

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH
THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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“Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state.”

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Oh, what a joy it was to see our brothers and sisters in the Lord once again! As we await the Lord's return, it is sweet fellowship each year to see each and everyone, and to set aside this time to stop our busy lives and totally devote ourselves to feasting on His word! The Lord blessed us with beautiful autumn weather, great preaching, great crowds of people from all over the U.S., and missionaries from Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, and other countries. *“Till we meet again,”* may we all continue to pray for each other.

SOBRIETY AND WATCHING UNTO PRAYER

By: C. D. Cole

I Peter 4:7, “**But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.**”

Introduction: Peter was a great exhorter. Most powerful exhortations of the scriptures are from his pen. We think of James as the practical epistle of the New Testament, but he is no more practical than Peter. In preceding context he exhorts Christians to be regulated by the will of God and not follow the lusts or desires that belong to natural man. And in the subsequent context he exhorts to cultivation of various Christian dispositions, such as love and hospitality. And our short text is an exhortation to sobriety and watchfulness.

I am convinced that we need to give more attention to the exhortations of scripture. It is a good way to learn the will of God for our lives. Certainly, anything we are exhorted to do is in the will of God.

We have here a statement of fact and then an injunction built upon that statement. The statement is “*the end of all things is at hand*,” and the exhortation is “*be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*”

THE END

I. The statement “*all things is at hand*”—what does this mean?

A. Some think it means the end of the world and the return of Christ. But how could this be when it is said to be at hand but, after nineteen centuries, it still has not taken place? Here is the way the difficulty is met.

(1) Some say that this is the age of the Messiah and is the last age, so that nothing like the flood or giving of the law

or the incarnation of the Word stands between this age and the end of the world.

(2) Others say it is near or at hand in the calculations of God with whom one day is as a thousand years, etc. II Peter 3:8, “*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*”

(3) Still others say that the state of every man is fixed at death and to the man who dies the end of all things has come.

(4) Still another explanation is this: the apostles really did expect the dissolution of all things and the end of the world in their day. Certainly there were such persons, but Paul corrects them and tells them that the day of judgment and return of Christ cannot take place until the apostasy and the man of sin.

B. We must best assert that the statement cannot be taken in the absolute sense. “*The end of all things*,” must refer to some great change in human affairs and not in the absolute meaning of the word all.

C. I believe it refers to the end of the Jewish economy in the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem and dispersion of the Jews. That was at hand. Peter wrote just a while before this happened. There was some event or experience that was to be theirs that made the exhortation practical and timely.

D. I believe the exhortation has a practical value and application to Christians of every generation. There is something facing Christians at all times that may be called a crisis—death, judgment, coming of Christ, something that makes this exhortation timely.

II. The exhortation. Two things exhorted to: sobriety and watchfulness.

A. Be sober. Means more than abstinence from intoxicating liquor. It includes this to be sure. To abstain from liquor is certainly a Christian duty. Drunkenness is enumerated among the works of the flesh; excludes a man from inheriting the kingdom of God, absolutely forbidden: Ephesians 5:18, “*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*”

The word sober here means to have full use of the rational faculties of the mind, to have good sense, or a sound mind. Mark 5:15, “*And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*” Acts 26:24-25, “*And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.*” II Corinthians 5:13, “*For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*”

But in our text the word has a moral value. It means to have a mind that acts wisely and prudently with

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reference to the things of time and the world. Romans 12:3, “*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,*” I Timothy 2:9, “*In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;*” I Timothy 3:2, “*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*” Sobriety means wisdom, prudence, moderation. Titus 2:12, “*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*” Now because the end of all things is at hand, be sober-minded, exercise a sound mind in reference to things seen and temporal. Beware of mistaking shadows for realities. Look at things in their comparative importance, and act accordingly. It means to have a sound mind with reference to things that are seen and temporal things of this world. II Corinthians 4:18, “*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” If a man has a just estimate of the value of material things he will not put too much value on riches, worldly honors, and worldly pleasures. He will be moderate in his desire to possess them, moderate in his efforts to obtain them, moderate in his attachment to them if he gets them, and moderate in his grief if they are taken from him. Men grieve over the loss of these things because they place too high a value on them. To be sober is to have wisdom and prudence about the worth of material things. I Corinthians 7:29-31, “*But this I say,*

brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.” View all things in the light of eternity.

B. Watching unto prayers.

(1) Not a command to pray. That a Christian will pray is assumed. Every Christian prays. Acts 9:11, “*And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,*”

(2) It means to be on the alert in our prayers. The first is exhortation to a sound mind. Be wise in judging of the things of the world. Don’t put too much value upon temporal things, because the end of all things is at hand. Riches, honors, pleasures of the world are only temporal – will soon pass away. The second exhortation is to an alert or watchful mind – be quick-minded. Don’t be dull and in a stupor when you pray. There is as much need for wisdom in praying as in studying or preparing to preach. “*Watch unto prayers.*” We need to be watchful in all our duties. We need to watch the way we perform our service to God, we need to watch the motives in performing our duties to God, and we need to watch the end we seek in performing them. Now prayer is a duty –

Luke 18:1, “*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*” Pray without ceasing. Continue instant in prayer. In nothing be anxious but in everything by prayer and supplication, etc.

Watch unto prayers. Watch for a fit opportunity to pray. Watch for time to escape from the world and hold communion with God. David: As for me, I will call upon God and the Lord shall save me. Psalm 55:17, “*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.*” We need to watch against worldliness of mind and especially against willful sin when we pray. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, God will not hear us. Psalm 66:18, “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*” We should watch with reference to the manner of prayer taking care that it is addressed to God and not to men.

We should watch against unbelief in prayer. Don’t even ask God for something with the feeling that he cannot do it.

We should watch against rebellion when we pray. Luke 22:42, “*Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*”

We should watch with reference to the results of prayer. Like Habakkuk 2:1, “*I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.*” “I will direct my prayer unto thee and look up.” When a man shoots an arrow, he looks to see how near it has come to the mark. We lose much of the comfort of our prayers for lack of observing the return of them.

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3175 Briar Hill Road, Lexington, Kentucky 40516

Phone 859.299.9164

Web Site: www.bryanstation.com

Email: mail@bryanstation.com

Alfred M. Gormley, Pastor

Don Waltermire, Assistant Pastor

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