

1 Peter 4:7

by John Gill

John Gill's sermon on 1 Peter 4:7 emphasizes the urgency of sobriety and prayer in light of the imminent end of all things.

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Timothy 2:8, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 5:8, 1 Peter 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "End Times", "Prayer and Vigilance"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the urgency of 1 Peter 4:7, reminding believers that the end of all things is near, which calls for a sober and vigilant lifestyle. He explains that this end refers to the conclusion of individual lives, the Jewish state, and ultimately the universe, urging Christians to be temperate and focused on their spiritual duties. Gill highlights the importance of prayer, encouraging believers to be watchful and intentional in their communication with God, as sobriety in mind and spirit is essential for effective prayer. The sermon serves as a call to live with awareness of the transient nature of life and the imminent return of Christ, prompting a diligent exercise of faith and grace.

Transcript

Ver. 7. But the end of all things is at hand,... With respect to particular persons, the end of life, and which is the end of all things in this world to a man, is near at hand; which is but as an hand's breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, and is but as a vapour which appears for a while, and then vanishes away. Or this may be said with regard to the Jews, the end of their church and civil state was near at hand, of their sacrifices, temple, city, and nation; or with respect to the whole universe, to the scheme and fashion of this world, which will soon be gone, though the substance will abide; when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth and all therein will be burnt up; when there will be an end of all the purposes and promises of God respecting the present state of things concerning his church and people, and of the judgments of God upon his enemies here; when the man of sin will be destroyed, and the wickedness of the wicked will be come to an end, and the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions of the saints, will be no more; and when will be an end put to the present dispensation of things; there will be an end of the ministry of the word, and of the administration of ordinances; time will be no more, and the final state of both good and bad men will take place: this may be said to be at hand in the apostle's time, though so long ago, because that was the last time, and the last dispensation of things; and whereas they knew not the exact time when it would be, they frequently spoke of it as near, in order to stir up the saints to the more diligent discharge of duty, and fervent exercise of grace, as here:

be ye therefore sober, or "temperate", as the Arabic version renders it; and so is opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which is an abuse of the creatures of Gods, and unfits a man for the duties of religion; when Satan easily gets an advantage, and is often the cause of other sins, and is frequently dissuaded from, for the same reason as here; see 1Co 7:31 or chaste, as the Syriac version; and so is opposed to immodesty in words, actions, or apparel, in which sense sobriety is used in 1Ti 2:9 or "prudent", as the Vulgate Latin version; and is opposed to all self-conceit and vanity of mind, and imprudence in conduct and conversation; see Ro 12:3 and to all immoderate care of the world, which has the same effect upon the soul as surfeiting and drunkenness on the body: it hinders the soul in the service of God, chokes the word, and makes it unprofitable, and runs men into many sins, snares, and temptations; and the consideration of the end of all things being at hand should draw off from it. It may also signify soundness of mind and judgment in the doctrines of faith, which are words of truth and soberness; and the rather this may be exhorted to, since towards the close of time there will be little of the doctrine of faith in the earth, and men will not be able to endure sound doctrine: it follows,

and watch unto prayer; watch all opportunities of praying, or of attendance on that ordinance, both in private and in public; watch and observe both your present wants, and present mercies, that ye may know what to pray for, and what to return thanks for; and that you have a due reverence of the divine Majesty, in whose presence you are entering. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "watch", or "be awake in prayers"; be careful that you lift up your hearts with your hands to God; that you pray for such things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God; that you pray in faith, and lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and watch for the Spirit of God to enlarge your hearts in prayer, and to assist you both as to the matter and manner of praying. And persons should also watch after prayer for a return of it; and that they do not depend upon the duty performed; and that they are not negligent to return thanks for the mercy prayed for, when received. Very rightly does the apostle join the above exhortation with this, since a man that is not sober is neither fit to watch nor pray; and a drunken man, according to the Jewish canons, might not pray {}:

"one that is a drinker, or in drink, let him not pray, or if he prays, his prayer is deprecations; a drunken man, let him not pray, and if he prays his prayer is blasphemies."

Or, as it is elsewhere {m} expressed,

"let not a drunken man pray, because he has no intention; and if he prays, his prayer is an abomination, therefore let him return and, pray when he is clear of his drunkenness: let no one in drink pray, and if he prays, his prayer is prayer (unless the word hlpt should rather be rendered "folly", as it may); who is a drunken man? he that cannot speak before a king; a man in drink can speak before a king, and not be confounded; even though he drinks but a fourth part, or a quarter of wine, let him not pray until his wine is departed from him."

{} T. Hieros. Terumot, fol. 40. 4. {m} Maimon. Hilch Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 17.

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