

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Daniel 12:1-3

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Ch 12 Luther: “The twelfth chapter of Daniel ... has to do wholly with the Antichrist and with these last times in which we are living. For this reason we do not have to consult the histories any longer at this point. Rather it is the clear gospel” (AE 35:313). (TLSB)

12:1 AT THAT TIME – These words connect this passage with the preceding one, which had pictured the destruction of the Antichrist at the end of the world. (PBC)

Michael. See note on 10:13. (CSB)

An angel who had already come to their rescue in the battle with Persia in 10:13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

“Michael, the great prince” is a reference to the archangel Michael, the warrior who helps the Lord (Dan 10:13, 21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Michael was charged to care for Israel but this reference may include “new Israel,” the Church. (TLSB)

time of distress. † See Jer 30:7; Mt 24:21; cf. Rev 16:18. (CSB)

God’s people would suffer greatly because of the great conflict. (TLSB)

“A time of trouble, such as never has been since.” We find these words quoted by Christ in Mt 24:21–22. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Jesus quoted from this verse in speaking about events leading up to the final judgment. Matthew 24:21-22 “For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.” (PBC)

Perhaps you have heard somebody describe this world as a madhouse. Actually the world is not a madhouse, but arena, a battleground where a war is constantly raging between the forces of God and the forces of anti-God. There is not a single area of life which has not been claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan and his henchmen. (PBC)

The struggle will continue and even intensify as the time draws closer to the end. The devil and his forces will become ever more desperate to win people over. The world during its tortured centuries of existence has seen distress of many kinds, but nothing like this last distress. These words remind us that being a Christian does not mean putting on rose-colored glasses so that everything looks pink and pretty. Daniel makes it clear that as we contemplate the future there's no reason for overconfidence. (PBC)

But there's no reason for despair, either. Not only is there trouble ahead; there's triumph, too. "At that time Michael... will arise." Daniel chapter 10 pictured Michael as the great angelic prince who was active behind the scenes of history, working against Satan's agent in the Persian government. Michael was God's agent to overthrow those satanic schemes and to guarantee that God's good will for the returning exiles would be carried out. Here we learn that when the final great distress overtakes the world Michael, God's angelic champion, will again intervene on behalf of God's people. (PBC)

Jeremiah 30:7 "How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it."

Michael will be successful in defending God's people, His Israel, the spiritual children of Abraham who have been gathered from the east and the west. The huffing and puffing of the enemies will stop when God sends final deliverance at Judgment day. (PBC)

book. See 10:21; see also notes on Ps 9:5; 51:1; 69:28. (CSB)

God's Book of Life, listing those who remain faithful. (TLSB)

"Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book." This book should be identified with the Book of Life (Dan 7:10; Ps 69:28) and not "the book of truth" of Dan 10:21 (see also FC Ep XI 6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

God's book is His family register containing the names of those who have been loved and chosen from all eternity. (Exodus 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Rev. 21:27) (PBC)

Through faith in Christ's perfect life and His innocent death we will not only be pitied by God but delighted in, as a father delights in his own child. (PBC)

While these, too, will feel the stress and strain of life, they can have the peace that passes all human understanding knowing their place in heaven is secure.

Philippians 4:3 "Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, ^a help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."

12:2† A clear reference to a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. Cf. Isa 26:19; Jn 5:24–30. (CSB)

WHO SLEEP – The dead will be raised to live again. Ambr: “Well, then, did he speak of the rest of those that sleep, that one may understand that death lasts not for ever, which like sleep is undergone for a time, and is put off at its time” (*NPNF* 2 10:184). Jn D: “The words ... clearly show that there will be a resurrection of bodies” (*NPNF* 2 9:100b). (TLSB)

“And many of those who sleep.” This verse is quoted by Christ in Jn 5:28–29, but Christ substitutes “all” for “many.” The Hebrew could also be translated “multitude” or possibly “all” in this context. This is the clearest example of the bodily resurrection to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures (see also Is 26:19). It is also interesting to note the use of language similar to that of Genesis in reference to the dust of the ground (v 2; Gen 2:7; 3:19). This verse shows us the reality at the Last Day when Christ returns. Those who have been faithful and survived the great tribulation will be joined with Christ, and those who have died in the faith will awake and arise bodily from the grave and join Christ. Those who died as unbelievers will also rise bodily but to everlasting shame and contempt. The Old Testament has many examples of sleep being a reference to death (e.g., Ps 13:3; Job 3:13; Jer 51:39, 57). Remember 1 Cor 15:26 and the reality that death is the last enemy to be destroyed. The Hebrew *lʿchayye ʿolam*, “to everlasting life,” is found only here in the Old Testament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

One of the enemies which has intruded into God’s good creation and which has caused untold misery for God’s people is death. This enemy will also be overcome in the final victory. Death is “the last enemy to be destroyed” (1 Corinthians 15:26). It will be destroyed by Him who as His resurrection broke the power of death. (PBC)

everlasting life. The phrase occurs only here in the OT. (CSB)

For those written in the book (v 1). (TLSB)

There will be those who will outlive the distress and those who won’t, but all will appear before the Lord at the end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

shame and everlasting contempt. For those who cooperated with Antichrist. (TLSB)

12:3 THOSE WHO ARE WISE – With so much coming at a person at all at once it is difficult to always make wise decisions. One way to help the decision-making process is to be in the Word constantly.

WILL SHINE LIKE BRIGHTNESS OF THE HEAVENS – They will live in the glory of heaven getting their light from Christ.

Like stars. Their glory is a blessing of God’s grace. Ambrose: “The progress of that life which shall be after death is better than that which is passed in sorrow and pain before death” (*NPNF* 2 10:184). (TLSB)

Christ quotes this verse in Mt 13:43. The use of *raqia'*, “expanse,” reminds us again of Genesis (1:6–8) and the creation. The use here may indicate a restoration of creation—new heavens and new earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

Matthew 13:43 “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

THOSE WHO LEAD MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS – These are those Christians who by word and example have brought others to faith in Christ Jesus.

