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I've got good news and bad news. *The end of all things is near* Good news if you're a christian. Bad news if you're rebelling against the God who spoke the worlds into existence.

Good news for those who love His appearing. Bad news for those He comes to wage war with.

A few weeks ago I said people like David Meade who set dates that never happen make us all look ridiculous. The end of the world guy. September 23rd came and went. The world had a good laugh at the christians. I went to check spelling on his name and see that he's reset the date. Now it's today. Made it hard to be motivated to study. But I did. Here we are. Again.

There was a Larson cartoon I thought seriously about stealing and putting on the front of our bulletin this week. Don't want to steal copyrighted stuff, but it would have been perfect. Dad dinosaur and a teenage dinosaur and the dad is saying, "it's only one night out of the week. It's not like it's the end of the world" and behind them there's a fiery rock that's about to crash into the planet.

So there you go. End of the world predictions are as old as the dinosaurs.

So, then, what do we do with Peter's words? Why is it ridiculous for all the other folks, the David Meade's and Howard Camping's and all the

others who have done the numerology and come up with a day, and people go on the rooftop in their pajamas and wait for Jesus.

2000 years ago, Peter told the saint's, get ready, *the end of all things is at hand*.

Has it ever occurred to you that one of Satan's strategies may be to cheapen the Word of God by having people throughout history predict the day, and then it doesn't happen. And the Christians are a laughing stock. Again.

And by using that strategy, Satan actually cheapens Peter's words, and if we're not careful, we might lump Peter in with all the other nut jobs. I think that's a strategy of Satan. He throws the false at us over and over and it cheapens our view of the true.

Here's what we know. Every word of scripture is true. These words Peter wrote are given to us by the verbal plenary inspiration of God. Peter's little statement is revelation to us, from God. It's absolutely true.

The problem is our perspective. We have a very limited time space continuum perspective. Very narrow. Very small. In 2nd Peter, he'll tell us; with God, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day.

Now in our time space continuum, either one of those statements can be true, mathematically. Pick one. But it's impossible in our time box for them to both be true. But they are.

God doesn't dwell in time and space like we do. He is eternal. Our perspective is limited to the 70 years we're going to be here. We try to fit God's things into our box, and it can't be done. Let's look at the words;

The end of all things is near; The first thing to note that's helpful is the word our translators translated as end.

Now I'm a kid from the 1950's, and our old black and white TV sets had

a knob that lowered the volume and then it went click, and the image on the screen disappeared like it was sucked into a white dot in the middle, and then it was gone. Ended.

That's not what this word means. This word means consummation. The finish, or consumation of a project. And there is a specific consumation that is being revealed here.

That consummation is the return of Jesus Christ to this world in glorious judgement. The very next thing on God's event clock is that Jesus is returning to this world and taking it back. He's deposing Satan as ruler and locking Him up, and He's judging all evil, and He's setting up His rule and authority, here, on this planet.

Nothing else has to happen first. The consummation of all things is at hand. That's what's next. Currently, God is calling out a people for His name from every nation on the globe. When the last person is in, the consummation will begin. Peter's words are exactly right. *The end of all things is near;*

So, when will that be? That's a fair question. A good question, and in fact the disciples asked that very question moments before Jesus ascended into heaven. In Acts 1 vss 6 and 7 they say "*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" And He said to them, "*it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.*"

That's pretty clear. When are you coming back? I'm not going to tell you. That's the Father's business. Your business is to "*occupy till I come*" He said in Luke 13.

Over and over in the parables, Jesus teaches that we are to live our lives as though He would appear in the sky to call us home, in the next 30 seconds. We are to live in the same expectancy that is so clear in Peter's brief sentence. *The end of all things is at hand;*

He purposely doesn't tell us the exact time, because we are to live at all times as if it will happen immediately. In one of the parables, Jesus

says, *But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into,*

He doesn't reveal the time because He expects the church to live in expectancy. Any moment. Any moment. And since the Bible is crystal clear on that, you have to wonder about so-called christians that come up with weird number schemes that have all kinds of extra-biblical meanings. Beware of those folks. They are wolves in sheeps clothing.

