

# 1 Peter

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1 Peter 4:7-11

Vs. 7a

- The end of all things: The idea of the immanent coming of Christ and the end of the world was pervasive in the early church. This is why it took so long to write the gospels. Why *write* the story of Jesus for future generations if there were not going to be any future generations? Now given that the Bible was not formally put together until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, how did those 4<sup>th</sup> Christians understand this first century belief? The early Christians, even through the 4<sup>th</sup> century, understood history and time in terms of epochs: Creation, the time between The Fall and The Great Flood, etc. With the coming of Christ, the final epoch has begun, the end of history. Christ gave His disciples a mission to complete during this final epoch - Go into all the world, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, and make disciples of all nations. The writers of the New Testament may be forgiven if they thought this was going to be accomplished quickly, in their own lifetime. Bear in mind that it took the church nearly 1500 years to know there was a Western Hemisphere. And there are still many hundred of nations/people groups who have still never heard the gospel.

Vss. 7b-9

- To pull from the title of Francis Shaeffer's classic book, if we are in the final epoch, how then should we live? Bearing in mind that the churches Peter is writing to are on the front of a severe persecution, so if your goal is to deflect negative attention from local authorities and local people, what better way than to live out life in the following way.

- Sound judgement and sober spirit: think clearly, stay calm, don't be carried away by every wind, remembering always that how we live today echoes in eternity.
- We must live this way so that we will be able to pray; if we live our lives in a panic, fearful, tossed about by every wave, we won't begin to know where to start as we pray or what even to pray for
- Above all LOVE – love one another as Christ has loved us
- Love covers a multitude of sins: if we love as Christ loves we are able to forgive as Christ forgives; if we love as Christ loves, our Father in Heaven will forgive our trespasses because we have loved well enough to forgive those who trespass against us.
- Open hospitality: Hospitality made the work of the early church possible. Inns at that time were little more than brothels. We see then that Peter stayed in Joppa at the home of Simon the Tanner (Acts 10:6) and Paul stayed at the home of Mnason while passing through Cyprus (Acts 21:16). Further, there were no church buildings. Worship and teaching was done in homes (1 Cor. 16:19; Philemon 2). Indeed, throughout the New Testament the church is urged toward hospitality: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to stranger, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2) and in Titus 1:8, hospitality is basic requirement of a pastor. In the parable of the Judgement in Matthew 25, in verses 35 and 43, Jesus praises those who show hospitality to strangers and condemns those who do not.

#### Vss. 10-11

- The grace of God, the word of God, the strength of God: 1) In 1 Cor. 12, Paul speaks at length about spiritual gifts and how God gives them in order to build the body of Christ with each gift performing its unique vital function. Here Peter is saying whatever that gift may be, use it as a blessing of service to others, demonstrating the grace of God. 2) If you have the gift of teaching or preaching, do so as the very word of God, not you own

words or the words of the surrounding culture. 3) In all of a person's acts of service, serve in the strength of God.

- We need to understand that we are “stewards” of God's grace, word, and strength, as well as any other gifts He may give. A steward was a slave. He would be given certain materials or monies to accomplish the tasks the master had given him. But these materials or monies were not his. They belonged to the master (see the parable of The Talents – Matt. 25:14-30). So too then are we slaves of Christ and as such are given gifts by the Master to do what we need to in order to fulfill the tasks He sets before us. But what He gives us is not ours, but His, and we are to use them as spiritual commodities for which the Master will hold us accountable.
- Prayer is the unspoken piece here. It is as if Peter is taking for granted that the people of these churches are and will be fervently praying. A good steward speaks to his master to clarify, update, and make requests. So too are we, as we pray, to ask God for an abundance of divine grace (My cup overflows - Ps. 23:5) so that we may be able to fully extend His grace, so we may have an abundance of divine wisdom that we may speak only His word and not our own, and so we may have an abundance of divine strength as we serve, so that when we act, speak, or serve in any way, people will know it is not we ourselves, but God working and speaking through us that they are seeing and hearing, and He is glorified.