament of the Savior! "For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because YOU DID NOT RECOGNIZE the time of your visitation" (Luke 19:43-44, NASB). Here Jesus foretold the destruction of the "holy city"– because they were unaware they had been visited by the Lord of glory! Their ignorance was judged. That is how serious it is to be ignorant of something that has been revealed – and, in the case of Jerusalem, both seen and heard.

The parallel is unmistakable! If the day of the Lord is "NEARER THAN WHEN WE BELIEVED" (Rom 13:12), we had better be able to discern it. If it does not seem nearer, then we have fallen asleep – because it actually IS nearer. It is not only "nearer" from the standpoint of fulfillment, it is also "nearer" from the outlook of desire! Preaching and teaching must reflect this perspective! The people of God must not be addressed as though homes, marriage, planting and reaping, and getting gain, were uninterrupted realities! They are not! "The END of all things is at hand!" Riches, success, fame, popularity, opulence, luxury, convenience – they are not what they appear to be. Advanced education may obtain something for you in this world, but it has no part in obtaining an eternal inheritance. The world has invented things to give men pleasure and surface satisfaction, but they quickly fade, and flee away.

One of the modern conditions that jeopardize the soul is the vaunting of temporal things, surface experiences, and shallow manners of life. The care of these things must not be carried from day-to-day. For those living by faith, due consideration of the end of all things will promote the kind of sobriety needed to be "faithful unto death" (Rev 2:10).

## Part 17 - THE END OF ALL THINGS

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 17 of 22

### THE COMING OF THE LORD

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for THE COMING OF THE LORD draweth nigh." (James 5:8). "But THE DAY OF THE LORD will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet 3:10). "LOOKING for that blessed hope, and THE GLORIOUS APPEARING of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians of "waiting for THE COMING OF THE LORD" (1 Cor 1:7). He wrote to the Philippians, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOR, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:20), and "The Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5). He wrote to the Thessalonians that they turned "to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN" (1 Thess 1:10). He wrote to Timothy, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, UNTIL THE APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 6:14). James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD . . . the COMING OF THE LORD draweth nigh." (James 5:7-8). Peter wrote, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to THE END for the grace that is to be brought unto you AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" (1 Pet 1:13).

Through the Holy Spirit, the Apostles provoked an anticipation of the coming of the Lord. They moved the disciples to live with a lively anticipation of that day. In our day, under the incapable hands of certain teachers, an imagined church has been produced that is NOT looking forward to the coming of the Lord. They simply are not being "saved BY HOPE" (Rom 8:24-25), and are wandering aimlessly on a road that does not lead to Zion. What makes this condition so serious is that Jesus Christ has opened "a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us" (Heb 10:20). It is the "way" prophesied by Isaiah: "And an highway shall be there, and A WAY, and it shall be called THE WAY OF HOLINESS; the unclean SHALL NOT pass over it; but it shall be for those: the WAYFARING MEN, though fools, SHALL NOT ERR therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it SHALL NOT BE FOUND THERE; but THE REDEEMED shall walk there: And THE RANSOMED of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and EVERLASTING JOY upon their heads: THEY SHALL obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa 35:8-10).

This "way" leads somewhere – that is the purpose of a "way." It is not like a house in which we dwell, but a road on which we travel to our appointed abode.

"The end of all things" is unquestionably associated with the coming of the Lord! We are not taught to view the termination of the temporal as a mere happening. It is the RESULT of the appearing of the Lord's Christ! The heavens and the earth will flee from before HIS FACE – their subordinate glory will fade before His glory as the light of the stars disappears in the resplendent glow of the sun. Thus it is written, "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them" (Rev 20:11, NASB). That is the apocalyptic way of saying "the end of all things." When you

consider that Jesus will return “IN HIS GLORY, and THE GLORY OF THE FATHER and of THE HOLY ANGELS” (Luke 9:26b), it is no longer difficult to associate it with “the end of all things.”

Because we have dealt extensively with this subject before, I shall only touch upon Christ’s return as it relates to indicators, or signs – things that can be detected by believers. I realize that this is sensitive ground for some, but we must not allow human prejudice to keep us from considering the Word of the King. Jesus has spoken on this subject, and He has done so because

it is a critical one. His words will not satisfy those who have exalted the wisdom of men, but they will have a strong appeal to those who are living by faith. In this review, we will focus on the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. A few observations will suffice to show the seriousness of our subject. These will be the words of the King – and it simply is not possible for those words to be irrelevant, or mere optional knowledge. They have directly to do with the saved preparing for eternity, and demand that they be alert, perceptive, and thoughtful.

