

First Peter – Then and Now
(Lesson # 10– Preparation for the Lord’s Return)
Scripture – 1 Peter 4:7-19

Introduction

- A. The Lord’s return is often neglected among us – as far as practical preparation.
- B. Early Christians must have felt the loss of the Lord Jesus a great deal, and longed for His return. It was a topic often discussed – as witnessed by the N.T.

I. The Reminder of His Coming: *The end of all things is near.* 1 Peter 4:7

- A. The word “*near,*” can be translated, “*at hand,*” (KJV) – indicating all prophesied events have come to pass – and the next promised event, would be His coming. (1)
- B. The sequence of events may be: (A) removal of the Church, (B) the Great Tribulation, (C) the Return of Jesus Christ, (D) the Millennium, (E) the Great White Throne Judgment, and (F) Eternity. (2)

II. Instructions Regarding Relationships: *...Love each other ... hospitality...*

- A. *Be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.* 1 Peter 4:7
Note the emphasis on prayer – and two necessary qualifications. (3)
- B. *Above all, love each other deeply* – 1 Peter 4:8
Consider the significance of love in their trials. What significance does it have today?
- C. *...Because love covers over a multitude of sins.* 1 Peter 4:8
Love is the opposite of criticism, manipulation, suspicion, grudges and blame.
How do we wish to be treated?
- D. *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.* 1 Peter 4:9
Consider the place of hospitality in their trials. What significance does it have today?

III. Instructions Regarding Service: *...Serve others ... speaking ... words of God*

- A. *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.* 1 Peter 4:10
What does Peter assume about his readers and God’s promise?

- B. *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.* 1 Peter 4:11

Note how seriously Peter takes the ministry of all believers. Should we?

Note the goal Peter has in mind for our ministry. What does that teach us?

IV. Instructions Regarding Trials: *Do not be surprised at the painful trial ...*

- A. The description of the trials: *Painful ... suffering... though something strange...* [4:12]
KJV & NASB translated "*Painful trial,*" as "*Fiery ordeal.*" -- Rome's judgment?

- B. The place of the trials in the plan of God.

1. *You participate in the sufferings of Christ,* V13

Note Paul's desire: *I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* Phil. 3:10

The Apostles believed trials confirmed they were true believers and sharing in His pattern of life. Christ was not a part of the world system, nor are we. John 17:14,16

2. *You may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed,* V13

The reminder that they may receive rewards for honest and faithful obedience. (4)

3. *You are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you,* V14

Obedience and faith in times of trial opens the door to God's presence and power

4. *Praise God that you bear that name,* V16

Trials indicate we're true believers and have been called by His name.

- C. The warning: *Don't suffer as a murderer, thief, criminal, or even as a meddler.* V15

V. Trials may indicate the closeness of Christ's return. 1 Peter 4:17,18.

Reminder: everyone will live somewhere forever – in degrees of rewards or judgment (5)

VI. The Exhortation Regarding Commitment. 1 Peter 4:19

Trials are a part of God's will

Trials call for personal commitment to God as a Person

Trials enable us to see right and wrong more clearly.

Recommended books on the Lord's Return

R. Ludwigson – A survey of Bible Prophecy (John Knox) (Gives all the viewpoints)

Val J. Sauer, Jr – The Eschatology Handbook (Z) (Information and Bible survey)

Rene' Pache – The Return of Jesus Christ (Moody) (One of the very best)

Victor Matthews