Ambrose: “So the choirs of apostles, martyrs, and priests, shining like glorious stars, might give light throughout the world” (NPNF 2 10:226). (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Hebrews 10:11-25

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. ¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ¹⁶ “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” ¹⁷ Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” ¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching

10:11–14 A contrast between “standing” and “sitting.” The Levitical priest always stood, because his work was never finished. (CSB)

10:11 *offers the same sacrifices.* Because these sacrifices were unable to accomplish what they signified. They could not remove sin, and thus had to be offered over and over again. (CSB)

The old covenant had an unending round of sacrifices which left sin untouched and consciences unrelieved. Not only did the high priest have to bring the same offering year after year on the Day of Atonement, so did the common priest day after day. Every morning and evening, as Numbers 28:3-8 relates, the common priest, assigned to that task for the day, was to offer a one-year-old unblemished male lamb, along with a grain offering of 1/10 ephah of fine flour, mixed with ¼ hin of olive oil, plus a drink offering of ¼ hin of wine. Twice a day the priest stood there, day after day, with the same sacrifices. What clearer indication could there be that such

sacrifices could “never take away sin?” Animal blood and grain offerings were unable to strip away sin’s guilt which like a cloak had wrapped itself around the sinner. (PBC)

10:12 *he sat down at the right hand of God.* In contrast to the work of the Levitical priests, which was never done (v. 11; see notes on 1:3, 13), Christ’s work was completed. His one sacrifice atoned for all sins of all time, making any further sacrifice unnecessary (v. 14). (CSB)

Christ sits, showing that His atoning sacrifice is finished. However, He continues to pray for us as our own High Priest. (TLSB)

In heaven in all glory and honor our high priest, whose perfect sacrifice was laid on the altar of the cross, now points to that completed sacrifice as the basis for His pleading for us when we sin. Romans 8:34 shows the sequence, “Who is he who condemns? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us,” With the ascended Savior as our lawyer, the believer’s case in heaven’s court is eternally secure. (PBC)

10:13 ENEMIES TO BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL – From note to Psalm 110:1 – In biblical times, the conqueror placed his foot on his enemies to indicate triumph. (TLSB)

10:14 MADE PERFECT ... HOLY – Luther writes, “Everything is forgiven through grace, but not everything is yet healed through the gift. The gift is poured in, the leaven is added, and it works to remove the sin which has already been forgiven to the person, and to drive out the evil guest, whom it has permission to drive out. Meanwhile, as this is happening, it is called sin and in its nature truly is sin, but now it is sin without wrath.” Luther: “Of this sacrifice and offering he has instituted a perpetual remembrance in that he intends to have it proclaimed in the sacrament of the altar and thereby have faith in it strengthened” (AE 40:14). (TLSB)

10:15–18 The two quotations included in these verses are from Jer 31:31–34 (already cited in 8:8–12). The new covenant guarantees that sins will be effectively and completely forgiven (v. 17), with the result that no additional sacrifice for sins is needed (v. 18). (CSB)

10:15 THE HOLY SPIRIT ALSO TESTIFIES TO US – Note the present tense, “testifies,” reminding us that the Spirit not only authored what was written in the past but also witnesses through it in the present. (PBC)

10:17 I WILL REMEMBER THEM NO MORE – God promised. God’s holy justice does not practice selective memory so that only some sins are recalled, nor does it suffer from amnesia so that other sins are forgotten. God’s justice sees all sins and demands that every one of them be punished. And that is what God’s love and mercy did through Christ. With Christ’s body broken and Christ’s blood shed on the cross God’s love paid for all sin. Such is the cause of God’s blessed forgetfulness of our sins. So the Spirit testified already in the OT and constantly does in the New. (PBC)

10:18 No other offering is needed because Christ’s perfect sacrifice brings perfect forgiveness. (TLSB)

10:1–18 Christ offered up only one sacrifice for the sins of the world—Himself. He “perfects” or completes us by applying the benefits of His sacrifice to us in Holy Baptism and in His Holy Supper. Whenever you study the Word or hear it at church, expect the Lord to change your life and strengthen your faith, for He desires to change your heart and mind by grace. • Merciful God, for Jesus’ sake forgive my sins. Grant me the Holy Spirit, that I may fulfill Your will. Amen. (TLSB)

10:19–12:29 Urgent exhortation warning against apostasy. (TLSB)

10:19 Another section of practical application and exhortation begins here (see note on 2:1–4). (CSB)

confidence to enter the Most Holy Place. The way into the sanctuary of God’s presence was closed to the people under the former covenant because the blood of animal sacrifices could never completely atone for their sins. Now, however, believers can come to the throne of grace since the perfect priest has offered the perfect sacrifice, atoning for sin once for all. (CSB)

confidence. Gk *parresia*, “boldness to say all things.” (TLSB)

enter the holy places. Into heaven to God, our heavenly Father (cf 9:12). (TLSB)

With these somewhat obscure, nay, I should rather say exceedingly beautiful and rich words, the apostle evidently wants us to imitate Christ, who suffered and by dying crossed over to the glory of the Father. The meaning, of course, is brief and clear, namely, what is written in Col. 3:3: “You have died with Christ, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” But one must observe with what grace and power of expression the apostle discusses this. In the first place, that figurative veil of the temple was a sign of the flesh of Christ, as the apostle plainly shows here. But the removal of the veil by him who enters, namely, the priest, signifies the death of the flesh of Christ—the death by which He Himself was removed from us and entered the invisible sanctuary. And that way or entrance of the priest in former days was old and dead; it signifies that this way and entrance of Christ is new and alive. And in this manner He fulfilled the figure and took away the shadow. (Luther)

10:20 *the curtain, that is, his body.* † When Jesus died, the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was “torn in two from top to bottom” (Mk 15:38). The curtain symbolizes the body of Christ in the sense that just as the holy of holies was entered through the veil in the temple, so we now have access into the presence of God in heaven through the flesh of Christ offered as an atoning sacrifice for sin. (CSB)

As the high priest passed through the curtain to enter the Most Holy Place, we “enter” heaven only through Christ’s flesh. Christ’s body and soul were divided in death as the curtain of the temple was torn (Mt 27:51). Just as the curtain was torn open, our way into heaven through Christ is now open. Luther: “He first sets forth the example of Christ, our Leader, who fights in the forefront. Although under no compulsion, yet for the purpose of buoying up our confidence He crossed over first of all, and He smooths the exceedingly rough road. Then the apostle points

out that Christ not only gave an example by crossing over, but that He also holds out His hand to those who follow” (AE 29:226). (TLSB)

Luther writes, “”He first sets forth the example of Christ, our Leader, who fights in the forefront. Although under no compulsion, yet for the purpose of buoying up our confidence He crossed over first of all, and he smooths the exceedingly rough road. Then the apostle points out that Christ not only gave an example by crossing over, but that He also holds out His hand to those who follow.” (TLSB)

10:21 *the house of God*. The Church (cf 3:6). (TLSB)

10:22–25 Five exhortations spring from Jesus’ provision for our reconciliation to his Father: 1. “Let us draw near to God.” 2. “Let us hold unswervingly to ... hope.” 3. “Let us consider how we may spur one another on.” 4. “Let us not give up meeting together.” 5. “Let us encourage one another.” (CSB)

10:22–24 Due to Christ’s sacrifice, God gives us faith (v 22), hope (v 23), and love (v 24). Cf 1Co 13:13. (TLSB)

10:22† Four elements are given in drawing “near to God” (CSB)

