

God's Glory in God's Word

1 Peter Part 2: To What End?

Last Week:

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Pe 1:1-5)*

Last week, we contemplated Peter's gospel. In the first 5 verses of his first letter, he lays out much of what we think about when we consider "Calvinism" or "The Doctrines of Grace". God's sovereignty in our salvation is on full display concerning mercy, election, regeneration, sanctification, and preservation – all leading to salvation – "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

In light of that great gospel, Peter calls believers to a lifestyle with a different purpose than the purposes of the world. A purpose with focus on – not a dying world – but on a living hope. A purpose focused on the chief end of man...to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.

***The end of all things is at hand;** therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1Pe 4:7-11)*

There are three distinct possibilities as to what Peter means when he announces that the end of all things is at hand. The first possibility, which seems to be the obvious one, is that the end of the world is near, bringing with it the end of all things on earth. The second possible interpretation is that Peter is referring to the end of all things Jewish, looking toward the catastrophic event that took place in AD 70, when the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was trodden underfoot by the Gentiles. From the Jewish perspective, the end of Jerusalem, and thus the end of temple worship, would be the end of everything. The third possibility is that Peter has in mind the nearness of the demise of those reading the epistle. Any one of those views is a possible interpretation.

R. C. Sproul. 1-2 Peter (Kindle Locations 2380-2385). Crossway.

It is important to consider what Peter means by "the end of all things is at hand". Skeptics point to this statement and argue that the Bible is in error – they assume that "end of all things is at hand" equals, as the New Living Translation reads, "the end of the world is coming soon". The end of the world did not come soon, so Peter was wrong. This interpretation distracts from Peter's objective in writing. And more importantly, it ignores the deeper meaning of the Greek word "telos". We should consider the use of this word elsewhere in Scripture:

*And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the **end**. (Mat 26:58)*

*But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the **end** of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its **end**, eternal life. (Rom 6:21-22)*

*The **aim** of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (1Ti 1:5)*

*But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its **end** is to be burned. (Heb 6:8)*

*Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the **purpose** of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. (Jas 5:11)*

*obtaining the **outcome** of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1Pe 1:9)*

When we consider the broader meaning of telos, we can see God's purpose, his aim, his outcome. God works all things according to the counsel of His will, and His will was to cause us to be born again to a living hope.

That hope is the "end" of all things. And it is near (at hand) for believers, who are, as a consequence, commanded to:

Be Holy

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1Pe 1:13-16)

Be the Proper Example to Unbelievers

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1Pe 2:11-12)

Be Godly in Our Homes

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear-- but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1Pe 3:1-7)

Suffer Patiently

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and

his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, (1Pe 3:8-15)

Shepherd the Flock

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1Pe 5:1-3)

Submit to the Shepherds

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (1Pe 5:5)

Next Week: 2 Peter