

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 12/28/16

Bible Prophecies

What If He Comes Today?

The coming again of the Lord Jesus to gather together to Himself those who belong to Him is not only a sure and certain hope, but it is an *imminent* hope. We are sure that He is coming back to take us Home to be with Himself (John 14:3), and we believe He is coming soon ☐- perhaps today! This is what Peter meant when he wrote, "☐the end of all things is near" (1 Peter 4:7). Peter may have had in mind the impending end of the old Jewish economy, or the approaching end of life itself, but primarily he was referring to the end of the age, to the coming again of Christ.

All the early Christians believed in and expected the Lord's return, and we today are to live in the light of this fact (James 5:8). If Jesus is coming soon then this will influence our living and our serving, for in the New Testament the truth of the second coming is always presented as a very practical matter affecting character and conduct. What difference will it make to us if we believe that our Lord is coming soon, at any moment?

Peter tells us in **1 Peter 4:7-11**

"⁷ The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. ⁸ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so 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. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall live a calm and an ordered life.

See what verse 7 says. Notice that he did not only write, "Be clear minded☐..."; but "Therefore be clear minded...☐" In other words, because the time is short, then "lead an ordered and a quiet life." The early Christians needed this exhortation, for they were surrounded by those who were godless and antagonistic to all who claimed allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ. We need the same exhortation today, for we are living in a world which has no time for God, and we need to be kept from being dragged down to the level of the pagan society around us. We need also to experience

calmness and confidence as we hear of "wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6), so that instead of being filled with alarm and panic we are kept "in perfect peace" (Isaiah 26:3) ☐- look up Proverbs 1:33.

2. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall be men and women of prayer.

In verse 7, Peter goes on to urge his readers to be "self-controlled so that you can pray". The word "self-controlled" suggests disciplining himself in prayer and guarding against drowsiness or slackness. We are to do this, not for the benefit which we shall receive ourselves, but for the benefit our prayers will bestow upon others. There is always a reflex result when we pray, for in praying down blessings upon others we are wonderfully enriched ourselves ☐- look up Job 42:10. The philosophy of prayer is hard to understand. If God wants to bless us, why do we need to pray? The answer is that He has ordained it this way ☐- look up Ezekiel 36:37. There are some things which God will do if we pray, which He will not do if we fail to pray. Therefore, with vigilance and diligence we are to be "self-controlled so that you can pray" - look up Ephesians 6:18. Surely the imminence of the Savior's return should spur us on to pray.

3. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall love one another fervently.

Notice the challenge in verse 8. We are to be loving "above all", meaning above all other things, and we are to love "deeply". This love is to be experienced "(y)ourselves". Why are we to love like this? One reason is given: "For love covers over☐..." Whose sins does love cover over? Our sins, or the other person's? It means that love will always find a way to forgive and forget ☐- look up Galatians 5:22, and compare Romans 5:5. That is the only way to love others. With God's love filling our hearts we can love everyone deeply, or 'fervently' as the King James Version has it.

4. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall set out to be friendly.

This is the deeper meaning of verse 9. The reference is to opening our homes to friends and strangers. This was a very necessary ministry in the first century; but there is still a great work to be carried on along this line today. The root of the word "hospitality", as it is used here, has to do with friendliness, not just in the home but in the heart. This is one way in which the love of verse 8 will express itself.

5. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall be busy in the Lord's work.

In verse 10 we are reminded that God has entrusted to us all some spiritual gift, or gifts, which we must exercise for the benefit of the saints. The Holy Spirit has imparted some special "divine endowment" to every believer. Our responsibility is to exercise the gifts for a neglected spiritual gift will fade ☐- look up Judges 5:23 and Amos 6:1.

6. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall speak boldly in His Name.

Verse 11 means that we are each to be "a mouthpiece of God", and that we should serve Him "with the strength God provides"; that is, we should speak not in our own strength but in His strength and with the enabling of the Holy Spirit. All around us there are souls who need to be told about the Saviour. Who will speak to them if we do not? □- look up Acts 4:19-20. There would be a mighty revival if all who name the Name of Christ would begin to speak about Him to their relatives and friends. What excuse have we for not doing so?

7. If we believe that Jesus is soon coming, we shall do everything to the glory of God.

See how verse 11 concludes this section of scripture, and compare these words with 1 Corinthians 10:31. What does it mean to do everything to the glory of God? It means that we shall seek with God's enabling to think, speak and act only in ways which are pleasing to Him and which honor His Name -□ look up Colossians 3:17 for a good illustration of this.

Perhaps Today! □ That is the message Peter wanted to get across in this passage of scripture we have been considering. That is the message which we need to hear, and to keep on hearing day by day □- *Perhaps Today Jesus will come!*