1. *a sincere heart*. Undivided allegiance in the inner being. (CSB)

An honest, believing heart. Cf 4:16. (TLSB)

2. *full assurance of faith*. Faith that knows no hesitation in trusting in and following Christ. (CSB)

Cf Mk 9:24. (TLSB)

3. *hearts sprinkled ... from a guilty conscience*. Total freedom from a sense of guilt, a freedom based on the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. (CSB)

Proclamation of Christ’s cleansing sacrifice relieves and strengthens our conscience so that we see ourselves and the certainty of God’s mercy clearly. Cf 1Pt 1:18–19. “Where the heart is not in a right relationship with God, or cannot take such confidence, it will not dare to pray anymore. Such a confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the certain knowledge of the forgiveness of sin” (LC III 92). (TLSB)

Sprinkled and washed are Greek verb forms which indicate lasting effects. Both forms are passive, indicating that this sprinkling and washing are done not by, but to us. Also it’s a cleansing which involved “blood,” as 12:24 shows, and “water.” (PBC)

4. *bodies washed with pure water*. As our bodies are washed with clean water, the cleansing water of baptism washes away all our sins (see Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5). A figure for inner

cleansing, of which the washing of the priests under the old covenant was a symbol (see Ex 30:19–21; Lev 8:6; see also Eze 36:25, where a similar expression is used figuratively for the cleansing resulting from the new covenant). (CSB)

By Baptism (Eph 5:26; Ti 3:5). Luther: “This old man consists of error, concupiscence, wrath, fear, apprehension, despair, evil conscience, horror of death, etc. Those are characteristics of the old, carnal man. They diminish, however, in the new man, but they are not extinguished until he himself is extinguished by death. . . . Rather the process of removal has begun, and as a person increases in spiritual health these evils are removed. This spiritual health is nothing more than faith in or love in Christ” (AE 31:124). (TLSB)

Let not Christ’s complaint to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:8 apply to us: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” Rather let it be His words in Matthew 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Faith which wavers and wonders, which is easily rattled and roiled up, displays little fullness and certainty. About such faith James 1:6 said, “He who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.” (PBC)

Luther’s Large Catechism, “Where the heart is not in a right relationship with God, or cannot take such confidence, it will not dare to pray anymore. Such a confident and joyful heart can spring from nothing else than the certain knowledge of the forgiveness of sin.” Luther further writes, “This old man consists of error, concupiscence, wrath, fear, apprehension, despair, and evil conscience, horror of death, etc. Those are the characteristics of the old, carnal man. They diminish, however, in the new man, but they are not extinguished until he himself is extinguished by death. . . . Rather the process of removal has begun, and as a person increases in spiritual health these evils are removed. This spiritual health is nothing more than faith in or love in Christ. (TLSB)

10:23 *unswervingly*. Without doubt or hesitation. Some of the readers were tempted to give up the struggle and turn back to a form of Judaism. (CSB)

the hope we profess. See 6:18–20. (CSB)

Cf 3:1, 14. Encouraging his hearers to stand firmly, confessing Christ. (TLSB)

The author is reminding us that hope is for confession, not concealment. Often confession brings bumps and bruises, sometimes even worse, as the Hebrew Christians had already found out and were again experiencing. But the world’s opposition cannot affect our hope. It may hurt our hold on and hinder our confession of the hope, but it cannot harm the hope itself. Those who confess this glorious hope in our modern society have found that opposition is not dead. Yet the world’s need for our confession of that hope and God’s faithfulness in fulfilling it are still there. (PBC)

he who promised is faithful. Cf. 2Ti 2:13. (CSB)

He uses the present tense to remind us such holding is ever to continue. We might have expected him to write “faith,” but he uses “hope” to lift our eyes to the future. From Christ comes not

only pardon for sins in the present, but glorious hope for the future. Heaven is our sure home. (PBC)

Nothing strengthens our hope for heaven more than the fact of God's faithfulness. How can the Eternal One lie or change His mind? He promised the eternal crown of glory and He will place it on our heads. To such a hope we are to hold "unswervingly," not letting it droop like some banner into the dust, but holding it on high for all to see. (PBC)

10:24–25 "It is not enough to teach and instruct alone. There is also need for daily encouragement... So here also there is need for us to continue to preach so that people may not become weary and disgusted. For we know and feel how the devil always opposes this and every Christian exercise. He drives and deters people from them as much as he can" (LC V 44). (TLSB)

10:24 HOW WE MAY SPUR ONE ANOTHER ON – The church of this time has been gathered from the diverse believers of the world, and very many who are weak, impotent, imperfect, and sinful have been intermingled, as Christ says in John 12:8: "The poor you will always have with you, but Me you will not always have." But because human nature is constituted in such a way that it prefers to deal with those who are good and perfect to dealing with those who are imperfect and difficult—because of this sin it comes about that those who are weaker cause those who are more perfect to be haughty, to despise, to judge, etc., while, on the other hand, those who are more perfect cause those who are weaker to envy and disparage—for this reason the apostles strove with all their might to counter this evil, lest schisms and heresies arise in the church. These, of course, are prevented only by mutual love. Furthermore, the love that is shown to equals or betters is (as one sees everywhere) either no love at all, or it is not Christian. (Luther)

No Christian lives on an island or for himself alone. With his attitudes and actions he has an effect on others. The present tense again stresses continued action. "Consider" means putting our mind on others, carefully noting their needs. As one body in Christ we need to spur each on other on "toward love and good deeds." The word "love" in the Greek is agape, the highest kind of love, which loves the undeserving and unlovable. (PBC)

Luther's Large Catechism, "It is not enough to teach and instruct alone. There is also need for daily encouragement ... So here also there is a need for us to continue to preach so that people may not become weary and disgusted. For we know and feel how the devil always opposes this and every Christian exercise. He drives and deters people from them as much as he can." (TLSB)

10:25 *not give up meeting together.* The Greek word translated "give up" speaks of desertion and abandonment (see Mt 27:46; 2Co 4:9; 2Ti 4:10, 16). (CSB)

God requires Christian to gather and hear His Word preached, receive the Sacraments, pray, sing, and give thanks (cf Rm 10:14; Lk 22:19-20; Ac 2:38; Rm 15:30; Ps 30:4). Those who despise the Church easily fall from faith. (TLSB)

Believers need to gather together to be strengthened and to give strength. Believers go to gatherings for worship and fellowship not just to gain for themselves, but to give to others. Let the subtle error that believers don't need the church, that they can sit alone at home with their radio or television set on Sunday morning, be laid to rest by the strong urging. Like blades of grass growing together or charcoal briquettes glowing together, we need each other. Some of those Hebrew Christians had already deserted those gathering, perhaps out of fear of persecution. How dangerous this could become verse 26-31 will show. (PBC)

LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER – The verb encourage is derived from the name “Counselor for the Holy Spirit in John 16:7. Standing alongside and helping each other where needed was far better than giving up meeting with each other. Giving and receiving strength when tempted, urging and being urged when wavering, comforting and being comforted when sorrowing are pluses to be found in gathering around the Word. (PBC)

the Day. Of the Lord's return (see 1Th 5:2, 4; 2Th 1:10; 2:2; 2Pe 3:10). (CSB)

When Christ will return for judgment. Cf Heb 10:37; Mt 25:31–32. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 13:1-13

As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” ² **“Do you see all these great buildings?”** replied Jesus. **“Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”** ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ **“Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”** ⁵ Jesus said to them: **“Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹ “You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. ¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³ All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**

13:1–37 The Olivet discourse, as this chapter of Mark is commonly called, falls into five sections: (1) Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the temple and the questions of the disciples (vv. 1–4); (2) warnings against deceivers and false signs of the end (vv. 5–23); (3) the coming of the Son of Man (vv. 24–27); (4) the lesson of the fig tree (vv. 28–31); (5) exhortation to watchfulness (vv. 32–37). (CSB)

Jesus answers His disciples' question (v. 4) about the destruction of the temple, including descriptions of what the end of the world will be like. The upcoming events of AD 70, when the Romans would destroy Jerusalem (vv 1-23, 28-31), foreshadowed the events at the end of the world (vv 24-27). The close comparison of these events has confused some interpreters, especially those intent on figuring out when Christ would return. As you study chapter 13, bear in mind Jesus' most important point: judgment comes unexpectedly; therefore, remain faithful. (TLSB)

The section of Mark from 8:31–10:52 narrates Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. Our text falls within the next section of Mark, describing Jesus' Jerusalem ministry (11:1–13:37). And from 14:1–16:8 (9–20), Mark describes Jesus' Passion and resurrection. The text is part of what is sometimes called the "apocalyptic discourse," and in it Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and warns the disciples not to be deceived by anyone or to misread the "signs of the times." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

13:1-2 Jesus leaves the temple for the last time. Some of the massive stone blocks used in the Herodian temple are still visible at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Through Wednesday of Holy Week, Jesus had been in the temple teaching (cf. 11:15–19 [temple cleansing]; 11:27; 12:35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

13:1 WAS LEAVING THE TEMPLE - "And as he came out of the temple." This is, first, the temple of Herod, one of the "kings of the earth" prophesied in Psalm 2, who (re)built this temple as a testament to his worldly wealth and power and as a bid for popularity and respect. Nevertheless, this is also the temple that Jesus, only the day before, had honored as his Father's house. It is God's tool, an image of the true temple, namely, the incarnate Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

ide potapoi lithoi kai potapai oikodomai. The temple was evidently very beautiful. Josephus gives a detailed description in *Ant.* 15.11 [15.380–425] and *B.J.* 5.5 [5.184–227]. See also Tacitus, *History* 5.8. There was a proverb that "Whoever has not seen Herod's temple, has never seen anything beautiful" (Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 4a). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES - "And as he came out of the temple." This is, first, the temple of Herod, one of the "kings of the earth" prophesied in Psalm 2, who (re)built this temple as a testament to his worldly wealth and power and as a bid for popularity and respect. Nevertheless, this is also the temple that Jesus, only the day before, had honored as his Father's house. It is God's tool, an image of the true temple, namely, the incarnate Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

LOOK TEACHER - "Look, Teacher"! (*didaskale, ide*). The disciple who calls Christ's attention to the temple complex plainly expects his Galilean rabbi to be as overawed as he, though he had seen this same rabbi raise the dead; though he had heard him confessed as Son of God and Messiah; though he was witness when, only

two days before, the Lord had suddenly come into this temple, where none could abide the day of his coming. Yet what is seen has power to make what is unseen seem insubstantial, even when what is unseen has revealed itself, that is to say, even when the Word became flesh and tented among us, and we beheld his glory in the true tabernacle of his flesh (see Jn 1:14). But, of course, when they saw him in the likeness of *sinful* flesh, he had no majesty in his form (Is 53:2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

massive stones. According to Josephus (*Antiquities*, 15.11.3), they were white, and some of them were 37 feet long, 12 feet high and 18 feet wide. (CSB)

The sentence begins with a genitive absolute of which Jesus is the subject. Commentators differ among themselves as to the place where one of the disciples said this. The text indicates that they were close to the temple. (Buls)

Fahling: Josephus tells us that the stones used in the Temple were 'white and strong and each of their length was twenty-five cubits, their height was eight, and their breadth about twelve.' For building purposes the length of the cubit was about twenty inches.(Buls)

Lenski: All of fifty years had already been spent in replacing one building after another in grander and richer form. The work was not yet done; it went on for years until shortly before the great war. The temple of Jerusalem, which Herod rebuilt, was considered one of the wonders of the world, being built of marble and richly adorned with gold. (Buls)

All earthly splendors seem unsurpassable, even final, to their own moment; so also that earthly temple of God can hardly have seemed in its moment merely a shadow of things to come, even though the far grander reality was already present there, in the Son. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Some can still be seen at the Wailing Wall. They were an incredible site. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

Huge stone blocks, some measuring 37 ft long, 18 ft wide, and 12 ft high, and decorated with gold, were used to build Herod's temple, one of the most impressive man-made structures of the ancient world. (TLSB)

13:2 See note on Mt 24:2. (CSB)

NIV note on Mt. 24:2 (CSB)

Now comes Jesus' reply. Note that we have the emphatic negative, twice in the last sentence, once in the main clause and once in a subordinate clause. It denotes total destruction. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: His reply is a word of reproach. The disciples were concerned with the shell, with physical values. They had failed in their appraisal of spiritual things. (Buls)

Lenski feels otherwise. He feels that though their eyes were feasting on the magnitude and beauty of it all, Jesus had a tremendous announcement to make. This answer must have shocked the disciples very much. It seems that they all walked in silence up the Mount of Olives where they sat down. That is quite a distance. (Buls)

not one stone ... left. Fulfilled literally in A.D. 70, when the Romans under Titus completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple buildings. Stones were even pried apart to collect the gold leaf that melted from the roof when the temple was set on fire. (CSB)

ou mē aphethēi hōde lithos epi lithon hos ou mēkatluthēi. The double negation with the aorist subjunctive is the strongest way to negate something in Greek (cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 468). “There will not be left here one stone upon another.” Jesus predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in AD 70 by the hand of the Roman general Titus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

DO YOU SEE - “And Jesus said to him, ‘Do you see . . .?’ ” Christ has looked; Christ has seen long before. It is he who calls their attention to these transient buildings, as he (truly!) sees them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

GREAT BUILDINGS - “These great buildings.” They are shadows, yet he also calls them great (*megalas*), without sarcasm. In their moment, they are substantial and, relatively speaking, splendid; it is not an *illusion* that will disappear, but a doomed reality that will be destroyed. So Christ does not deny the apparent reality of the present earth. Indeed, in Psalms, Job, and elsewhere, he insists on, even celebrates, the reality of what is seen. What he disallows is its apparent future. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

stone. See note on Mk 13:1. (CSB)

thrown down. Excavations in 1968 uncovered large numbers of these stones, toppled from the walls by the invaders. (CSB)

TLSB note on Mt 24:2 – Given the scale and splendor of the Jerusalem temple, Jesus’ prediction is all the more astounding. Yet it unflinchingly came to pass, under the Roman general Titus, 40 years later.

