

Prepping for the End of the World

Survival Kit, Part 1

1 Peter 4:7a

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

When Peter says that the end of all things is near, he is not telling us to be selfish and prepare to survive at all costs. True Christianity is the opposite of selfishness. It is selfless at its very core. Peter is telling us to prepare for the end of the world, but the preparation he asks of us is to be focused on serving others and honor Christ in that.

Discussion Points:

The end of the world can bring about many different emotions and feelings for different people. For some, anxiety may be the emotion that rises as a result of thinking about the end of the world. For others, the feeling may be one of hopelessness. For Christians, there is likely a feeling of hope and joy because of what is promised to happen at the end.

- Why do people experience different emotions when thinking about the end of the world?
- Is it healthy for a Christian to have a fear of the unknown?
- Should the end of the world and the events of the end be unknown?
- What are your honest thoughts when thinking about the end of the world?

One of the grand promises of God is that He will sustain the earth until He is ready for it to end. This promise was made to Noah after the Flood in Genesis and is still relevant for us today.

- What are the implications of God's promise to uphold and sustain life on earth until the end?
- How should we live in light of God's promise?
- What does God's promise say about His character?

Discussion Guide cont.

Nearly all of the books in the New Testament talk about the end of the world and the events that lead to the end. Even with so much material about what will happen, many Christians would have difficulty describing what the Bible says.

- Why do you think the end of the world was such an important topic to the New Testament writers?
- How does teaching of the end of the world affect us?
- What benefit is there in knowing what God has revealed to us about the end of the world?
- How well do you know what the Bible says about the last days?

The word that Peter uses to talk about the end of the world does not refer to a cutting off or a termination, but instead completion or fulfillment.

- How does a completion or fulfillment differ from the idea of a termination of the world?
- What are some of the so-called loose ends that God will tie up as the end of all things draws near?

Peter wants us to be prepared for the end of the world. Many have taken that to mean they need to figure out the date. Unfortunately, that is not what Peter is teaching. In fact, the Bible says that it is not for man to know the exact timing of the end, so there is no use in making predictions.

- How would you respond to someone who claimed they knew the specific time of the end of the world?
- What are some negative results that come from predicting the end of the world?

Gospel Connection:

Most people in the world fear the end of all things, but Christians should not. For a Christian, there should be a feeling of peace and even a glimmer of hope about the end of all things because of the glorious promises of God. At the end of all things, Jesus will return and finally be received by the world as king. All things will be fulfilled and Jesus will redeem all of creation. Instead of preparing for a doomsday scenario, Christians should be focused on using the time they have left in this life to serve others and demonstrate their love and devotion to God in glorifying Him. Because Jesus came to die on the cross, the sin problem of man has been dealt with. All who believe in Christ can have their sins forgiven and can be fearless about the final judgment because they have been covered by Jesus' righteousness. When Jesus rose from the grave, he proved that he conquered death and can bring us new life. When he ascended, he left us with the promise of his return in the same way. The gospel brings us peace with God in our lives currently and it brings us peace for the future when considering what will happen in the last days. The gospel changes everything.

Discussion Guide cont.

Practical Implications:

- Think:** What does the end of all things mean to you? Have you trusted completely in Jesus? Meditate on the Bible's teaching about the end and think about what it means for the world to see redemption when Jesus finally returns.
- Pray:** Thank God for who He is. Thank Him for being truthful and faithful to fulfill all of His promises. Ask Him to help you to be less selfish and more selfless so you can serve others and serve God as the end nears.
- Do:** Search the Bible for teachings of the end times. Study the passages about Christ's return and encourage yourself and others with the hope that of redemption in Christ.

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One of the most watched syndicated television shows in recent years was called *Doomsday Preppers* and the tag line reads, “Are you prepared?”

Millions of people tuned in to watch and it has spawned a movement; millions of people are now investing in some way, shape or form, in some preparation for some kind of unforeseen disaster – whether it’s nuclear fallout or an electromagnetic pulse or a global infectious pandemic that potentially wipes out the human race.

