

CLARITY MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

CLARITY TRUMPET

"It's Time for CLARITY!"

For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

-First Corinthians 14:8, 9-

Enduring to the End

Among those who believe in and preach a by-works way of salvation, or who believe their security in Christ is conditioned upon their consistent performance of good deeds, there is probably no thought more prevalent to them than: *I must keep on keeping on. I've got to hang in there until I meet the Lord. I've got to hold on no matter what.* In the language of Scripture the thought is expressed this way: *He who endures to the end shall be saved* (Matthew 10:22; 24:13; and Mark 13:13).

And so we hear these well-meaning folks say things such as, *"It just is not enough to believe in Christ; you must also endure to the end. The Bible says so."* The usual meaning behind such sentiments is that once you have put your faith in Christ you must then "endure" (meaning to *never give into*) temptations and the trials of life -- for the *rest* of your life, if you expect to meet the Lord in Heaven. Failure to do so would result in losing your salvation. Once you've lost your salvation, we are told, you may then repent and start all over with the Lord again; if you don't, and you die in such a backslidden condition, you who were once saved will instead spend an eternity separated from God in Hell.

Determining What It Means

Now, the issue is not: *Does the Bible actually say we must "endure to the end" in order to be saved and go to Heaven?* Rather, what must be determined is what does this phrase *mean*?

It really isn't that difficult to understand the three passages in which this statement was made by Christ. That is, it isn't difficult *IF* we carefully consider the *contexts* in which this statement occurs.

Matthew 24:13 and **Mark 13:13** go together. They appear in the same context where some of Jesus' disciples asked Him, *"Tell us, when will these things be [when the Temple would be destroyed -- Mt. 24:2; Mk 13:2]? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age"* [Mt.24:3; Mk.13:4]?

Christ then walked them through the present age, emphasizing that there will be many false prophets and false Messiahs bent on deceiving men, including believers.

Matthew's account says this: *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved* (vs.11-13).

Mark's record states it this way: *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. And you will be hated by all men for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved* (vs. 12-13).

However, just before we consider what *enduring to the end* means in these two parallel passages, I want to mention the third passage where the statement is found, for my approach to understanding all three passages is the same.

Matthew 10:22: The statement under consideration in this verse has a different, but somewhat similar, context. In this chapter Christ called twelve men out of the multitude of disciples, made them apostles (vs. 1-4), and sent them out *"to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (vs. 5, 6). Verses 5-42 contain His instructions and warnings to them as they prepare to go on this missionary trip. The particular passage we are looking at begins with this admonition: *Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men . . .* (vs. 16, 17a). The entire paragraph then describes the terrible things unbelieving men will do, or will attempt to do, to these twelve. Christ sums up with, *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved* (v. 22).

Three Vital Questions We Must Ask

Gaining a proper understanding of these passages is greatly simplified if we ask ourselves three very basic questions; questions that unlock the passages in a clean, natural way without having to force an interpretation upon any of them.

The three questions can be succinctly stated thus:

- Endure what?
- To the end of what?
- Be saved from what?

Endure what? In all three passages it is clear that the disciples would be hated for Christ's sake. In **Matthew 24** and **Mark 13** the hatred of men toward them is in a setting of trying to persuade them to believe false teaching and to follow false Messiahs. Jesus said, *Many will come in My name. . . and deceive many* (Mt.24:5; Mk.13:6). So, in answer to the above question, the disciples were to endure the attempts of hateful men to *deceive* them.

In **Matthew 10:22** men wanted to keep the twelve from preaching their message: *The kingdom of Heaven is at hand* (v. 7), they were attempting to shut them up through persecution (vs.16-23). These twelve, then, were to endure (put up with, not cave in to) the attempts of hateful men to *silence* them.

To the end of what? In the **Matthew 24** and **Mark 13** passages they were to endure to the end of their lives or to the end of the Tribulation, whichever came first.. In the same context we are told: *For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened* (Mt. 24:21, 22 cp. Mk 13:19, 20).

In **Matthew 10:22** they were to endure to the end of that particular mission which was directed only toward Israel. They were not to preach to Gentiles or Samaritans (vs. 5, 6).

Saved from what? The use of this word, *saved*, is more than likely the cause for much of the misinterpretation of the entire statement about enduring. The Greek word translated "saved" means to be *delivered* or *protected*. What is to be delivered or protected? Man's spirit? His soul? No, not according to any of these passages. The **Matthew 24/ Mark 13** verses say, *Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved* (same Greek word with the same meaning). So, the promise is to be delivered from physical death.

The same is true in **Matthew 10:22**. In verse 21 Jesus said, *Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death*. Verse 22 follows with *"he that endures to the end shall be saved* (delivered). From what? Premature *death* at the hands of those who would like to silence them in their preaching of the kingdom.

When these passages are looked at in their respective contexts, there is no hint of the possibility of either losing your salvation or in keeping it through endurance. To get such an interpretation demands that one lift the statements out of their contexts and read into the statement what simply is not there. Never read into verses your preconceptions.

Is Endurance Not Important?

Though endurance is not a condition for being saved or for keeping saved, for the child of God (one who *is* saved) endurance is an absolute necessity for a lifetime of fruitfulness and blessing from God.

Far too many believers "throw in the towel" when things get rough while serving the Lord. How many do you know who at one time were being used mightily of the Lord, but who now are spiritual drop-outs? This is not how God intends it to be.

The apostle Paul, for instance, included this in the last letter he wrote before his death: *Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect. . .* To endure here means "to be steadfast under." In Paul's case, he was steadfast under tremendous persecutions, trials and difficulties for the sake of the Gospel and the Church. **The apostle Paul finished well.**

When the writer of Hebrews wrote of Abraham's trust in God's promise of a child, it says of him, *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise* (6:15). The promise here is not of eternal salvation, but of God's guarantee that through His servant Abraham entire nations would be blessed through his offspring. **Abraham finished well.**

In Hebrews 10:36 we read: *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise* ("great reward" in v. 35). And 12:1, 2 tells us to ". . . lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. . . . Our salvation from beginning to end is in Christ. Looking to Him, **we who are His may also finish well!** But *endurance* throughout our entire lives is required.

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