The end of all things is at hand; and has been at hand since Jesus showed up on the scene and announced to all hearers, the authority to reign of God . . . is at hand.

In Marks gospel by vs. 14 of chapter one we read; *14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

God's plan has unfolded before our eyes with that truth always present. Jesus died to make a way for us to come out of this world, to come out of darkness, to have our sins removed at the cross, and to join Him in His kingdom authority.

The cross made that possible, and since that day, God has been calling out a people for His name. Called out of this world and into His world, his Kingdom authority, His ownership.

At the first church council recorded for us in Acts 15, James stands up and says something earth shattering to jews who think the entire purpose of God revolves around them. He says; *14 "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about **taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.***

That was a bombshell for them. God is taking, from the gentiles, a people for His name. And that has been happening for 20 centuries now in an unbroken succession from Peter, to us.

And when the last person is called in this age of grace to all nations, the consumation of all things will begin, we believe, with Christ returning to gather His bride, the Church, to Himself in the air, and that begins 7 years of Israel's time still waiting to happen.

The time of Jacob's trouble. Note that the disciples didn't ask about the church, or the rapture, or any of the things we talk about. They asked about Israel. "*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*"

They did not see a 2000 year parenthesis called the church age where God takes a people for Himself from all of the nations. The old testament prophecies were about Israel, and they ask about Israel. Messiah comes and defeats those who have trampled down Israel. He reigns on David's throne in Israel. That's their question. It is also what Peter speaks of when he states, *The end of all things is near;*

It's the next item on God's agenda. And what triggers those events could happen at any moment since Peter said that. God has that timing in His sovereign control. It's the next thing.

Now, Peter has a survival mentality as he writes these things. Out where I work we've lost a frightening percentage of our talent base within a few months. And the fellow I work for says we are in survival mode.

Survival mode is when advance is no longer a question and you've dug in to try to at least hold your ground. That's Peter's mindset. Persecution is exploding all around them. Peter, in this final few verses of chapter 4 tells his hearers what the survival mode plan is while they wait for help from heaven. Read it that way.

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See the word therefore? The end of all things is exploding all around us, therefore, here is your survival plan.

And in these few words, Peter maps out a triad that is needed for christian survival, then, and now. I'll outline it for you. Easy peasy.

In vs. 7b, Peter gives the necessary basics for a vertical lifeline. A connection with the Father. Then in vs. 8 and 9 Peter says when that relationship is solid, the vertical connection with God is vibrant, the next thing is the horizontal connection.

Christians to christians. Love, hospitality, meeting each others needs, forgiveness. And then in vss 10 and 11 a triad connection. You become a pipeline for God to pour out His blessings on others. All three are involved. Horizontal and vertical all working together.

We could cut these verses out of our Bibles. We don't need any of this. We are autonomous islands of plenty and ease. We don't know anything about war mentality or survival mode, because there's no war. No need to survive. We can say; *I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing* . . (R3:17a)

That's what the folks at the country music concert in Las Vegas said Sunday night as the show was cranking up. That's what the folks in Santa Rosa California said 1 week ago.

Maybe we should file these thoughts away in some musty corner for future use. Just in case. I don't know why I think about this so much. Maybe I'm morbid. In this same chapter Peter is going to tell us *judgement begins with the household of God*. What does that mean.

Well, it might mean that before Jesus comes to call us out of this world, a tidal wave of some sort might catch the church off guard. Complacent. Old. Fat. Lazy. Asleep. Not ready.

Is the church in this land ready for scenarios that wipe out our security and comfort and ease and plenty . . in a day.

My brain has been working overtime this week thinking about things after the guy in Las Vegas slaughtered 58 people. I watched the entire Vietnam series, and it was excellent, but my one take away that haunts me is the title of episode 7. **The Veneer of Civilization.**

The veneer is thin and getting thinner. I read a long article about the Las Vegas shooter. Bottom line, he's my age, has no passions. A-political. Non-religious. Grew up in Southern California. Went to the University of California at Northridge at the same time as my wife.