Given O. Blakely

## Part 18 - MATTHEW 24

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 18 of 22

### MATTHEW 24

The disciples have just shown Jesus "the temple buildings" (Matt 24:1). Matthew places this occurrence after Christ's lament over rejecting Jerusalem, in which He said her house would be "left desolate" (23:37-38). Luke identifies it with Christ's observation of the widow that placed "all her living" into the temple treasury (Luke 21:1 ff). The Jews took great pride in the temple. It was a mark of distinction, borne by no other peoples. They had not, however, duly associated themselves with God, or with His Son, Who was "greater than the temple" (Matt 12:6).

Although Jesus had referred to that very temple as "My Father's house" (John 2:16), He now revealed that it would undergo violent destruction. "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt 24:2).

This reply intrigued His disciples, and rightly so. Later, as the Lord was "sitting on the Mount of Olives," His disciples came to Him "privately," inquiring about His veiled remark concerning the temple. Their question has captured the attention of the most astute thinkers among men. "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt 24:3, NASB).

Jesus does not upbraid them for asking the question, nor does He tell them their question was unlawful, as He did in Acts 1:7. First, He warns them not to allow anyone to mislead them on these things. "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt 24:4).

Because of the nature of Christ's words, men would be prone to distort them, attaching to them meanings not intended by our blessed Lord. We do well to be cautious about embracing theological novelties. Whatever our view of this text, it must not leave us in conflict with the more plain declarations of "the end of all things."

It should be apparent that the disciples' question was not simplistic. It was threefold. They wanted to know (1 When the things of which He spoke would come to pass, (2 The sign of His coming, and (3 The sign of the end of the "world," or "age." Noble inquiries, indeed! It would be refreshing to hear such inquiries in our time! O, that there were more interest in the coming of Christ and the end of the world!

Jesus answers in a manner that defies logical arrangement. First, He does not directly address the question about "when." Instead, He goes straight to the matter of signs, or indicators. His point is not to pass along vital information, but to inform His disciples of the need for preparation and readiness. How clearly this is seen in the following phrases. "See to it that no one misleads you . . . see that you are not frightened . . ."

While Jesus speaks about the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, His words cannot be confined to that event. The rumor of wars, nation rising against nation, famines and earthquakes in various

places, the rise of false prophets, an increase in lawlessness, and people's love growing cold, cannot be confined to the destruction of Jerusalem (vs 4-12).

In verses 15-22, the Lord appears to speak directly to the fall of Jerusalem and the attending destruction of the temple. His words address the "end" of an era, the "end" of a time of blessing; the "end" of a custodianship of truth, and the "end" of a sacred structure. The desolation of the "holy place," the necessity of swift escape, and unparalleled tribulation, would attend this demise. He relates these events to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the desecration of the "holy place" (Dan 9:27; 12:11). Time forbids us to go into Daniel's prophecy at length. Suffice it to say, Jesus is telling His disciples the event of which He speaks is on the Divine agenda. It is part of the judgment leveled against Jerusalem for their rejection of the Messiah. His words ought to stab deep into the heart of every lethargic soul that supposes coldness of heart is not noted by the Almighty.

The part of this text that particularly addresses our subject is found in verses 27-31. Under no circumstances can these verses be said to apply only to the destruction of Jerusalem. They were typified by that ancient destruction, but were not exhausted thereby. This, in my understanding, was His answer to the disciples question about His "coming and the end of the world."

Again, the Lord speaks to faith in arresting language. He refers to the destruction of Jerusalem as "the tribulation of those days" (verse 27). By saying "immediately" after, He emphasizes that this is the next significant event on the Divine agenda. He is not speaking in terms of time, but in the language of Divine purpose. Too, the fall of Jerusalem was only the "beginning of sorrows" for the Jews, not the conclusion of it (Matt 24:8). It would continue "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Now Jesus alerts His disciples that they are to learn to live in expectation of His return!

Christ's return will be witnessed by the entirety of humanity. It will be like the lightning which passes from one end of heaven to the other in a moment of time (verse 27). Elsewhere we are reminded, "EVERY EYE shall see Him" (Rev 1:7). His return will be sudden, universal, and unmistakable!

His return will be central in every sense of the word. It will fulfill the proverb, "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather" (verse 28). Many consider this to refer to men being drawn to Christ for the final judgment. This does not, however, satisfy the text. In my opinion, this refers to the saints, returning with the Lord, to judge the rotting corpse of the world and religious institutionalism. Christ's return will bring the domination of dead religion to a grinding halt! Praise the Lord!

## Part 19 - ALL THINGS ENDED

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 19 of 22

### ALL THINGS ENDED

The "end of all things" will be precisely that! Sun, moon, and stars will no longer shine or exist (verse 29). Principalities and powers in heavenly realms (Eph 6:12) will be jarred from their places of rule, to be consigned to the lake of fire. All forms of competing power, whether natural or spiritual, will give place to the Son of God. They will be torn from their temporary thrones, and "the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One" (Dan 7:27, NIV). Nature, as we know it, will come to an "end"—and it will happen when Jesus returns "as a thief in the night." As it is written, "But the day of the Lord will come AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of THE DAY OF GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Pet 3:10-12). "The end of all things is near!" Of that, you may be sure!

