

# The End Of All Things Is Near

A sermon by Pr. David Johnson

Many years ago, when Vicki had the daunting job of home-schooling our kids, I'd often be glad that I wasn't the teacher of a particular lesson. Sometimes it would be the repetition required to master a concept. At other times it would be the absolute feeling of inadequacy I experienced when a particular lesson was addressed. But in either case, I would conveniently find some other task to tackle rather than be sucked into this vortex of learning. Not that I disliked academics mind you, but I certainly didn't want my personal ignorance brought to light.

But there was one subject I could never run from, for it was not only a subject of study for our kids, but it was something I had to address in my own life every single day. This subject was Language Arts, the study, formation, and applied use of words and sentences. And though I have to use words every day, I've always struggled with the seeming endlessness of language variations.

Likewise, I've found that the art of wordsmithing, can be the making or breaking of people. There are several vocations which are either aided or hindered by the proper use of words. In reality, much of our cultural wars are fought on this battlefield of language; the definitions and marketing of philosophies through words.

Sadly, recent years have shown us that this battle for linguistic control hasn't stopped with education or in the public marketplace. It has even invaded the hallowed halls of the church. Truly, a balanced understanding of Scripture is either helped or undermined by the proper use of basic language practices. After all, the accurate interpretation of a text can be greatly altered by a simple definition, a turn on a phrase, or an idea out of context. In fact, much of today's theological compromise within Christendom has been driven and enabled by the use (or should I say, *abuse*) of this very principle.

So as we begin, I'm going to give you a little sentence diagramming lesson:

*The dog patiently endured the unfriendly cat.*

<b>Dog/Cat</b> – Nouns	<b>Endured</b> - Verb
<b>Patiently</b> – Adverb	<b>Unfriendly</b> – Adjective
<b>The</b> – Definite article	

Now, while some may have appreciated this useful English lesson, many of you won't have noticed that I also imparted to you a subtle personal bias, "Dogs are nicer/better than cats." Oh, this statement wasn't taught in the lesson, or as a proven fact, but still, the seed of my personal worldview was planted. All I need do is support this opinion in a few more exercises and the odds are good that you'll soon share in my viewpoint.

And so it can be with theology. Actually, I'm convinced that many of the warnings we read in Scripture are there because of the gullible and lazy nature of our minds. Paul said as much in his two letters to Rome and Corinth:

**Romans 12:2** **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4** **And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup>in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...**

This is the same concern that Peter displays in 1 Peter:

**1 Peter 4:7-11** **The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaint. <sup>10</sup>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>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.**

Peter's overarching concern was that the end, with all of its temptations and opposition, lay ahead. God's people would be greatly tested to stay the course and stand fast against all opponents. And the final objective for every believer was that God would be glorified through Jesus Christ. But how would that be achieved through His people? Peter goes on to instruct:

- \* Be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer
- \* Fervently love one another, because love covers a multitude of sins
- \* Be hospitable to one another without complaint
- \* Each has received a special gift, use it in serving one another
- \* Whoever speaks, is to do so as one speaking the utterances of God
- \* Whoever serves is to do so as one serving by God's strength

Peter exhorts every believer to make sure every word and deed be accomplished with a focus on God, and in His power.

Jesus addresses this priority as He prepared to leave the disciples before His crucifixion. He knew that once He was gone, the disciples might be manipulated and swayed by a host of philosophies and convincing arguments. They would need something to keep them on task and on script. They would need a divine sensitivity to both the words of a message, and the motivation behind it. This could only happen if they had help; a supernatural "Helper" that could always be with them.

**John 15:26-16:4** **"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, <sup>27</sup>and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. 16:1 "These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. <sup>2</sup>They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God. <sup>3</sup>These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. <sup>4</sup>But these things I have spoken to you, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you of them. These things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.**

**"...kept from stumbling...make you outcasts...kill you..."**

Jesus states there will be terrible opposition. But He gives them a "Helper" (*Paraclete*), the Holy Spirit, to keep them from compromise, confusion, or apostasy as the times turn dark. Jesus promises that they will have a divine Aid in their battle against their accusers so that they will *remember* what they were taught and stand fast in the truth.

Yes, "The end of all things is near." But we have work to do, along with the challenge to stay on task and in the truth. Praise God that we don't stand alone, but have the supernatural Helper of God to guide, lead, and empower us.