NOT ONE STONE WILL BE LEFT ON ANOTHER – This was the result of their constant worshiping of false gods and lack of repentance. They falsely felt that as long as the Temple was in their midst other nations could not defeat them. They put their trust in false gods including a building like the Temple rather in the God whose Temple it was.

This disturbing prophecy must be understood in the context of Jesus' teaching concerning the Temple on an earlier occasion. It actually forms the expected sequel to chapter 11:17. There, in a pronouncement of judgment upon the misuse of the Temple, Jesus cited Jer. 7:11. In the context of that passage the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar is seen as God's punishment of the rebelliousness of Judah in the time of Jeremiah (Jer 7:12-14). The failure of the Temple authorities in Jesus' day to respect God's intention with reference to the Temple created the climate in which its ruin was certain. (Lane)

"There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down [*kataluthēi*]." These wonderful stones have no foundation; these wonderful buildings, like earth and everything on it, are under sentence of demolition, unlikely as it seems. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:1-2 Jesus begins to talk about the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world with a prediction of the temple's destruction. What makes a house of worship worthy is not its outward appearance but the Word of God in it. The temple in Jerusalem had been the "embassy" of heaven on earth. With the birth of Jesus, this temple would no longer serve that purpose. Now, in Jesus Christ, the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily among us (cf. Col. 2:9). – "To this temple, where we call You, Come, O Lord of hosts; Come with all Your loving-kindness, Hear Your people as they pray." Amen (LSB 909:2) (TLSB)

13:3–37 Second of two extended sections of teaching (cf 4:1–32). (TLSB)

13:3-4 The Mount of Olives is located to the East of the temple mount, across the Kidron valley. It offers an overview of the city. A "sign" (*sēmeion*) is an event with special meaning—a portent. In the Gospel of John it is the equivalent of miracle. "For the Gospel of John, however, a *sēmeion* is not simply a miraculous event but something which points to a reality with ever greater significance" (Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989] 1:443). Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The signs of the end given by Jesus have four characteristics, according to *The End Times: A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism* (CTCR document, September 1989, pp. 20–21): 1. The events are not limited to the future or to just before his appearing. "The church of every generation can expect to witness their occurrence. Wars, famines, earthquakes, and anti-Christian forces were present already in the first century A.D. and they continue today." 2. The purpose of the signs is not to enable the Christian to calculate when, but to "assure the Christian that Christ will surely return." 3. Watching alertly for the signs affects the believer's outlook toward life in a positive way. 4. The signs are not necessarily spectacular events, but can be part of ordinary day-to-day existence. Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

13:3 *Mount of Olives*. See note on 11:1. (CSB)

Note that this is a major paragraph and that also this sentence begins with a genitive absolute of which Jesus is the subject. "Opposite the Temple" must have been a magnificent location to view the building. The disciples were away from the crowds. Note that the verb is singular but that we have four subjects. Perhaps Peter was the spokesman. Here we have two sets of brothers. (Buls)

"And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple." Speaking of externals, we see a young Galilean rabbi sitting on the ground opposite the huge and grand center of Israelite faith. In fact, we see two temples opposite each other, the incarnate God and his earthly likeness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Kai kathēmenou autou eis to oros tōn elaiōn katenanti tou hierou epērōta auton kat' idian Petros kai lakōbos kai Iōannēs kai Andreas, "while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives." The genitive absolute, *Kai kathēmenou autou*, describes the circumstances under which the disciples were asking (*epērōta*, imperfect) Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

This was across the Kidron valley and had a great overview of the city. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

The short journey from the city to the Mount of Olives furnished a most imposing view of the sanctuary area. The route followed by Jesus and the Twelve probably led through a gate in the north wall of the city and then eastward across the Kidron Valley, defined on the west by the high ridge on which the city of Jerusalem stood and on the east by the gentle slopes of Olivet. Because the Temple was set at the crest of the western ridge it loomed over the valley and would have been fully visible throughout the journey. (Lane)

Peter, James, John and Andrew. See 1:16–20. (CSB)

When they reached the western slope of the Mount of olives the four disciples whom Jesus first called (chapter 1:16-20) privately asked Him to clarify His pronouncement. In a vision Ezekiel had seen the Shekinah glory depart from the Sanctuary to the Mount of Olives, leaving the Temple defenseless against attack (Ezek 9:3; 10:18f; 11:23), while Zechariah spoke of the Mount of Olives as the locus of redemption in the last days (Zeck. 14). These rich biblical associations between the Temple and the Mount of Olives appear to inform the disciples' question. (Lane)

"Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately." Christ's words have been shocking; they may even have seemed impious. These four, the inner circle of disciples, dare to inquire further. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:4 TELL US –"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" They mean, first, "When will the temple be destroyed?" and, second, as Matthew makes clear, "What will signal the end of the world?" (see Mt 24:3), because they rightly, though with distortion, connect the end of the temple with the end of all things. For the end of the temple is the end of the world

written small, as the destruction of the true temple is the destruction of the world in one man. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

The questioner begins with "Tell us." This shows how familiar they were with Jesus. The question is twofold: "when" and "what." Actually He answers neither of these two questions but speaks at length concerning what is important for them. (Buls)

The question in Matthew 24:3 is more detailed: "When will these things happen and what is the sign of your second coming and of the end of the age?" They are speaking about two things: the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. What prompted this question? (Buls)

Ylvisaker: From the Old Testament they know that the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Gentiles will be followed by the advent of the Lord. (Buls)

Stoeckhardt: Their thoughts of the end of Jerusalem and of the world were linked together, as they are also in the writings of the prophets, and as the Lord foretold in Matthew 16:27-28, indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning and a purview of the judgment of the world. (Buls)

Fahling: It was also quite natural for them to connect the destruction of the Temple with 'the end of the world' and 'the coming' of Christ. According to the certain prophecies of the Old Testament as well as in the light of the Savior's predictions His final coming might be viewed together with the destruction of Jerusalem as the beginning of the end. Daniel 12:9ff; Matthew 16:27-28; 23:38-39; Luke 13:34-35; 17:23-24.