The Son of God shall appear in all of His glory, and "then all the tribes of the earth will mourn" (Matt 24:30). No one will question Who He is, or why He has returned. It will be evident that "all things" have come to an appointed "end." Those who have "received the reconciliation" (Rom 5:11) will rejoice, while all others will "wail" because of Him! The "things" in which they have trusted, shall come to an abrupt and final "end." Saints will cry, "Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation" (Isa 26:9, NASB). The lost will cry for the rocks and mountains to cover them (Rev 6:16), and lament the day they were born. Their doleful song will be, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer 8:20).

The great gathering will take place when our Lord returns – at "the end of all things." How precious are the words! "And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other" (verse 31). Those who suppose this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem betray a level of spiritual incompetence that is to their reproach! Everything did not "end" with the destruction of Jerusalem! How different it will be when Jesus is revealed from heaven, in all of His glory, and with the holy angels! Then what was foreshadowed in the fall of Jerusalem will take place. The demise of the ancient city will be small by way of comparison.

### HE SHALL SEND JESUS!

The "end of all things" is inextricably tied to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit has revealed that Jesus will remain in heaven until such time as everything foretold by the prophets comes to pass. Hear the word of the Lord. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, Who has been appointed for you – even Jesus. He MUST remain in heaven UNTIL THE TIME

COMES for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through his holy prophets” (Acts 3:19-21, NIV). That restoration is chronicled in Scripture (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1,5).

Here the Spirit puts everything together for us. The awareness of the “end of all things” constrains us to turn away from what defiles, to God Himself. He compels us to obtain remission of sins and refreshment from the very presence of the Lord. Jesus has been appointed “for” us – to ensure that we participate in “the world to come.” Until the work of salvation is completed, Jesus “MUST remain in heaven.” He, like the High Priest of old, is remaining until the intercession is completed. When His work is completed, He will return to “restore everything” as God has appointed. Thus will the revealed will of God be fulfilled. “And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to his good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Eph 1:9-10, NIV). What a glorious purpose!

## CONCLUSION

Everything is coming to its appointed conclusion! “The end of all things is at hand!” The impact of this upon our lives will be unmistakably strong. Let the Word of God speak to your heart as you contemplate “the end of all things.”

Given O. Blakely

## Part 20 - HAVE A FORBEARING SPIRIT

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 20 of 22

### HAVE A FORBEARING SPIRIT

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. THE LORD IS AT HAND" (Phil 4:5).

The word "moderation" means "mild; gentle, patient (Strong's); "equitable, fair, mild, gentle" (Thayer); "pertaining to being gracious and forbearing – gentle, gracious, forbearing," (Louw-Nida); "gentle, kind, yielding, tolerant" (Gingrich).

The New American Standard reads, "Let your FORBEARING spirit be known to all men. THE LORD IS NEAR."

Notice, the constraining influence is not that we are commanded to be "forbearing," but is rather, "The Lord is at hand" – and He has been forbearing with us.

This is not telling us to be forbearing with the outward expression of sin – like a fornicator. In fact we are told NOT to be forbearing of such people: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?" (1 Cor 5:11-12). There was a fornicator in the church at Corinth, and the people were commanded "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:5). That was a person unworthy of forbearance. When the people did what they were commanded to do, God Himself brought that man to repentance – without the further influence of the people (2 Cor 2:6-8).

Concerning our text, you have brothers and sisters in Christ who, like yourself, are not yet perfected. Things that deter them are coming to an end, just like those that hinder you. In view of this situation, the Spirit admonishes us. Considering the soon return of the Lord, and the imminent "end of all things," we cannot afford to be harsh and inconsiderate – in either our expression or our response! As it is written, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, FORBEARING one another in love" (Eph 4:2). And again, "FORBEARING one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col 3:13). Forbearance is mandatory for the one who has offended, AND for the one who has been offended as well. If someone has "a quarrel against any" – or "a complaint against another" (NKJV), we are not told to go to that person and complain. The word from the King is, "FORBEARING one another, and FORGIVING one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, SO ALSO DO YE" (Col 3:13).

That is living in view of "the end of all things!" That blessed view will constrain you to bear "with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you" (Col 3:13, NASB).

You see the practicality of considering "the end of all things." It will not only assist you in

preparing for the coming of the Lord, but will deliver you from being tossed to and fro by a spirit that is easily offended.

## Part 21 - DO NOT COMPLAIN

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another WITHOUT GRUDGING. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 21 of 22

### DO NOT COMPLAIN

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pet 4:9). Other versions read, "without grumbling" (NKJV), "without murmuring" (ASV), "without complaint" (NASB), "without complaining" (NRSV).