Just a guy hanging out is how the article describes him. Then one day the veneer is gone, no one knows why, and anarchy happens. No indicators. No nothing. The veneer of civilization is getting incredibly thin. Even now, with no real pressure. Civilization is like a morning mist. The sun comes out and it's just gone. Before your eyes.

I'm not trying to be an alarmist. A doomsday prophet. All I'm saying is, Peter's giving us some instruction, and we really don't give it much attention while the mist is present. We would do well to give Peter a listen. Just in case.

I've used some sarcasm, and some reality check this morning to try to make you think about where we're at and what our responsibilities are.

The truth is; the church has been in military survival mode the entire time of it's existence. We are enemy combatants living in territory that our King has claimed is His, and the old king, Satan, would love to exterminate us. That's our situation.

Currently he is using one of the most deviate and diabolical plans ever conceived against the church. He has lulled us to sleep with ease and security and plenty. The church is like the 10 virgins waiting for the bridegroom. And waiting, and waiting, and waiting and

.....ZZZZZZZZZZ

I look around me at the church in america and it's asleep, and there's no oil in the lamps, mostly.

We don't want to be that church. We want to listen intently to what Peter is going to tell us, because it's just as critical to us, in spite of Satan's current plan, as it was to the first hearers. The church is always in survival mode, always in enemy territory, always to be awake, and watching, always to be living the way Peter describes right here.

These 4 verses are critical for survival, and we're going to take as much time here as the Holy Spirit allows. There is no other battle plan, survival plan, this is it.

It's hard to be vigilant. It's hard to live in military mode. 2000 years have come and gone. We have soft beds and hot showers. We have too much yummy food. We have abundance as never before. Maybe 2000 more years will pass.

Listen to 2 verses that describe where we're at, perfectly, and then we'll dive into Peter's words.

Paul writes these words to the christians in Rome about 1950 years ago; *And do this, understanding the occasion. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* Romans 13:11

And Habbakuk wrote these words just about 2600 years ago, as if he were writing them to us direct.

"For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. Habakkuk 2:3

Timeless words. Words that are working in God's time, not ours. And so are Peter's. Listen to him;

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stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Such an economy of words, but they are the churches marching orders for all time. Let's look at them.

7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.

Within the 12 words after the word therefore, are the christians marching orders for having a vibrant real personal relationship with the God who has purchased us.

The first word for us is sound judgement. 2 words in english, one compound word in the greek. (so-fron-eh'-o). It means to have a right mind.

In Mark 5:15 we have an apt picture for us that describes this word. The demoniac of Gergesa. He is actually a picture of every christian, albeit a radical one. Here is a guy who is so out of control it's not even safe to be near him. The demons have driven him mad. Chains cannot control him. A wild man, unclothed, living in the tombs.

It's actually a picture of every one of us, if the veneer of civilization is removed. It may be the best answer Las Vegas Sheriff Joseph Lombardo is going to get. Veneer of civilization vanished, and demonic influence causes the behaviour of the wild man at gergesa and similarly, a Stephen Paddock.

This is who we were, without Jesus. The robes of civilization keep most of us in check, but the potential is always there. Then Jesus comes along one day, and after Jesus, the next scene is of a man, clothed and in his right mind. That's our word. Right mind.

This is such an interesting compound word. It comes from two words:

sōos ("safe") and phrēn ("what regulates life," the root of the English term, "diaphragm").

So the two ideas combined are safety and regulation. We regulate the volume of our rock and roll for the safety of our eardrums. Right. That knob on the radio.

And christians make thousands of decisions daily. Weekly. We, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, with the knowledge contained in this book, live a safely regulated life. Every moment. Something will pop up in front of us like a video game and we're faced with a decision.

We're sitting with friends laughing and suddenly the jokes get sort of raunchy. What do we do. What's the safe thing? And within this idea of safety is this relationship with our King, the Lord Jesus.