Millions of dollars are being spent on prepping – purchasing water purification systems or air filter systems to keep out unwanted viruses or underground bunkers.

One man I read about has already spent more than \$7 million building an underground home which will allow him to survive everything from a nuclear holocaust to some contagion or even the collapse of the free world market.

Obviously, being prepared for problems isn’t entirely a wrong concept. Most of our automobiles come with a spare tire, right? Many people have a generator in their garage or spare candles in their cupboard.

But how much can you prepare? As I’ve said before, if we lose electricity for months or years and if you have a well in your backyard and a real fireplace, we’re going to come over and live with you – because *we* are your church family and you love us – don’t forget that.

I did a little research on this subject this past week and finally found what I was looking for; it was a list of what you’d need to buy in order to survive these catastrophes that preppers are gearing up for – whether it’s nuclear war or the collapse of the free world.

I found a list called, the Minimum Pre-Crisis Preparations. Assuming you have an

underground bunker or cabin in the woods somewhere, you need to have at a minimum:

- A battery powered radio;
- A shovel & pick;
- A saw with an extra blade;
- A hammer and plenty of nails;
- A shelter ventilating pump;
- Plastic sheets and duct tape to cover your windows;
- Large containers for water;
- A bottle of bleach;
- A portable stove;
- Wooden matches in a waterproof container;
- Containers and utensils for storing and cooking food;
- A first aid kit and a tube of antibiotic ointment;
- An oil lamp;
- A flash light;
- A 2-week supply of dehydrated food;
- And a 2-week supply of candles.

I noticed that this stuff was stocked for only 2 weeks – I don’t know what you’re going to do after 2 weeks, but again, this was the minimal pre-crisis preparation.

I kept reading from other sites and eventually found a list that was 5 single spaced pages long; this is the list for people who are serious about prepping for the rest of their lives out on their own.

And by the way, it hit me that if you don’t have the pre-crisis preparation list done, what you really need to do is make friends with these people, although they probably won’t let you. These are the preppers who have bunkers or some kind of underground container or shelter. One guy I read about has buried 52 old school busses – 52 of them. Anyhow, whatever you do, even if you only have one old bus buried in the

back yard, stock it with everything from what I've already read; but now include:

- A vacuum storage system;
- A water purification system;
- Plenty of canned vegetables and fruits along with dozens of empty canning jars and with a pressure canning system;
- Plenty of guns and ammunition;
- Trade in your bank account for gold and silver to put in your underground safe;
- Get a kerosene heater;
- And a propane heater;
- And a wood burning stove;
- And a solar oven;
- And plenty of tools and a supply of lumber;
- And barrels and barrels of grains and flour and yeast and salt –

and the list goes on to include ham and a short wave radio; every imaginable piece of equipment for camping and hunting and foraging and cleaning and purifying and on and on and on.

Listen, it's going to take everything you've got and cost everything you have – this is some serious prepping.

One blogger I came across, rather humorously wrote that spending your life getting ready for a cataclysmic event will still only provide you with three possible outcomes.

First, he wrote, it's possible that after all your prepping, nothing cataclysmic happens and you die of old age.

A second possible outcome is that something does happen and you die anyway. In other words, you had everything ready in your stocked underground compound, but you were a few miles away that day when the cataclysmic event occurred and you didn't make back into your bunker – something did happen, but you died anyway.

Or thirdly, something happened and you survived in your bunker. That catastrophic event did occur, you and your family feasted on dehydrated food and sanitized water through your filtration system and you fought off all

those starving neighbors who weren't prepared, but then, eventually, you got sick or simply grew old and died. There's some wisdom in that perspective.

Beloved, nowhere is the believer commanded or even encouraged to prepare our lives and give our lives to prepare for some natural or biological disaster.

In fact, there is an Old Testament verse that will never be the motto for modern day preppers – you're not going to find this hanging from the wall of a bunker.

In the Book of Genesis, God destroys in judgment the human race and the animals on earth with a global flood. Everyone and everything on the earth drowns, except Noah and his family and two of every kind of animal, along with a number of sacrificial animals - you probably know the narrative.

