

# The End of All Things is at Hand

BY PASTOR DAMIAN KYLE



***But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*** 1 Peter 4:7

I'm a lifelong reader of the comics. Humor is important, and comics aren't just "the funnies;" they can communicate profound insights into life and teach important things. But not everything they teach is accurate. You have probably seen the stereotypical image of a crazed-looking man with a sign proclaiming, "The end is near." The message is clear: The world may endure hard times, but anyone who really thinks its end is actually near is crazy or exaggerating.

The New Testament, however, teaches that the world is going to end, and that God wants every Christian to live every day influenced by that consciousness. Peter writes this verse certain that human history will one day end—and that God is in control of it all. This contrasts with how some think of history as a random, out-of-control series of events. While God has given mankind freedom of choice, He rules and overrules history to work it toward His appointed end. He will not allow the world's rebellion against Him to persist forever. The world's destruction will bring wonderful results for some and horrible consequences for others—depending on each person's response to His Son, the Savior He sent into the world to offer forgiveness for our sins.

Paul described Jesus' return in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: ***"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. ... Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*** We will instantly go from whatever we were doing to being with the Lord forever, and this could happen at any time. Second Peter 3:10 says the day of the Lord will come ***"as a thief in the night"***; it will catch some by surprise. We are privileged to live with the awareness that the Lord could return at any moment. It's especially important to contemplate His return when experiencing difficulty and

suffering—as was Peter's original audience. Peter wants all his readers—including those he addressed 2,000 years ago and the generation on earth when Jesus returns for the church—to remember that Jesus is going to come for us.

Jesus taught that despite all that generation's difficulties, the world would experience even greater difficulty as His return drew near: ***"And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ... And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. ... And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"*** (Matthew 24:6-8, 14). By calling these problems ***"the beginning of sorrows,"*** Jesus is not saying they are new. They have happened consistently throughout history, but their severity and constancy will intensify before His return. During childbirth, we call these contractions, or birth pangs. The longer the expectant woman endures, the more severe and frequent they become. And earth's catastrophes will likewise give birth to something—new heavens and a new earth. But it's a painful process to get there.

Like a mother who has no time to regroup from a contraction before another comes, one problem will arise and will be so great that no sooner can the world respond with a temporary, makeshift solution before the next occurs—and the next, and the next. Maybe you feel like that as you watch the news. In the face of a world that's overwhelmed with problems, do you feel powerless? If you're asking what you can do, what you should do, Peter answers in the verse's second half: ***"Therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers."*** Prayer is the indescribable privilege of accessing God anytime. Think of that! I can't always get my wife on the phone; I certainly can't reach the president. But I can access God. That's remarkable. However, prayer is also simple.

It's talking to God, like a friend, as Jesus calls us in John 15:14.

Neither eloquence nor length is supreme in prayer; sincerity is. Jesus' parable in Luke 18 teaches us to pray while being aware of, not a human audience, but God. What are we to pray about? Everything. Psalm 62:8a says, ***"Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him."*** The Hebrew

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word for pour out means "to spill." Growing up, whenever someone spilled a glass, the contents spilled until everything had come out. That's how we're to pray to the Lord: Until everything has come out.

We're to pray with confidence, assured that every situation we pray for is different after we have prayed than before. If you don't see the difference, that's not your problem. That's God's problem. He has promised to respond to our prayers, and He honors them in His timing and His way. So prayer changes both situations and us: Prayer keeps us from being disoriented, confused, or fearful amidst a world of incomprehensible difficulties. As the end draws nearer and the world unravels, we need to dwell in constant communion with God in order to navigate life. Only He can grant us the peace to live well amidst this world's calamities. ✨

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