If I join in the mocking talk, it leads to sin, and my friendship with the Lord is compromised. An unsafe choice. A show comes on TV, and we want to watch it, we need to laugh, it's necessary to laugh, but invariably the humor gets bawdy and I come away stained.

TV is just a constant onslaught. You can be watching Johnboy Walton, or Amos McCoy, and it still isn't safe. It breaks into a commercial and some girls in string bikinis are playing volleyball and telling me if I'd consume alcohol, I'd be right there on that beach with them. And we all know what happens with beautiful women, after dark, plenty of beer . . . So much for Amos McCoy. Most of you don't have a clue who Amos McCoy was. 1st generation TV. I was there.

We have to safely regulate our lives based on a living relationship with the Lord Jesus and bound by the truths of this book. And everything is working against that. The world, the flesh, the devil . . . it's all trying to move me out of that safe zone.

One thing I can state unequivocally; If you do not know what's in this book, there is no safety. No regulation. Psalm 119:11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

The only way to walk with the Lord Jesus in a safety regulated lifestyle, a right minded lifestyle, is to know this book. Inside and out. 35 minutes a week listening to me is not enough. You need to be in this book, daily.

You need to visit that list of links at our web site that leads to a banquet feast of better teaching than I can probably ever manage. *For lack of knowledge My people are destroyed*; says the Lord in Hosea 6:3

Sound judgement. Bible knowledge based living. Right minded.

The next word we want to look at is sober spirit. *7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer*

What is a sober spirit? *nēpsate* What a great word. It means to be alert. On your game. Ready for action.

You're playing volleyball and you're in position and your eye never leaves that ball, you're dancing around, moving from side to side, front to back so when that ball comes into your quadrant, you're in the right place, right position to keep that thing off the ground and moving back into the offense.

Or you're in Viet Nam and you're the mine sweeper guy with the metal detector walking in front of the platoon. Inch by inch. The hair's standing up on the back of your neck. Ignore this word of Peter's and get blown to bits.

That alertness, that readiness is what this word describes. Listen to Peter in the very next chapter. *5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Same word. Be sober minded. Be alert. The devil is looking for someone to devour. Ask Peter how he knows this.

He's all bragged up. He's the one who will never recant. And a little

slave girl says, aren't you one of them? And Peter gets devoured. By Satan. It wasn't mortal, but I'll bet he could tell you how painful it was. Until he saw the resurrected Lord of glory at the lake at Galilee, and Jesus said, Hey, Peter . . . and restored him in that relationship that is everything.

We don't live this way. Most of us are so dis-engaged, Satan wouldn't bother. We're not causing him any grief.

Normal christian living requires self discipline. A regulated life style to keep us in the safe zone, away from sin and worldliness. And we need to be game on alert. Watchful for that fiery dart Satan's going to lob into our court. And we do this . . . why? Because we want to walk in the spirit in unbroken communion with the Lord Jesus. Every minute. Every day.

And that's what the rest of the verse says. for the purpose of prayer. 7
The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer

Prayer is not my strong suit. No one will accuse me of wearing knee holes in the carpet because I'm some big prayer warrior.

In 1st Thessalonians 5:17, a verse even I can memorize. *Pray without ceasing*. Pray at all times. This is the communion of christians with their heavenly Father. Always. A daily conversation.

This is our vertical connection with *Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!*

Once that is in place and solid, then the next portion of Peter's exhortation is the horizontal plane. Our relationship with other believers. We'll look at that, next time we're together.

Such an economy of words. Jesus is coming. Soon. Any moment. Therefore, live a disciplined life based in being obedient to the commands in this book. Know the book, for your own safety. Let this book flow in your veins. Live a regulated life based in these things.

Be watchful. Be alert. Don't fall asleep and wander off into sin. Live as though your enemy could capture and destroy you if you aren't paying attention.

And finally, walk with the Lord, prayerfully, at all times communing with Him in prayer as He communes back to you through His Holy Spirit in conjunction with looking into His word and meditating on the things written in this book.

That's the vertical connection. That's the Christians walk with the Saviour, but there's more. When that part is solid, then we interact with other believers. The horizontal connections. Next time.