

1 Peter 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Analysis

Peter's eschatological urgency—'the end of all things is at hand' (to de telos panton eggiken)—should govern Christian living. 'End' (telos) means both termination and goal/purpose: all things move toward their divinely appointed consummation in Christ's return and final judgment. The perfect tense 'has drawn near' (eggiken) indicates completed action with ongoing results: the end has already approached and remains imminent. This eschatological reality demands specific response: 'be sober-minded' (sophronesate)—clear-thinking self-control, not intoxicated with worldly pursuits; and 'sober unto prayers' (proseuchais)—disciplined, watchful prayer life. Jesus taught similar vigilance (Mark 13:33-37, Luke 21:36). Every generation must live as though Christ's return is imminent, because it is (Revelation 22:20).

Historical Context

Written circa AD 62-64, shortly before Nero's persecution intensified and Jerusalem's destruction (AD 70), Peter addresses Christians in Asia Minor facing increasing hostility. The Neronian persecution, Peter's martyrdom, and the temple's fall all loomed near—lending urgency to his exhortation. Early Christians lived with vibrant expectation of Christ's imminent return (1 Thessalonians 4:15, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31), which shaped their ethics, priorities, and endurance under persecution. Peter's emphasis on prayer during trials reflects Jesus' Gethsemane example (Matthew 26:41) and Paul's teaching (Philippians 4:6-7). The apostolic generation's eschatological fervor challenges modern complacency.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Does the reality of Christ's return truly shape my daily priorities, or do I live as though this world is permanent?
2. How would maintaining sober watchfulness and disciplined prayer change my life practically?

Interlinear Text

Πάντων	δὲ	τὸ	τέλος	ἤγγικεν	σωφρονήσατε	οὖν	καὶ
of all things	But	G3588	the end	is at hand	be ye	therefore	and
G3956	G1161		G5056	G1448	G4993	G3767	G2532
νῆψατε	εἰς	τὰς	προσευχάς·				
watch	unto	G3588	prayer				
G3525	G1519		G4335				

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Peter 5:8 (Parallel theme): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2 Timothy 4:5 (Parallel theme): But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Luke 21:34 (Parallel theme): And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Hebrews 10:25 (Parallel theme): Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Colossians 4:2 (Prayer): Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Titus 2:12 (Parallel theme): Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

Ezekiel 7:6 (Parallel theme): An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come.

Romans 12:12 (Prayer): Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Philippians 4:5 (Parallel theme): Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.