Note again that they asked "when" and for one specific sign. He answers neither question. (Buls)

kai ti to sēmeion hotan mellēi tauta sunteleisthai panta, "and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" "All these things" probably refers not only to the destruction of Jerusalem but also to the end of the age (cf. Mt 24:3). That's why, in v 7, Jesus talks about "the end" (*to telos*).

The disciples thought that the destruction of the temple would be one of the events that ushered in the end times (see Mt 24:3).

the sign. The way by which the disciples might know that the destruction of the temple was about to take place and that the end of the age was approaching. (CSB)

saymion - an *indication*, especially ceremonially or supernaturally:—miracle, sign, token, wonder. The signs Jesus gives have four features: .(Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

- The events that are not limited to the future or just before his appearing.
- The purpose of the signs is not to enable the Christian to calculate when, but to "assure the Christ will surely return.

- Watching alertly for the signs affect the believer’s outlook toward life in a positive way.
- The signs are not necessarily spectacular events, but can be part of ordinary day-to-day existence.

Christ does not answer the first question, though after this pericope he gives them a sign by which they may know to flee the city’s fall (v 14). As to the second question, the great sign of the end of the world (and the beginning of the new creation) is the world’s judgment and rising in Christ. But the final sign is reserved to next Sunday’s pericope, that is, the sign of the Son of Man appearing in the clouds of heaven. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

The burden of the remainder of this present text is not the questions of when the temple (and the world) will be destroyed and with what sign, but rather, the questions of what will and will not endure (v 13) into permanence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:5-8 *Planaō* means “to mislead, deceive.” By its very nature, deception is difficult to detect. Other idioms for it are “to twist people’s thoughts, to cause what is false to seem like what is true, to dig away the truth, or to cover the eyes with lies” (Louw and Nida, 1:366–67). Scripture comments frequently on the subject (Jer 29:8–9; Eph 5:6; 2 Pet 3:17; 2 Thess 2:9–12). The deception of false prophets claiming “I am he” has repeatedly taken place. See Lenski for a brief historical review. Popular approaches to “the self” add a new twist to the deception. Rather than encouraging people to believe that someone else is “he,” our society so elevates personal rights, individual choice, and private autonomy that each individual himself is the “he.” According to New Age thinking, we are our own gods. Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

13:5 *Watch out.* It is clear from such words as “Watch out,” “You must be on your guard” (v. 9), “So be on your guard” (v. 23), “Be on guard! Be alert!” (v. 33), “Therefore keep watch” (v. 35) and “Watch!” (v. 37) that one of the main purposes of the Olivet discourse was to alert the disciples to the danger of deception. (CSB)

blepo – To be extremely on the lookout for possible problems or traps.

NO ONE DECEIVES YOU – *planaho* – To be seduced to follow a wrong path, set of values or wander from the correct road. In our time the New Age way of thinking suggests that we are our own gods.

“And Jesus began to say to them, ‘See that no one leads you astray.’ ” This sentence is such a powerful and poignant response to their questions that it might well end with an exclamation point. They ask their Teacher, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” (v 4). Their *Savior* responds, in essence, “Stay with me!” This is first; this is crucial. Finally, nothing else

signifies, but that they stay with him who cannot be shaken. In no other way will they endure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Bengel: He had said little previously concerning these things. (Buls)

Lenski: It marks the length and the importance of what Jesus said. (Buls)

And what does He say? "Be on your guard lest someone mislead you." (Buls)

Lenski: All men have an affinity for religious error. (Buls)

My sinful nature loves error. (Buls)

Jeremiah 29:8-9 "Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD."

Ephesians 5:6 "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient."

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."

2 Peter 3:17 "Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position."

13:6 MANY – This is an explanation of the previous verse. Note the word "many." (Buls)

Ylvisaker: As a punishment God will permit false Christs to appear. There is no record of any false Christ previous to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Lenski: The procession of such deceivers from Simon Magus and Barcochba on to the great anti-Christ and all the anti-Christ goes on to the end of time. . . . They all use the revelation of Christ as their sheep's clothing. The sad thing is that they shall actually succeed in deceiving many. (Buls)

There will be many deceivers and many deceived. "On the basis of my name" means that they will make a false claim appear true. Each generation produces false Christs. The reader should be able to name two or three in our own time. "I am he" is elliptical for "I am the Christ." (Buls)

I am he. That is, the Messiah. (CSB)

“Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ [*egō eimi*] and they will lead many astray.” Certainly, antichrists are a sign of the end, but that is of secondary importance here. Of first importance is that to be led astray (*planēsousin*) is to be destroyed, that the opposite of *astray* is *aright*, and that none can lead aright but Christ alone. It is because Satan knows Christ’s absolute uniqueness, and the absolute necessity of following him only, that Satan floods the world with pseudo-christs to confuse, distract, and destroy. And even apart from antichrists proper, the world through many mouths is always crying, if not, “I am he,” certainly, “I am it.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

hoti egō eimi. Here the *hoti* introduces direct discourse (cf. Mt 7:23; Mk 1:37; BDAG, s.v. *hoti*). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

In the Semitic world the “name” of a person denotes his dignity and power. Understood in this manner signifies that they were arrogating to themselves the title and authority which belong only to Jesus. “I am he” as used by Jesus, these words have been generally understood to constitute a claim of dignity which finds its significance in God’s own self-designation. The deceivers will claim this dignity for themselves. (Lane)

13:7-8 “And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” Christ created the world as a peaceable kingdom, but peace and peace treaties will not endure among fallen men in a fallen world, nor can endure here the concomitant blessings of prosperity and well-being. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“Do not be alarmed [*mē throeisthe*]. This must take place, but the end is not yet.” Not as though the disciples should or would be alarmed by the end itself, but rather that until the end, they must not be startled or intimidated by mutability under the curse. However it may seem, the curse has rendered temporary what is seen, until the end (and the beginning of what will be everlasting). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“There will be earthquakes in various places.” Christ created the earth so that it would not be moved. But a fallen earth already moves under man’s feet, and it shall move more and more violently until it removes altogether. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“There will be famines.” Christ promised Noah that seedtime and harvest would not cease while the earth remained (Gen 8:22). If they become uncertain, the earth is moving to its end. Thus, as there is no enduring stability in the ground beneath, there is none in the climate above, till the skies disappear with a roar. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“These are but the beginning of the birth pains.” The Law here is that the uncertainty of earthly life must only increase as divine wrath shakes the world more and more fiercely, finally to remove everything that can be shaken. The Gospel here is that these increasing evidences of the evanescence of the visible (like birth pains, stronger and stronger and closer and closer together) herald the birth of the world without end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:7 WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS – These developments fall within the sovereign purpose of God, who controls the historical destinies of nations. These things must happen, but they do not signify the end, or even that the end is near. The Bible frequently depicts wars as a time of divine visitation (e.g. Is 14:30; 19:2). It would have been natural for the disciples to have seen in the outbreak of conflict in the land or in the disturbances of A.D. 62-66, when rumors of revolt were common, a sign that the end was imminent. Wars, in themselves, however, do not indicate that the consummation is a hand. (Lane)

