

## 78 Mark 13:9-13

# A Guarded Endurance

### Text

9 **“But be on your guard.** For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, **do not be anxious** beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

### Introduction

#### Affirmations

Before I get into the text too far, I want to take a moment to affirm my belief in certain end times events. I am taking a position on Mark 13 that runs against the grain of much of evangelicalism. When I do that the fear is that I am abandoning the historic end times scheme altogether. So in order to focus our attention more acutely on our text I want to address what may be some concerns.

First, I believe in the second coming of Christ. I believe that he will come again and that he will return as we saw him leave. That means I believe in a physical bodily return. But this time he will come in all of his glory.

Second, I believe that this age is characterized by wars and rumors of wars. I believe that we will see earthquakes and famines. I believe that we will see persecution. In fact we *do* see all of these things. America is such an exception to the rule of persecution that it is almost embarrassing.

Third, although I do not affirm the Tim Lahay sort of anti-Christ, I do believe, as John had written that Antichrist must arise as indeed there have been many anti-Christ.

Fourth, I believe that there will be an increased time of tribulation and lawlessness toward the second coming. Again, I do not believe that it is necessarily going to be a 7 yr tribulation as seen in Hal Lindsey's books.

Fifth, I believe in a rapture of sorts. Once more, I do not subscribe to what the common 21st century view of the rapture is, but my Bible has 1 Thess 4:17.

I affirm all these things and more. But I do not think that this passage teaches it. I believe that this passage is focused, at least through verse 31, on a 1st century fulfillment. All those things are taught in other parts of scripture, but it seems that this passage deals principally with the destruction of Jerusalem.

## Review

Last week I had desperately wanted to fit all of verses 1-13 in a single sermon, but I decided to cut in half once it ran over an hour. Verses 1-13, I believe, represent one section of thought. It is the warning section. "See that no one leads you astray" and "the end is not yet" and "These are but the beginning of the birth pains" and "But be on your guard." He has not yet answered their question. This first section is a warning against premature reaction and sensationalism. Verses 5-8, which we covered last week, have to do with grand events like wars and earthquakes and such. This week, in verses 9-13 it gets more personal with the focus on persecution. The next section, from verse 14 through 23 begins the actual sequence of events that marks the end.

## Persecution

*9 "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them.*

**Acts 5:27** And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." . . . 40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

**Acts 12:1** About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

Paul also was beaten and imprisoned and stoned from city to city. He stood before Felix and Festus, and King Agrippa, and even Caesar himself. There are many other references that could be given, but time is short.

*10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.*

This is a popular verse for missions. It has been used as a motivating force to get people to reach every people group in order to hasten to second coming of Christ. But again, the entire context is 1st century, and when this verse is examined more closely there is no reason to place this in the 21st century either. In Mark, the Greek is  $\pi\acute{\nu}\tau\alpha \tau\eta \theta\upsilon\eta$  - all nations. In Matthew it is  $\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\upsilon$  which means the inhabited earth. When Alexander the Great conquered the known world, that is exactly the notion that is in play here. He obviously did not conquer the Eskimos or the Japanese, but those were unknown regions of the earth. The inhabited world or known world was a bit different. And so we see

**Luke 2:1** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the *world* should be registered.

**Acts 11:28** And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the *world* (this took place in the days of Claudius).

**Acts 2:5** Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every *nation* under heaven. . . Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya

belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians

**Rom 1:8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world.

I know of no interpreter who believes that Caesar intended to register the peoples of South America or that the famine spread to Hawaii and Argentina, if I may speak anachronistically. Having established that the term for world or peoples may have a limited rather than global usage, it remains to be seen if we have examples of the gospel going to the known world. As it turns out, we do.

**Col 1:6; 23** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth... if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

**Rom 10:18** But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for  
“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the world.”

As strange as it may sound. There is good reason to believe that this was fulfilled in the 1st century. Our aversion to that interpretation owes itself more to our tradition than it does to the text. There are semantic reasons to limit it to the known world, and there are explicit statements that the gospel had been proclaimed under all of creation.

*11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.*

Again, we see Paul and Peter fulfilling this in the book of Acts.

