

We Must Endure to the End!

Keep Moving Forward in the Faith Once Delivered

The signs all around us point to the imminent end of this present evil age. We see horrible earthquakes, such as those in Indonesia and Japan, radioactive contamination at Chernobyl, Ukraine, and now in Japan, hurricanes such as the New Orleans, south Florida, Bangladesh, and Australian storms, droughts such as the recent 10-year event in Australia followed by the devastating floods of recent months, incredible debt among people and nations as so many wish to live beyond their means, and social unrest with the turnover of family integrity and the rising of moral relativism and humanism. Truly we are living in unprecedented times. The return of Jesus Christ cannot be far away, or, if He does not return,

“... and except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved [alive], but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22).

It may be tempting to go along with the downhill flow of society during these times in history when “anything goes”, a time that the apostle Paul so aptly put into perspective in II Timothy 3:1-5.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.”

We are instructed by Paul to “turn away” from such ungodliness, but with the human nature we all possess it is not always easy to deny the desires of the flesh. Note what Paul says in Romans 7:14-16, 23-25.

“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.... But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

We Must Endure to the End!

Jesus Christ made it plain that “... he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). What does “endure” mean here? In the context of Matthew 24:1-13, we are told of the wars, famines, disease epidemics, earthquakes, betrayals, and martyrdom that will afflict us, and in verse 12 the failure of love itself for many. Amidst this horrible conflagration at the end of the age, Christ is telling us to not allow this love to wane. But wane among whom? Among us, the brethren! Let it not “wax cold”.

He had stated this point earlier when He instructed the disciples before they were to be sent out among the peoples of the world, “... as sheep in the midst of wolves ...” (Matthew 10:16). They were to be “... wise as serpents and harmless as doves...” as they witnessed the truth of the good news of the Kingdom of God, and as a result were to be brought before councils, governors, and kings for His sake, to be a testimony against them and the nations. In Matthew 10:22 Christ said,

“And you shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.”

Are we not His disciples today? Must we not also endure to the end as they did, and as a result possibly have to face afflictions because our message will be hated by the world’s leaders, and even by others in our own families? Though hated, tortured, and maligned we are promised that if we endure to the end of the age — or to the end of our physical lives, for some of us will be killed (Luke 21:16) — we will be “saved” ... that is, given eternal life at the resurrection of the saints.

Paul reiterated this need to hold on “to the end” of the lawless age in which we are immersed. Note Hebrews 3:1-14, especially verses 6 and 14:

“... but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast to confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.... For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end ,,,,”

Hold On to What?

We must endure to the end, hold on to the end ... but to what are we to hold on to? What does Scripture say?

1. Hold fast what is good, and we know that the Father is good, and His commandments (Matthew 19:16-21).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” I Thessalonians 5:21.

2. Hold fast the traditions taught by the apostles in the word of God.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” II Thessalonians 2:15.

3. Hold fast to eternal life that has been promised to us.

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.... Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” I Timothy 6:12, 19.

4. Hold fast sound [healthy: Strong 5198] words from the apostles as related in God’s word.

“Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” II Timothy 1:13.

5. Hold fast the confidence and hope of the resurrection.

“... but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Hebrews 3:6.

6. Hold fast the beginning of our confidence in our future kingship.

“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” Hebrews 3:14.

7. Hold fast our profession as future kings and priests, and as living sacrifices.

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” Hebrews 4:14.

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

8. Hold fast the hope that is before us

“... that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” Hebrews 6:18.

9. Hold fast the profession of our faith.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised).” Hebrews 10:23.

10. Hold fast what you have to the end.

“But that which you have already hold fast till I come. And he that over comes and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations” Revelation 2:25-26. (See also Revelation 3:3.)

“Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.” Revelation 3:11.

What Should We Be Doing Today?

We have already seen that, by holding fast to what we ought, we are already doing what we should to reach the end of the age unscathed and whole, prepared for the return of Jesus Christ. We are in a very real way “... earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), and we will be exhibiting the fruits of the spirit as summarized in Galatians 5:22-23. We will be doing the will of the Father, even as Jesus Christ did (John 5:19).

What things might we outline as daily duties to our Creator as members of the ecclesia (the “church”) of this modern day, to enable us to endure to the end? Our tools are many, and they are powerful!

- 1. Pray without ceasing.** Ephesians 6:18; I Thessalonians 5:17.
- 2. Put on the whole armor of God.** Ephesians 6:1-17.
- 3. Read and study God’s word.** Acts 17:10-11; II Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 4:12.
- 4. Fast on occasion.** Matthew 6:16-18; Isaiah 58:3-12.
- 5. Fellowship with the brethren.** Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42.
- 6. Avoid getting caught up in the world’s ways.** James 4:4; John 15:19; 17:14; Galatians 1:10; I John 2:15; Matthew 6:24; Romans 12:2.

“You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the **world** is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the **world** is the enemy of God.” James 4:4.