Note that this complex sentence is constructed on the analogy of the present general condition. "Whenever you hear of wars and rumors of wars, never be alarmed." NEB reads: "When you hear the noise of battle near at hand and the news of battles far away do not be alarmed." TEV is similar: "Don't let wars or talk about war upset you." Think of how upset many Americans were and are about the Vietnam War. Think of how futile the efforts of many to do away with war. (Buls)

Hendriksen: Wars and rumors of war did not cease with Jerusalem's fall . . . One author counted three hundred wars in Europe during the last three hundred years. . . Not any single one of them could ever give anyone the right to make predictions with reference either to the date of Jerusalem's fall or to the time of the Parousia. (Buls)

Then Jesus goes on to say: "These wars must come, but the end is not yet." The necessity is due to the sinfulness of mankind and the judgment of God. General Sherman said: "War is hell." His words have been repeated by many heads of state since. Wars are simply awful. But there's more. (Buls)

the end. Not the destruction of Jerusalem but the end of the age (see Mt 24:3). (CSB)

13:8 EARTHQUAKES...FAMINES – The first word in Greek, not translated here, is "You see." An explanation. Look at how maps have had to be changed many, many times since 1900 because of "nations rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom." Then, "there shall be earthquakes in many places." "There shall be famines." (Buls)

In verse 4 the disciples had asked for just one sign which would indicate the end of the world. Jesus does not give them one sign for such a purpose, but He mentions many signs: false Christs, wars, talk about war, earthquakes, famines. None of these can be used to determine the end of all things and Christ's second coming. All of these signs,

things beyond our control, are warning for us to repent. Verse 8 ends on a somber note: "These things are only the beginning of the birth-pangs." (Buls)

Lenski: the world of nature is affected by sin in the same way as the world of men, and thus these disturbing manifestations are signs of the end . . . These are only a prelude 'a beginning of birth pangs' much severer pains and writhings must be added before the new heavenly eon comes to full birth. (Buls)

Fahling: While these things are preclusive both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of Christ's second coming, these things are but 'the beginning of sorrows' because 'the end is not yet.' (Buls)

birth pains. See note on Mt 24:8. (CSB)

NIV note on Mt 24:8 – The rabbis spoke of “birth pains,” i.e., sufferings, that would precede the coming of the Messiah.

TLSB note on Mt 24:8 – Birth pains typically become more frequent and intense as the time of delivery approaches. So also it will be in the end times. The severity and frequency of cataclysmic events will increase. (TLSB)

archē ōdinōn tauta. “These are but the beginning of the birth pains.” The “Son of Man” (13:26) will appear in history after a painful “birth experience.” Jesus compares wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines to the beginning of these pains, but he warns that they are not signs that the end is to come immediately (“not yet,” v 7, “but the beginning,” v 8). They do not enable any precise dating of that Last Day. The metaphor of birth pains also suggests that the end is going to be both judgment and salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

These words of Jesus read like a page out of our daily newspaper: cults with their messiahs, wars and threats of war, nations warring against nation, earthquakes and famines. We have them all. They are the evidence that sin has corrupted all things and that only the Lord’s coming can finally set things straight. Perhaps the situation is even more critical in our day than in Jesus’ day, for at that time Rome had enforced a relative peace on the entire civilized world. (PBC)

13:9-13 The power to stand firm (*hupomenō*) doesn’t come from within. We look for the Holy Spirit to provide the strength to “bear up despite difficulty and suffering,” enabling us “to demonstrate endurance” (Louw and Nida, 1:308). Perseverance is not easily achieved (Heb 6:11–12; 10:36). “We shall not be moved” establishes the idea of rootedness. From the outside, standing firm may appear as stubbornness, obstinacy, or inflexibility. The Greek word for stubbornness (*sklērotēs*) means “refusing to change, refusing to think differently” (Louw and Nida, 1:766). It is not used, however, of believers. Rather, it describes those who refuse to accept the Gospel (Rom 2:5). Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

An alternative treatment of v 13b could emphasize the irony of the Christian who stands firm in the freedom of the Gospel, but who nevertheless is accused of inflexibility and stubbornness when he or she doesn't collapse before the fallen will as expressed in devalued societal norms. Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Illustration: “We shall not be moved” sounds like stubbornness; like the elderly man who refused to leave his cabin, though volcanic Mt. St. Helens was about to explode; or the couple who stood on the porch of their house as the flood waters ascended the steps, and refused to get in a rescue boat and leave. “We shall not be moved!” may appear courageous when ultimately it is foolish. But sometimes what appears foolish and stubborn isn't. Sometimes it is faithfully standing firm. Eusebius, the historian of the early church, records the story of aged Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. A persecution of Christians had begun and believers in Christ were being rounded up. Christians were threatened with wild beasts or death at the stake unless they denied Christ and swore allegiance to Caesar. Polycarp was arrested and brought before the proconsul, who urged him, “Swear by Caesar's fortune; change your attitude. . . . Swear, and I will set you free: [execrate] curse Christ” Polycarp answered, “For 86 years I have been His servant, and He has never done me wrong: how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” (Eusebius, *The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine*, tr. G. A. Williamson [Minneapolis: Augsburg] 171). How stubborn Polycarp must have appeared to the watching crowds as the torch was set to the stake. This wasn't stubbornness, however. Though he was tied to the stake, he was standing firm by the cross. Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

13:9-10 “But be on your guard.” Here again, as in v 5, we hear a Savior speak. Earth and everything on it must disappear; Christ himself has decreed it. But he is determined that his disciples shall not be lost, however they may be shaken by a shaking world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings”: The peace of their daily lives will not endure, nor the approval of their society. They must not be surprised to see these things vanish. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“For my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.” The witness they will bear is the everlasting Gospel. The Word that will outlast the heavens and the earth will, through them, enter all the dying world, to all the fading kings, administrations, and nations. It is the Word of Christ, by believing which (certainly *not* by proclaiming which) they will endure forever. (It is, of course, implied that through their witness others shall receive the everlasting life while the world is passing away.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:9 Persecution of Christians was common in the first century and is still common today in parts of the world. (TLSB)

BE ON YOUR GUARD – In verse 5 they must watch out for deceivers. Here it has to do with the person themselves. "Look out for yourselves." Verses 9-11 form a unit and verses 12-13 form another. The first unit speaks of what will happen from without and the second of what will happen from within. The word "betray" is common to both. In both cases the betrayal leads to something worse. Compare Matthew 10:17-22 on this section. (Buls)

Bengel: Mark is not an epitomizer of Matthew.

