

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to God. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. It is certain.

**Mark 13:1–13 (NKJV et al.)** — **1** 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.

This is the Word of God.

## **Knowing “WHAT” Helps Us Endure**

- 1. Knowing Deceptions**
- 2. Knowing Destruction**
- 3. Knowing Deliverance**

In Jesus name, fellow redeemed,

Here in Batavia we stand over 800 miles from the Jersey coast. Yet this last week, even here the winds of the hurricane which devastated the east coast were felt. 20-30 foot waves were reported on the lake front in Chicago. What a terrible display of power and destruction. Hurricane Sandy came ashore late Monday in southern New Jersey, wiping out houses, pushing sand four blocks inland in places and leaving thousands stranded. As of Thursday this storm had taken the lives of 124 people; and the search continues still. Imagine the death toll if there had been no warning. Imagine not having the technology to predict the path of the storm and give warning of its approach. Imagine if they there were no emergency crews prepared to respond with boats and helicopters. Knowing “what” to expect when a storm like Sandy strikes allows residents and government to prepare and endure.

As the disciples sit on the Mount of Olives they look onward to the glorious Temple of Jerusalem, a restored project under the work of King Herod. Yet Jesus strictly warns His disciples that such earthly structures as this Temple are only temporal. In 70 A.D. the Roman armies will surround Jerusalem, invade, and destroy the Temple. Jesus gives the warning. What is shaded by this prophecy of the Temple being destroyed Jesus extends to the end of all things. As Peter, James, and John ask, so ask we, "... what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?" (13:4). He tells us "what" to expect as the stormy seas of the end strike. He speaks of **deceptions**; He speaks of destruction; and most importantly, He speaks of deliverance from all these things. *v.13 ... he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

## **KNOWING "WHAT" HELPS US ENDURE**

### **1. Knowing Deceptions**

What if those residents of New York and New Jersey had not received an accurate report of what was coming? What if as gentle winds blew in days ahead of Hurricane Sandy's strike, news reporters said, well, that was the worst of it? What if the president came on national television telling you that the safest place to be was on your roof top? **Knowing deceptions helps us endure.**

*5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you." The word "deceive" has the sense of being led astray. These deceptions lead us to false shelter. 6 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many.* To come "in Jesus name" is to come "naming His name." It is to come as a representative of Christ doing the things which Christians do. These are the false christs who, in His name, call you to shelter where the foundation is crumbling.

Some more obvious examples are revealed by those who claim to be Jesus Christ Himself having come again. In the early 19th century, a man named Arnold Potter of the Latter Day saints made such a claim. However when his attempt to ascend into heaven by jumping off a cliff resulted in his body being buried by his followers, I think the evidence is pretty obvious – he was a false christ. However, there are many more subtle ways that false christs arise, naming the name of Jesus in a very genuine tone and deceiving many.

Matthew records, *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:24)* For these you need to be even more on your guard. They come naming the name of Christ with great signs and wonders.

Such spiritual leaders come directing you to shelter from the storms of this world in all the wrong places.

The pope calls himself "the Vicar of Christ." The word "vicar" means substitute. This means that the pope considers himself the substitute for Christ in His absence. The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "... the title Vicar of Christ is more expressive of his supreme headship of the Church on earth, which he bears in virtue of the commission of Christ and with vicarial [substitutionary] power derived from Him." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15403b.htm>, [w/edit]).

Generation after generation these popes declare “I am He.” As is written in 2 Thessalonians 2, ***opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)*** This is why we, as a church body, confess that the pope is the Antichrist. He stands “against Christ.” He rises right out of the midst of God’s people, doing great and wonderful things, claiming to speak as God over and above Scripture. His “canon law” is to be considered divine. Indeed, the deception the Antichrist brings to the world is not to be taken lightly. It is the most destructive teaching the world will ever be deceived by. It comes from within the Christian church, from the substitute for God on earth. In the name of Jesus this calls you to shelter in the absolute wrong place. In the midst of the storm of sins we conjure up in our life, the Roman teaching is to find shelter in your works.

At the Council of Trent, 1563, it was declared: *CANON XI.-If any one saith, that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins ... or even that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favour of God; let him be anathema.*

This claim to merited forgiveness is in total opposition to forgiveness by grace and faith in Christ. It is the teaching of work-righteousness rather than Christ-righteousness. This is like the advice to run out on your rooftop in the middle of a hurricane.

There is only One Jesus. And Jesus is found not in any earthly figure, or man made reasoning, but in Scripture alone. Since His ascension into heaven, the Word is where He remains with us – the unchanging truth, the enduring redemption. As we read in our Scripture reading: ***But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:12)***

Many rise up, naming the name of Christ. Many great figures come, those who do much outward good, who do many signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. But only one source can provide a real shelter in the midst of your sins. As Isaiah writes – ***To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20).***

In the Word we find the right source of protection and truth. We see the path of the storm coming. We prepare to endure those deceptions which are so appealing to our flesh. The Word keeps us on the path of righteousness, receiving the gifts of God to create and strengthen faith. As Jesus said, ***“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31–32)***

