

ENDURING TO THE END

“A text without a context is a pretext.” The context of enduring to the end in Matthew 24:13 is intimately tied to the 70th week of Daniel (the 7-year Tribulation Period) addressed in Matthew 24:15. Jesus in this context emphasizes a coming time of great HATRED in which His people will be killed by all nations for His name’s sake (cf. Matt. 24:9-12).

Matthew 24:13 (NKJV)

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

The word “saved” (Gk. *sozo*) means “to be delivered” or “to be rescued”. However, from what and in what manner is dependent upon the context. So, the question becomes – is this talking about physical deliverance or spiritual deliverance?

Some have thought that enduring to the end and thereby being saved means perseverance of the saints even to the point of death and thus has spiritual salvation in view. It is certainly true that true believers will persevere even unto death. A cross-reference to argue for this view is found in Matt. 10:22 where the identical language is used in regard to those who will die for their faith (cf. Rev. 2:10).

Matthew 10:22 (NKJV)

22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

But we also see the same emphasis in regard to the context of the Tribulation Period as seen in Revelation 12:11.

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

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.

“It [the Tribulation Period] will not be a time when people profess Christ as they do in our day where there is no significant cost for associating one’s self with Christ. In that day it could cost one their life!” – Bruce Hurt

Years ago, I heard a testimony about a believer who came out of a context of cruel persecution in a communist country. As they came here, they expressed shock that people could actually live in a context where people professed Christ but didn’t really mean it. They said that where they came from, they would never fake it – because the cost was too high.

That will certainly be true in the Tribulation Period under Antichrist. People are not going to fake it if their profession is not real – because it may very well cost them their life. But having said that, I would also argue that the nature of a TRUE saving faith is the same in every dispensation (cf. Heb. 11).

Romans 10:13 is said to be the verse most often used to invite sinners to receive Christ. And while that may be true, we should note that Romans 10:13 is a quote from Joel 2:32 in the OT

which is prophetically found in a Tribulation context in the day of the Lord.

Joel 2:32 (NKJV)

32 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Romans 10:13 (NKJV)

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

My point is the nature of saving faith today is the same as saving faith that will be exercised in the Tribulation Period as seen in the fact that the very same language applies to both eras. The faith that saves today as seen in Romans 10 is expressed in the same way as that which will be expressed in the Day of the Lord as seen in Joel 2:32.

So, it is true that a saving faith endures to the end and will not completely or finally apostatize, but is willing even to die for Christ if necessary. Those who do this evidence the truth of being persevering saints who ultimately will go into the kingdom.

“Although saving faith may have lapses, it always has the quality of permanence.” – William MacDonald

“It is not that a person’s endurance will produce salvation but that his endurance will be a Spirit-empowered product and proof of the reality that he is saved. ... Endurance is always a mark of salvation.”

– John MacArthur

Hebrews 10:38–39 (NKJV)

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

However, having said all that, in the context of Matthew 24 “the end” relates to the end of the age that ushers in the coming of Christ which ties to the disciples’ question about the end of the age as seen in Matthew 24:3.

The word translated “end” here is the Greek word “telos”. It refers to the ultimate end, purpose, or goal of an action. Thus, it refers to the very end of a process. It is used in context in verses 6, 13, and 14.

v. 6 - “the end is not yet.”

v. 13 – “endures to the end shall be saved.”

v. 14 – “then the end will come.”

As implied in verse 9, many (if not most) true believers who come to faith in the Tribulation

Period will be killed as a universal killer-hatred for them will dominate the world's scene.

Revelation 7:9 (NKJV)

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Revelation 7:13–14 (NKJV)

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

An innumerable number of believers will die for their faith in the great tribulation.

However, the language of "to the end" in verse 13 indicates that some believers will survive the horrors of the Tribulation and will be physically delivered to go into the kingdom. It will be these survivors who will populate the kingdom in terms of those born in the kingdom age.

God has always had a remnant and a surviving remnant will also come through the worst of times in human history and go into the kingdom in their physical bodies. Lawlessness will abound and depraved hatred will universally define the world, but Satan doing his worst can't rid the world of God's people.

The kingdom will be a mixture of mortal people (who survive the Tribulation or who are born in the kingdom age) and glorified people (Raptured saints or Resurrected OT saints) living together in a most remarkable relationship. In one form or another, all of God's people are headed for the kingdom!

Judgment day for the world is coming! Christ is coming! The kingdom is coming! Believers in Jesus are KINGDOM PEOPLE! Let us live accordingly!

Matthew 6:10 (NKJV)

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

1 Thessalonians 2:10–12 (NKJV)

10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;

11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.