*12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death.*

Here we see that the persecution that the gospel begets will pierce even to the family unit. Brother will deliver over brother to death. This is exactly what we see in some countries under Islamic rule. If a family member becomes Christian, they are cut off from the family and may even be given over to death. DA Carson relates how a Jewish friend of his became a Christian and his parents held a funeral for him. Families may be torn apart in Hindu regions of the world when one member becomes a Christian.

This kind of persecution, however, also took place within the first century. Even while Christ was still alive and ministering one family turned their back on their son who had been healed by Christ. They feared being kicked out of the synagogue and so they refused to stand by their son who had been given his sight back. Stephen was stoned to death, Peter was imprisoned and beaten, Paul was stoned and left for dead, the audience of the book of Hebrews had their property plundered, Paul was beaten with 39 lashes, Peter was crucified upside down, John was exiled on Patmos, John the Baptist was beheaded, James was killed, the persecutions were heavy. So while this description may fit either the 1st century, or this age in general, I believe that the time indicators restrict it to the 1st century.

## The "Full" Gospel

That said, I want to take a small application detour to address the name it and claim it group. This goes by many names, "name it and claim it" health and wealth," the "prosperity gospel." Proponents of this teaching prefer the phrase "full gospel." Some of its proponents I would place squarely outside of Christianity. They are heretics through and through. Other, however, are real believers that do preach the real gospel, they just add the prosperity part on the end. The basic notion is that Jesus came to give us life and life abundant. This abundant life is characterized by wealth, business success, health and so on. They turn to passages in the OT that speak of God giving every man a fig tree and a vineyard.

I won't comment but briefly on such texts. First, they confuse the Old Covenant with its attendant blessings and curses, with the New Covenant. We are not under the same economy and cannot lay claim to the same kind of blessings. Second, they wrongly interpret the abundant life that Jesus promised in terms of physical blessings. Third, they fail to observe the two-age model that is the eschatological structure of the New Testament. There is a tension that exists between the "already" and the "not-yet." One day we will be free of sorrow, free of pain, free of sickness. But this age is not that time. This brings me to my fourth and primary gripe that flows from our text: This two-age model has been abundantly attested to through the centuries and it is a major slap in the face to Christians around the world and through the ages to suggest that they are not living the good life that Jesus promised!

D.A. Carson notes that there are some weeks in Ethiopia where three pastors will be killed in a single week. There is betrayal, torture, murder, violence, rape, imprisonment and all sorts of unmentionable things which happen on almost a daily basis all for the sake of the gospel. Just from that which has actually been preserved in writing, both from those who were persecuted and those who acknowledged doing the persecution, I could give hundreds of pages of material, and that is only of abbreviated accounts.

This is a subject for which I have little patience. Shame on these teachers who peddle such doctrines. They wear blinders that shield them from what the real world is like. They speak as though Christ had already brought this world to its consummate form and it is only lack of faith that keeps one from enjoying it.

## Endurance

*13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*

The one who endures to the end will be saved. The Arminian will play this verse off as proof that one can lose his salvation. Others will treat it as teaching that the salvation is purely physical. In the context of persecution, it would be a mere tautology to say the one who live through it all will be alive at the end. That does not seem to do justice to the text. Nor can I grant the Arminian point with a view to the larger reaching of scripture. It is possible that it means what the Arminian says it means. that is within the real of possible interpretations. But it seems to me that this verse is descriptive rather than causal.

Endurance is the mark of a true believer. Thus the one who endures to the end is the same as the one who is saved. 1 John 2:19 says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they

had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us." Hebrews 3:14 says, "For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end." This sounds very much like what we see here in Mark. Just a few verses earlier we have that same statement in different words, "And we are [present tense] his house if indeed we hold fast [future] our confidence and our boasting in our hope." Enduring to the end is the mark of genuine salvation, not something that causes genuine salvation.

## **Application**

As last week, I want to close with a quote, this time from Geerhardus Vos:

“What the Lord expects from us at such seasons is not to abandon ourselves to unreasoning sorrow, but trustingly to look sorrow in the face, to scan its features, to search for the help and hope, which, as surely as God is our Father, must be there. In such trials there can be no comfort for us so long as we stand outside weeping. If only we will take the courage to fix our gaze deliberately upon the stern countenance of grief, and enter unafraid into the darkest recesses of our trouble, we shall find the terror gone, because the Lord has been there before us, and, coming out again, has left the place transfigured, making of it by the grace of his resurrection a house of life, the very gate of heaven.”