**Knowing the deceptions, helps us endure in the truth.**

## **2. Knowing Destruction**

Unlike Katrina, reporters are praising FEMA’s response to Sandy. Knowing what to expect and what went wrong last time equipped the government to be much more effective with their response and aid. It helps to know what is coming. It is our Savior who warns us, who tells us

these things will happen. We prepare for the storms. We baton down the hatches. And Jesus provides the emergency aid we need. **Knowing the destruction, helps us endure.**

As He says in v.7 and 8, Wars, earthquakes, famines, hurricanes are things which “must be.” From the fall into sin until now, these things have, are, and will happen. Our sin has brought a curse upon the perfection of God’s creation. Against God’s will, these things have come into existence. These are what Jesus calls “the beginning of sorrows.” Or literally – “the beginning of labor pains...” The word Jesus uses for “sorrows” refers to the pains associated with child birth. That is, the birth is coming, but is not yet here. The deliverance from the pains is not far off, soon the joy of new life will be ours, but we must first endure the pains that come with the delivery of creation.

From Romans 8 – *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Romans 8:22)*

It is as if the whole creation is having contractions. Some of you would know this much better than I. The closer and closer you get to the birth of the child, the more intense and painful these contractions become.

However Jesus doesn’t warn us of these things to frighten or disturb us. He says, “do not be troubled, such things must be.” He is telling us what to expect so we are not so soon troubled by these things. These are acts of the curse of sin. These are things which “must be” as we are reminded of the temporal state of this life. Without the contractions which grow ever stronger and more real, we would never be aware of the coming delivery. We would never expect or long for the delivery to come. If we weren’t confronted with the reality of sin, we would never find need for a Savior.

The labor pains of this cursed world are God’s reminder of sin, a call for all people to look to Him in repentance and hope. When your life is full of earthquakes, wars, and famine, He is God’s emergency aid. God has been through these things before and He knows exactly what you need to survive and grow strong in Him. In Christ we see this as a labor leading toward delivery. We look for the time when the creation will give birth to new life as God brings us out of this world to a glorious new creation in eternity. **Knowing destruction comes, helps us endure.**

### **3. Knowing Deliverance**

As you watched the news footage coming in, what an amazing site. I’m not talking about the devastation, but rather about the deliverance. Helicopters, boats, rescue workers were fast on the scene responding to cries of help. In Northern virginia, a girl stood in the upper floor of a roofless house, saved by a rescue worker dangling from a helicopter. What would happen to such people if there was no hope that emergency aid was on its way? What hope would they look for as waters surrounded them, rising on all sides? **Knowing deliverance helps us endure.**

(v.13) The persecution is no small thing. As the labor pains of this world contract, we as believers experience them greatly. In the late 1st century AD, there were vast persecutions of Christians to the point where the Roman Emperor, Domitian, was said to have executed members

of his own family. Could you imagine having members of your own family being willing to kill you because of you believe in Jesus?

For His name's sake you are hated. As we look on our personal spiritual "endurance" we hardly have the strength or patience to survive one day in the midst of persecution. That is why our endurance and strength cannot rest in us. That is why God became man. That is why Jesus is the beginning and end of our faith. Our endurance comes from the One who was truly hated by all, even you and me. Yet in the midst of all hatred and His own innocent death, He loved you. He loved all. He looked forward to the joy of your eternal deliverance...

*... let us 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, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1,2)*

Our eternal endurance never comes through our own doing or strength. It comes through looking to Jesus. It comes only through the shelter we receive in our Savior Jesus. Day by day the storms within us cause us terror. We see a world in labor all around. We would be lost in despair if not for the Author and Finisher of our faith who goes before us, who shelters us from our own sins by His faithful sacrifice. His enduring forgiveness gives us enduring faithfulness.

Jesus predicts in v.9 – His disciples will be arrested and face councils. They will be beaten in synagogues and even killed for the sake of the gospel. Yet all this is their testimony – looking to the author and finisher of their faith, looking toward death as deliverance. You too are on trial. Your Christian trial is God's testimony to all the world. The Greek here gives us the word "martyr." You are martyrs to those who oppose the gospel and those who have not yet heard of such things. Maybe you do not stand before federal courts. Maybe you stand before the courts of those who oppose or have not yet heard the name of Christ. You are a "martyr" as you stand up for the name which will deliver you from ever persecution, every broken relationship, every hateful world. Your life is a testimony to the fact that your real life is not of this world, but exists in heaven. *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (Philippians 3:20)*

The world labors. The sorrows have come. Deceptions, destruction, and persecution bring their pain into our lives. Now is the time to be up on the roof top shouting to your neighbor. Warning them that this world is coming to an end. She is about to give birth. It could be today. It could be tomorrow. Or it could come in 100 years. v.10 – Through your testimony, the gospel goes forth to all nations. Look to the helicopter of salvation circling as the gospel is preached among us. See the harness of Christ's righteousness placed on you as the Spirit hauls you out of this world. We are in that in-between experience, dangling from the deliverance of God's Word. We are lifted from the dwellings of this world but have not yet arrived in heaven. Now is the time to endure the final birth pains – *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. (2 Timothy 4:18).*

Our endurance in Christ comes from **knowing the deception, knowing the destruction, and knowing the deliverance we have in Christ. Knowing "what" helps us endure. Amen.**