The word translated "grudging" comes from a word meaning, "as an expression of dissatisfaction grumbling, complaining" (Strong's), "secret debate" (Thayer), "to express one's discontent" (Louw-Nida), and "secret talk, whispering" (Gingrich). It ought to be obvious that the Holy Spirit does not provoke such expression or communication.

The practicality of this exhortation – "Use hospitality one to another WITHOUT GRUDGING" – and the unqualified acceptance of it, is arresting. "HOSPITALITY" is the opposite of murmuring and complaining. It moves one to receive another, not reject them, attempting to justify such rejection by murmuring. An acute awareness of the fact that "the end of all things is at hand" will constrain us to be patient and have strong hearts! If we are tempted to complain against our brothers and sisters, the recollection of the imminence of Christ's return will cause us to conduct ourselves properly. "The end of all things" must not find us murmuring and complaining against Christ's "brethren" (Rom 8:29; Heb 2:17) – and they ARE Christ's "brethren" before they are ours. If they really are "brethren," they are not our "brethren" because they belong to the same congregation, but because they belong to Christ, having been given to Him by God.

James also addresses this matter, and does so with great strength. "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, LEST YOU BE CONDEMNED. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" (James 5:9. NKJV). Other versions read, "or you will be judged" (NIV), "so that you may not be judged" (NRSV), "lest ye be damned" (PNT). Satan will tempt the saints to be tolerant of murmuring. He knows that is a path that leads to Divine judgment, and even damnation. The record of the Israelites murmuring against Moses is given to provoke us to sober thinking on this matter. Five times it is written that the people "murmured against Moses" (Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 14:2; 16:41). They did not like the way Moses was leading them, and God took it personally, because He is the One who had chosen Moses to lead them. On the border of the promised land Moses told the unbelieving Israelites what God Himself had said, "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have MURMURED AGAINST ME [God]" (Num 14:29). God is the one who determined that judgment, not Moses (Num 14:26-30).

For us, the clear implication is that due consideration of "the end of all things" produces acceptable conduct, and will stifle the tendency to murmur and complain! Consciously standing in the shadow of a returning Lord, and the "end of all things," makes for sobriety and self control. Those who choose to ignore this central and stabilizing reality will eventually be overcome by the world.

## Part 22 - WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE SHOULD WE BE?

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pet 4:7-10)

Lesson 22 of 22

### CONCLUSION OF SERIES

#### WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE SHOULD WE BE?

Some questions do not need to be discussed or pondered: to ask them is to answer them! If the Lord is coming, and if that coming will result in the "end of all things," there is no question about how we should live. In our text for this series, Peter mentions the following characteristics that are to be found in us:

1. Be ye therefore **SOBER** – "serious" (New King James), "sound judgement and sober spirit" (New American Std), "clear minded and self-controlled" (New International), "alert and self-controlled" (Complete Jewish Bible), "Be prudent therefore" (Douay), "discrete and sober" (Tyndale). In America, we live in a society characterized by self-seeking, shallow thought, and a quest for entertainment. These promote giddiness or silliness. In view of the imminence of "the end of all things," the saints of God cannot afford to get caught up in such things.
2. Watch unto **PRAYER** – "watchful in your prayers" (New King James), "sober spirit for the purpose of prayer" (New American Std), "keep sane and sober for your prayers" (Revised Std), and "serious and disciplined for prayer" (Holman Christian Std). We must not pray with empty heads and hearts. A praying person must have a disciplined and serious mind, perceiving things correctly.
3. Have **FERVENT CHARITY** among yourselves. "Keep fervent in your love" (New American Std), "love each other deeply" (New International), "maintain constant love" (New Revised Std), "unfailing in your love" (Revised Std), and "show deep love for each other" (New Living). "Fervent charity" takes place with deliberation, focus, and insight. Fervent charity will not believe or receive false reports. It will not look for hidden faults.
4. Use **HOSPITALITY** one to another without grudging. "Be hospitable" (New King James), "Offer hospitality" (New International), "practice hospitality" (New Revised Std), and "Welcome each other into your houses" (New Jerusalem). Some people have never invited children of God into their homes. They have not practiced hospitality. Knowing that "the end of all things is at hand," the saints of God are to practice hospitality, showing their love and care for the saints.
5. As every man hath received the gift, even so **MINISTER THE SAME** one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. What "gift" have you received? If you do not know, pray that God will show you what you can do, and how you can do it. It will be something you will feel comfortable doing – something you will enjoy doing for the Lord. When you have identified what the gift is, "minister the same one to another."

Hear Peter's challenging conclusion. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the

which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in ALL holy conversation and godliness," (2 Pet 3:9-11)

This is obvious to faith. The stronger one's faith, the more obvious this truth becomes.  
Given O. Blakely