And the covenant God makes where He promises to never to do that again is perpetually signaled by a rainbow. You knew that too.

What's often overlooked is the detail of that covenant God delivers to Noah – and for the rest of human history, as we know it, God has promised these things.

He says to Noah in Genesis chapter 8;
I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done (that is, by sending a flood) – now notice;

***While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
And cold and heat,
And summer and winter,
And day and night
Shall not cease.” (Genesis 8:21-22)***

You know what this means? In light of these promises which have never been set aside to this day – we still see the rainbow – but more than that,

- we don't have to fear the extinction of the human race because people are planting **seeds** and **harvesting** crops just like they are today;

- we don't need to fear the sun frying us to a crisp because we're given the promise here of **cold** weather too;
- but we don't need to fear the earth will freeze over and we all end up freezing to death (if the global warming people are wrong); we don't need to fear that either because God promises that we will continue having both **cold** weather and **heat** – or warm weather – and we're especially hanging on to that promise right now, aren't we?;
- further, we don't need to fear the collapse of the solar system, the destruction of the sun and moon – because God is promising the continuation of the rotation of earth and the other planets and stars, which will continue causing 24 hour cycles of **day and night** along with all four seasons, summer, winter, spring and fall.

In fact, if you study the tribulation at the other end of human history you also discover that earth is still filled with billions of people (who evidently haven't been destroyed by a nuclear free-for-all or pandemic; you also are informed that even during the Tribulation period – just before Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom – the earth has plenty of trees and animals and water and rivers and oceans and fish and all kinds of food.

Look, when it comes to catastrophe scenarios, the Bible just kind of ruins the party. More importantly, it keeps us focused.

Beloved, we're never told to spend our lives prepping for disaster; what we *are* told in the Bible to do is to prepare for – to live our lives in light of – the life we will have beyond this one.

My life right now is going to last a handful of decades. In fact, I probably won't need all 10 fingers to count the decades, but my life – and yours – beyond this life, is going to last forever. You don't have enough fingers and toes, even if each one of them counted for a billion years!

But here's the point: in between this brief life and the eternal life to come, God has a few things to tell us about how to prepare for the end of the world, as we know it.

And God delivers it through the Apostle Peter. So let's go back to ***Peter's first letter and chapter 4***. While you're turning, I can tell you ahead of time, Peter's inspired advice on prepping has nothing to do with wooden matches or spare batteries or underground bunkers.

Peter is going to tell us how to become a sanctified prepper, so to speak, in light of our eternal future – ***notice verse 7***.

The end of all things is near (1 Peter 4:7a).

Stop here – this is as far as we're going to get today.

In fact, in order to understand the following 10 things Peter is going to command us stock up on, we have to answer the question here that you're immediately confronted with – what's the end of all things?

Sounds like Peter is just another doomsdayer or an alarmist trying to get our attention.¹ Well he isn't a doomsdayer as it relates to germs or nuclear bombs, but he is sounding an alarm.

In fact, all but 4 books in the New Testament refer to the end of human history as we know it. From the very opening pages of ***Matthew's Gospel*** you hear John the Baptizer preaching, ***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2)***. And you go all the way to the end of the New Testament, to the ***Book of Revelation*** and you hear the Lord Jesus saying, ***“Yes, I am coming soon”*** to which John responds, ***“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20)***.

And in between Matthew and Revelation, you hear this repeated message over and over again about the literal, imminent return of Jesus Christ.

Imminent means it can happen at any time. It's helpful to understand that when Peter writes here – ***the end of all things is near***, the word he

uses for *the end* is *telos*, which doesn't mean termination, but completion.ⁱⁱ

You can understand it as a milestone or a goal that is nearly reached. So Peter is telling us that a goal – or the completion – is near.

The end of all things is near. All things means that everything is wrapping up and leading us to this eschatological goal – this prophetic milestone – this end times event – which, for the believer, is ***the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (Titus 2:13).***ⁱⁱⁱ

And Peter essentially says that event of Christ's appearing *is near*. In fact, the verb translated is near – the end *is near* – is in the perfect tense which emphasizes that it is poised and ready to materialize.^{iv}

One New Testament author wrote, "Peter is picturing Jesus Christ in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, awaiting one word – 'Go!'.^v "Go, Son, get your bride, the church – she is now complete."

