

## ***“Enduring Salvation”***

What marvelous buildings made up the Temple complex – with the Temple itself being a picture of beauty, strength and security for the children of God. But the Teacher has something to teach to these who marvel. Pointing to the buildings, He says, “There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

“And it was so.” In the year 70 A.D. the Roman armies destroyed the Temple and the entire city --- not one stone left upon another.

With these words, the Teacher shakes their world to the core. If Jerusalem and the Temple will not endure – then who can stand?

What does this mean? The disciples are not sure, so they ask Jesus (privately) – but notice – they don’t ask HOW this will happen, but simply, WHEN will this take place? “What will be the sign,” Jesus? Already in survival mode, they ask Jesus to give them a “heads-up” for this impending tragedy.

But Jesus doesn’t tell them WHEN – He only tells them what will happen before all this takes place. You see, salvation is not a matter of having time to prepare for a tragedy (prepping for the disaster) – nor is it simply a matter of how long one can survive. No, salvation is a matter of WHERE you stand – and WHAT you are standing on. Will IT endure?

“Watch out” – the Teacher warns – take care that you are not standing on shaky ground. For deceivers will come – promising Saviors and salvations – and leading many astray. There will be wars and earthquakes and famines – as if all of Creation is becoming un-created – but these are just the beginning of the birth pains.

“Be on your guard” – for you will be delivered over, beaten, and made to stand before governors and kings. But the Gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. “Do not be anxious” – for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will deliver over his brother, a father his child, and children their parents. “And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”

Stock markets and buildings collapse – hurricanes and floods wipe out communities – battles rage across the pond, and in your own family.

Such turmoil makes you wonder how long this world will endure. And in the midst of all this, Jesus teaches you that it is not a matter of “how long” – but rather – do you have a place to stand, a place of refuge, one that will ENDURE?

The people of Israel took great pride in Jerusalem and the Temple. And what does Jesus do? He says their refuge will not endure – it will be destroyed. But there’s more! He shakes their whole nation with rumors of wars – He shakes their footing with talk of earthquakes – He strips their bounty with talk of famine – and even their homes and families will be ravaged. In essence, He leaves them with no place to stand.

Where do you stand? What do you “fear, love, and trust” above all things. The truth is that healthcare is not immune to failure. Investments can evaporate. Even your family is vulnerable. All the things you think are rock solid – the things you cling to when the storms rage --- not one will be left upon another.

The Teacher pulls all things out from under our feet – because nothing will endure – except the Lord our God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Everything we look to in our time of need must be laid waste – so that we “fear, love, and trust in God above all things” – so that we may endure to the end, and be saved.

The Romans flexed their muscles and the Temple was laid waste. Wars ravage the nations and kingdoms of this world. Famines and earthquakes shake everything to the core. And deceivers come with their lies, leading many astray. But there is One who endures all this and more – our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Everything that Jesus warns His disciples about – happens to Him in His last days. War breaks out in Gethsemane as the kingdoms of this world rise up against Him-whose-kingdom-is-not-of-this-world.

His brother Judas betrays Him. He is handed over to stand trial before councils and governors – and the deceivers lead many in the crowds astray.

Jesus is beaten – hated by men. Hated so much that they set a murderer free in order that they might crucify Him, the Innocent One.

He thirsts – and in this famine – the Bread of Life is buried. The Father gives up His Son into death – and the whole world is shaken as earthquakes shatter the foundations of the earth.

So often we live as if LIFE is one big endurance challenge. The world chimes in and teaches us that “only the strong survive.” But the Lord is with us. He comes and takes away all our false places of refuge – in order to teach us WHERE to stand – for there is ONLY ONE PLACE TO STAND – in and with Jesus, by faith.

The Lord sets before you today His own Son – who stood in your place – to bear your sin, receive your punishment, and suffer your death. In Jesus, He teaches you that “it is finished” – that your sin and death have been conquered by His death.

He who died in your place has been raised to life – so that you may be CERTAIN that your sin and death are conquered – that in Jesus, you ARE raised from death to life.

Dearly beloved, you are those whom He brings out of the great tribulation – washing your robes and making them white in His blood. Covered with the blood of Jesus – you stand victorious – even as the world around you crumbles and falls.

You stand solid and secure against all the attacks that come your way – for you have an enduring refuge, Jesus – and even the gates of hell cannot overcome Him. You stand IN, WITH and ON Christ by faith – and in Christ you endure to the end, and are saved. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.