“Love not the **world**, neither the things that are in the **world**. If any man love the **world**, the love of the Father is not in him.” I John 2:15.

world [Strong 2889] = *kosmos*, “... a harmonious arrangement or order, by extension the adornment or decoration It came to mean anyone not of the ekklesia.”

7. Have your eyes trained on the incredible future that lies ahead for us.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Romans 8:18-19.

“For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, beside you, what He has prepared for him that waits for Him.” Isaiah 64:4 (quoted in I Corinthians 2:9).

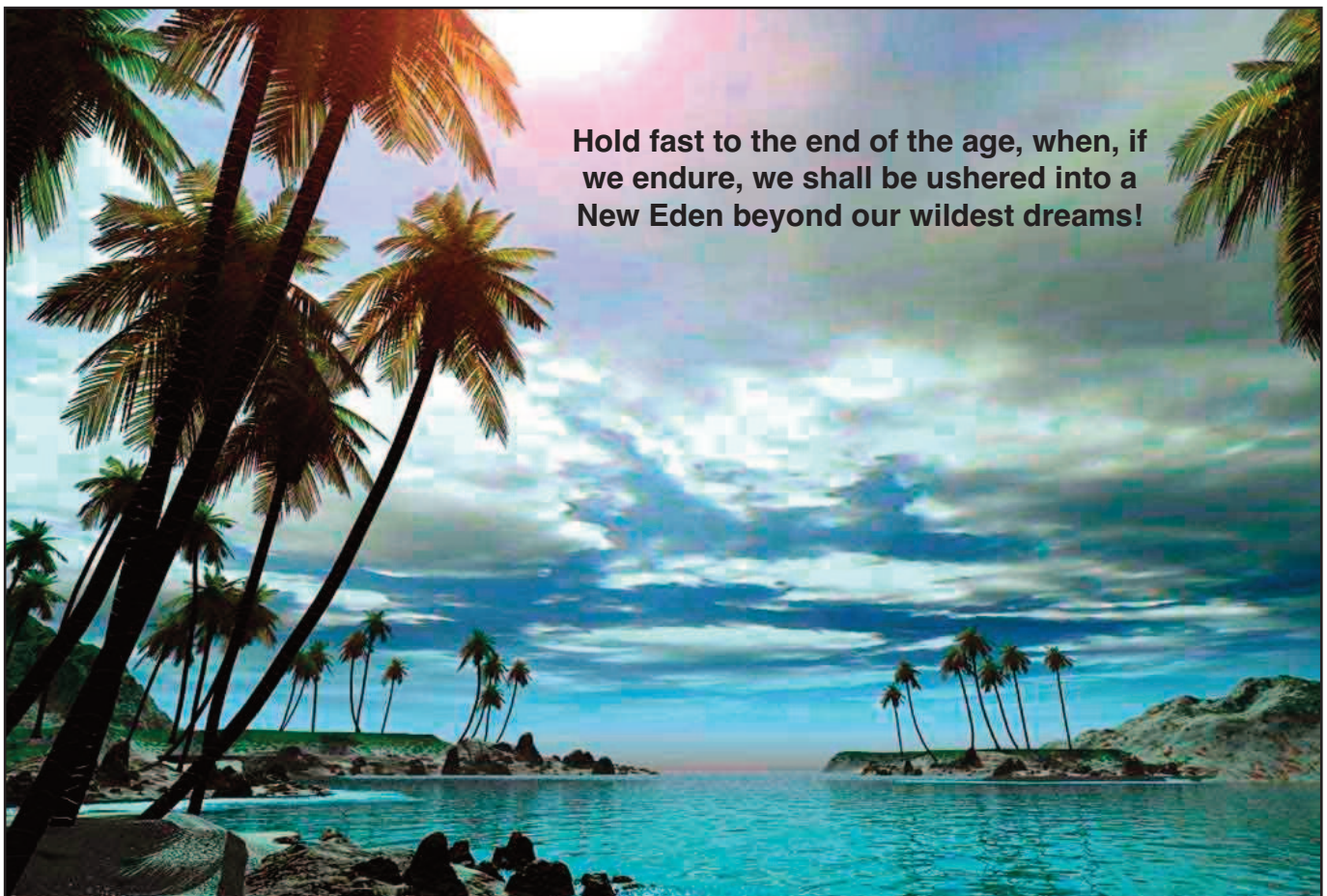
The Conclusion of It All

There is no question that we can indeed endure to the end, and inherit the gift of eternal life and kingship

in the government of God wherein we will rule the earth for a thousand years. He has said that “... *He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory ...*” (Romans 9:23) ... and remember that “... *He has chosen us in Him from the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Ephesians 1:4-5).

If we “faint not” (Galatians 6:9) — and through God’s power we will not — we will inherit the promise given to the Church at Smyrna nearly 2,000 years ago:

“I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Revelation 2:9-10.



Paul W. Syltie — March 19, 2011