Now, with the completed New Testament as commentary, we know that the second coming of Christ is in two phases.

The first phase is what we call the rapture of the church. Paul writes that we will suddenly – and without warning – be caught up (the Latin verb is *rapturo*) – we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the clouds.

Paul writes it this way to the Thessalonians, ***For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. The bodies of deceased believers will rise first, uniting with their spirit which has been with Christ, enjoying heaven with the Lord the moment they died – they will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).***

Isn't that far-fetched to think that Jesus is going to come into the atmosphere, surrounded by clouds, to rapture His church?

Well, if you go all the way back, nearly 2,000 years ago to when the resurrected Jesus ascended back to heaven – Luke writes in the Book of Acts what happened after the Lord delivered His final message to his disciples.

After He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. In other words, the Lord disappeared from their sight into the clouds. ***And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them*** – that would be angels. ***They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."*** (Acts 1:9-10)

So if Jesus ascended literally up and into the sky through the clouds and then vanished as Luke records, it isn't far-fetched at all that Jesus can suddenly reappear in the clouds – only this time, to call His church up to meet Him in the clouds and then return to Heaven.

And that's the first phase of His coming; the first phase of His second coming is when He comes *for* His church.

The second phase is when He comes *with* His church. Read it sometime on your own, but there's a remarkable event in ***Revelation 19*** where the Lord is seen coming from heaven with the redeemed host. He descends all the way to earth where He establishes His throne and His thousand year Kingdom (***Revelation 19 and 20***).

Peter is focusing here on this first phase – the appearing of the Lord and the completion of this goal, the completed Bride of Christ, the living church being raptured up and away with Christ.

Paul fills in some blanks on what that first phase/rapture event looks like as he writes to the Corinthians, ***Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will . . . all be changed, in a moment, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).***

How much time will it take for the rapture – the raising of the dead, the glorification of our bodies who are alive, being swept up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air?

Paul writes here, *in the twinkling of an eye*. That's like snapping your fingers. We're here – and the next moment – we're gone!

By the way, the second phase of His coming – described in *Revelation 19* – isn't in the twinkling of an eye. It seems like slow motion as Jesus descends on a white horse and the redeemed are all mounted for battle along with Him. And He doesn't come to the clouds; He descends to planet earth. That's another sermon or 9 or 10.

When Peter writes here, *The end of all things is near*, he is referring to that next event on the prophetic calendar: the appearance of Christ as He calls up and away His church.

This is an imminent event – it can happen at any moment. And if it was poised and ready to materialize 2,000 years ago, imagine how poised and ready it is now?!

But just as the preppers would do well to apply *Genesis chapter 8* and the promises of God regarding planet earth, so religionists and church leaders and Christians should take to heart *Acts chapter 1* where Jesus told His disciples that it wasn't up to them – or us – to figure out the dates of these prophetic events; just focus on being His witnesses.

Or in Matthew's Gospel where the Lord Jesus announced that regarding His second coming, *But of that day or hour no one knows (Matthew 24:36)*.

But that hasn't stopped people from guessing, has it?

- As the black plague swept through Europe, **church leaders** interpreted it as a sign of God's wrath and the end of the world was predicted for **1346**.
- **London astrologers** predicted the world would end in a flood in **1524**, which would start in London. At least 20,000 people abandoned their homes and

headed for higher ground. (Reading the promise to Noah might have helped a bit on this one.)

