

Only Christ Endures

What are the things that endure? Nothing in this life will endure. The riches of this world but also the suffering of this world will pass away. The things that give us safety and the things that hurt us are passing away. But Christ and those who are washed in His blood, these will endure into everlasting life.

Mar 13:1-13 NKJ Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*" ² And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." ³ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" ⁵ And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and will deceive many. ⁷ "But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These *are* the beginnings of sorrows. ⁹ "But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ "But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² "Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³ "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

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If you think of something that is going to endure, you think of stone. The pyramids, the massive cathedrals of Europe, the thick walls of ancient cities, these are things that endure.

Here the disciples see the temple at Jerusalem, granite blocks 40ft x 12ft x 8ft. This temple is impressive and beautiful. Surely they think that is going to last forever. The disciples' words to Jesus show that they are thinking like this, "what will be the sign of this and the end of the age?" Surely this temple will last until the end of time.

We like the disciples tend to be in awe of the massive works of men. But Jesus knows differently. Prior to our text he told his disciples “your house [the temple] is left to you desolate.” The temple as beautiful as it is, is worthless to Christ because they rejected Him who was the fulfillment of that temple. It is like a beautiful mansion with an old man living all alone without friends or family.

Jesus knows that what matters is what is inside, and there is nothing left inside this temple.

Does that mean we shouldn't try to make our church as beautiful as possible? NO. We continue to build beautiful churches because it's an expression of what is important to us. Anyone who sees this place will know what is important to this congregation. 1. The Word of God. 2. A Christian education. 3. Basketball

So making the church as beautiful as possible is important, as long as we keep Christ and His Word as the reason for it. Otherwise it will be an empty beautiful building.

What other things are not going to last?

Wars and rumors of Wars

Lots of things are going to come through the newspapers, big things, horrible things, earth shaking things, things like WW1 and WW2, things that seem to indicate the end of all things. This or that man will get elected to president or governor or senator, and people will think, that's it, there is no hope left. But those things aren't going to last. We move on. The people of God continue.

Earthquakes and famines

The earth itself is going to shake and break. You will have times of great distress in your life. Maybe your house will burn down. You lose all your stuff, books and pictures and furniture. Imagine standing outside your burning house thinking, “What are we going to do now?”

Nations also will come and go. The United States also will someday fall apart if the world lasts that long. This was a real challenge for the Christians in the 4th century AD. The stability and riches of the Roman Empire suddenly and overnight was just gone in its place fear and raiding hords of Visigoths and Vikings.

Jesus tells us do not be surprised or troubled when these things happen, they are but “the beginnings of sorrow.” These things must pass away something far better is coming. He tells us this so we will remember what is important, His word and His Kingdom, but also for another reason.

“Take heed that no one deceive you.”

These things could easily be a trap for Christians. “Why would God let this or that thing happen?” And so we give up the faith because we think we know better than God. We see the wars, the pain and suffering, we lose our house in a fire, we think how could God let this happen? But Jesus told us before hand this is the way things will be.

There are many Christians who want to spend a great majority of their time in speculation about the end times. They write whole books about events and timelines that they imagine the bible foretells. But they’re missing the whole point. When Jesus talks about the future he doesn’t talk about the great things that men will achieve or the how he will come in a glorious kingdom. Instead he says watch your feet. There will be all these traps on the road waiting to catch you, watch out for them.

For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many.

False teaching will be a constant problem. We shouldn’t be surprised when many are drawn away from the truth. We need to be constantly on the watch because many will try to draw us away from Christ.

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ “FOR the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

This could easily be a real offense to us, when those who believe are killed for their faith. And we might think, “Where is the God who saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego?” IF ours is the living God why are any of his people killed by unbelievers?

The Muslims used to do something even worse than killing Christians. They would kill the Christians. They would take their children and train them into these elite Muslim warriors who would then lead the charge in their future holy wars.

But notice Jesus says this is necessary as a “testimony to them.” Certainly those who were brought before rulers like Paul before the Emperor had opportunity to preach the gospel to them but even more than that they provide us with one of the greatest witnesses to the truth the Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. These men were so certain that they had seen the risen Jesus that they were willing to get torn apart by lions rather than deny Him.

You will be hated by all men for my names sake

The world will gnash their teeth at us. The world will continue to grow in their hatred of us. This is what we should expect. But these things will not last. Neither the temple, nor the false religions, nor the wars, nor the nations, nor the suffering, no not even death will endure.

But there are two things that shall endure:

1. The Gospel of Christ, in the midst of all this death and suffering the Gospel will be preached to the ends of the earth.
2. He who endures to the end shall be saved. That is the promise that Christ gives. Endure through all of this and you will receive the kingdom.

How are we to endure? Not by our strength, but by the blood of the Lamb.

Rev 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Notice our earthly lives and the things of this life are passing away, let them go, including the suffering of this life. Instead hold on to 1 the Word of their testimony which is the Word of God, and 2 the blood of the Lamb which washes us from sin.

How did they endure until the end? Because the Lord died for them and us, washed us in the baptism and made us clean and pure from the sin of this world.

Amen