- **Christopher Columbus** predicted in 1501 that the world would end in **1656**.
- The influential Puritan pastor, **Cotton Mather**, made several predictions of the world's end; his last one was for **1716**.
- **William Whiston** predicted a comet colliding with the Earth would destroy all life in **1736**. They are still making movies about that possibility.
- A Presbyterian minister named **Christopher Love** predicted that in **1805** the world would be destroyed in an earthquake.
- In 1806, **Mary Bateman** of Leeds, England had a hen that had begun laying eggs on which the phrase, "Christ is coming" was written. It created a firestorm of interest until they discovered that she had written on the eggs in corrosive ink so as to etch the eggs, and then reinserted the eggs back into the hen's oviduct. I'm sure that hen didn't want anything to do with prophecy after that!
- **John Wesley**, founder of Methodism, predicted the Millennial Kingdom would begin in **1836**.
- **Wilford Woodruff**, the Apostle of the Mormon Church predicted the Kingdom of God on earth to begin sometime between the years of **1875 and 1925**. He gave himself 50 years of latitude.
- **Camille Flammarion** predicted that Halley's Comet would poison the atmosphere and possibly snuff out all life on the planet in **1910**. Comet pills

were sold to protect people from the toxic gasses. Camille more than likely made off with a fortune.

- **Charles Russell**, the influential leader of what would become the Jehovah's Witnesses, predicted the final battle would take place in **1914**.
- **Jeanne Dixon** predicted a planetary alignment which would destroy the world on **February 4, 1962**.
- **Chuck Smith**, founder of Calvary Chapel – along with many other evangelicals by the way – predicted that the generation born in **1948** would be the last generation born before the end of the world. He did say he could be wrong, but that it was a deep conviction in his heart.
- **Pat Robertson** in the late 1970's on his 700 Club program predicted the end of the world in **1982**.
- **Louis Farrakhan** declared that the Gulf War was the final war of Armageddon in **1991**.
- **Harold Camping** gained worldwide headlines, as he and his followers spent millions of dollars announcing **May 21, 2011** as the day the world would be destroyed in judgment.

And there will be more to come. I rehearse some of these predictions in order to protect this flock from distraction and even disillusionment.

Making Wrong Predictions produces at least 5 results:

1. It gives unbelievers an excuse to party. ("Hey it didn't happen and we're still here! There's no judgment coming after all – so let's all get wasted.")

2. Secondly, the preaching and the promise of Christ's return invites mockery (Peter in his second letter brings up this point: the world already mocks at our belief in the promise that Jesus Christ is coming back, so why would any believer want to add fuel to the world's mockery by giving them a date that the Lord already said won't come true? – ***no one knows the day or the hour – Matthew 24:36.***)
3. Third, churches and church leaders lose valuable credibility. (In other words, if they're wrong on this, who is to say they're right on anything else they believe the Bible says?)
4. Fourth, believers are distracted from their mission. (Disciple making takes a back seat during the frenzy.)
5. And believers can become discouraged and disillusioned about the Bible they thought they understood.
 - So don't set dates;
 - Don't get distracted;
 - Don't set yourself up to be disillusioned or discouraged;
 - Stay focused.

The end of all things is near which simply means we are to live in light of eternity. We are to look for and long for the promise of the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And while we're waiting, Peter writes, ***The end of all things is near – therefore . . .*** Did you notice that? ***Therefore!***

In light of the imminent return of Christ – in other words, because of the fact that the next item on the prophetic agenda is the rapture of the church, there's plenty to do.

We've got some prepping to do. In fact, in the remainder of this chapter, Peter effectively gives us 10 items to pack into our survival kit –

misspelled s-e-r-v on purpose; we didn't miss the spell check – because Peter isn't going to tell us to forget about people and the church. Instead he is going to tell us that people and the church and living out the gospel and disciple-making will matter more than ever as the end draws near.

There are 10 things to stock up on in order to be prepared as we continue toward the end of all things.

We'll start into this list next Sunday, if we're still here . . . I'm not making any predictions!

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 01/07/2018 by Stephen Davey.

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i Adapted from J. Ramsey Michaels, Word Biblical Themes: 1 Peter (Word Publishing, 1989), p. 39

ii John MacArthur, 1 Peter (Moody Publishers, 2004), p. 235

iii Adapted from D. Edmond Hiebert, 1 Peter, (BMH Books, 1984), p. 268

iv Duane F. Watson & Terrance Callan, Paideia Commentaries: First and Second Peter (Baker Academic, 2012), p. 102

v Charles R. Swindoll, Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus (Zondervan, 2010), p. 218