Before the present century many thought that Mark is an abridged form of Matthew. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: However disunited the world may be otherwise, it is one in its hatred of Jesus' disciples. (Buls)

Thus far He is speaking of persecution by the Jews. Persecution of true children of God began with the Jews, the Covenant people. On this compare Acts 22:19; 26:11; 2 Corinthians 11:24. (Buls)

Hendricksen: From the book of Acts (22:19) we learn that Saul (Paul) of Tarsus caused believers in Christ to receive this horrible punishment. (Buls)

But persecution was administered also by Gentiles. (Buls)

Hendriksen: Think of such procurators as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus; as to 'king' of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1) and of Agrippa II (Acts 25:13,24,26). Even Herod Antipas, who technically was not a king, is also given that title at times (Matthew 14:9). It was Pontius Pilate who sentenced Jesus to die on the cross after he had sent him to 'king' Herod Antipas (Mark 15:15). (Buls)

What happened to Jesus will happen to His disciples, persecuted by both Jew and Gentile. "Because of Me." Look at Acts 9:4-5; 22:7-8; 26:14-15, John 15:18-21. (Buls)

local councils. The religious courts made up of the synagogue elders. (CSB)

paradōsousin humas, "they will hand you over." The "indefinite plural" indicates that no one in particular is being referred to, but someone in general. In English, it is sometimes translated with a passive form. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

"For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings." The terms look at persecution from both a Jewish context ("councils" and "synagogues") and a Gentile one ("governors" and "kings"). Some of this was fulfilled in Acts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

flogged. Infraction of Jewish regulations was punishable by flogging, the maximum penalty being 39 strokes with the whip (see 2Co 11:23–24). (CSB)

STAND BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS AS WITNESSES – After trial before the Jewish courts, they will be turned over to the Gentile authorities, presumably as disloyal provincials who disturb the peace and incite to riot. The double reference, “kings and governors,” serves to designate all men of authority (cf chapters 6:14; 15:2; Matt 27:2), it may also look beyond this local situation to the experience of arrest throughout the Empire. (Lane)

RSV translates "To bear witness before them." NEB: "To testify in their presence." AAT: "To tell them the truth." Jesus did not soften the persecutions which were coming. We must remember that for ourselves too. (Buls)

Persecution of Christians was common in the first century and is still common today in parts of the world. (TLSB)

13:10 *first*. Before the end of the age (see Mt 24:14). (CSB)

Before the end of the world and Judgment day. (TLSB)

PREACHED TO ALL NATIONS – Jesus announces God’s plan to include the Gentiles. (TLSB)

Bengel: The preaching of the Gospel was furthered by persecution, before the end shall come. (Buls)

"Must" denotes the necessity caused by the will of God. Look at Matthew 24:14: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world for the purpose of a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Buls)

Lenski: This is the clearest statement in the Gospel concerning the actual time of the end. (Buls)

Unknown and foreign lands were first entered by missionaries. Think of the world-wide mission work which is being done. Here are some Old Testament passages which prophesied of this matter: Psalm 72:8-11,17; 96:1-10; Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:6-12; 52:10; 60:1-3,6; Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 26:4; 28:14. (Buls)

kai eis panta ta ethnē prōton dei kēruchthēnai to euangelion. “And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.” “To all nations first” is in the emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence. This is not a promise that if we get the Gospel to every nation, then the end will come. We can’t bring the Kingdom. Only God will do that at the appointed time. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

13:11 BROUGHT TO TRIAL - "And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." As above, the peace of their daily lives will not endure, but this (like the end of all things) is no cause for anxiety. When they bear witness, it will be the same enduring Word that they will be speaking. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

THE HOLY SPIRIT – The Holy Spirit would help them bear witness to the Gospel. (TLSB)

This is a very comforting verse. The disciples are plainly told not even to think about what they shall say. He gives the reason why they should not even think about what they would say. It will be given to them. All they have to do is to speak what will be given to them. This is an amazing sentence. "For, it's not you who are speaking but the Holy Spirit is speaking." He does not mean, of course, that they will become mere robots. The concurrence of the activity of the Holy spirit and the new man in the Christian is truly amazing. (Buls)

Hendriksen: That this prophecy, too, was gloriously fulfilled is evident from the speeches of Peter, or Peter and John (Acts 4:8-12,19,20 with the effect upon the audience described in 4:13-14) and from those of Paul (Acts 21:39-22:21; 23:1,6; 24:10-21; 26:1-23. (Buls)

"It is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." To these disciples who are to be apostles, the Holy Spirit will give these words directly. To the world's end, the Holy Spirit gives all disciples these words indirectly through Holy Scripture, to be heard, marked, learned, and summoned by the Spirit from our hearts as occasion is granted. Thus, the miracles of inspiration and enscripturation guarantee that as we speak the everlasting Gospel, it is not we who speak, but the Holy Spirit himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:12-13 "And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake." Christ so created man that family harmony should be everlasting and human love be universal. But humanity is fallen; only the family that is in Christ and only the love among those who are led aright will endure forever. Apart from him, all family ties and all human love will disappear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

"And you will be hated [*esesthe misoumeno*] by all for my name's sake." The hatreds, resentments, and wicked lovelessness that are endemic in all fallen nature will only burst forth all the more as those who are dying confront those who have eternal life. By the very life his disciples have in him, they will be the odor of death to those who are dying, for it is through their union through faith with the Living One that they condemn this world (that is, like Noah, acknowledge its doom, Heb 11:7) and become heirs with

him of the world to come. Therefore, they will be hated by all who are in denial. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“Over to death . . . have them put to death.” Christ created man to live forever; by sin came death. Insofar as his disciples, too, are also sinners, their present bodily lives will not endure. Whether by martyrdom, by the judgments now present in a fallen world, as sickness, disaster, age, and so forth, or by the appearing of Christ, these present bodies of sin and the sinful nature that remains in them are, like the temple in Jerusalem and the whole fallen world, sentenced to destruction. Of course, for his disciples, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and all judgments imply only that their release and resurrection is drawing near. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“But the one who endures [*hupomeinas*] to the end [*eis telos*] will be saved.” That is, the one who is found enduring to the end will be rescued from all he has endured: sin, Satan, and all the sorrows of mutability. But also, and self-evidently, the one who endures to the end will *endure*, that is, the one who has eternal life will have eternal life, glorious, powerful, immortal, and imperishable: in a word, permanent. He who stands firm will stand firm forever, for he who stands firm is simply he who stands in Christ, and the one who is in Christ will be in Christ, world without end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:12 BROTHER WILL BETRAY – Anti-Christian sentiment would divide families, even to the point of close relatives handing over loved ones for execution. (TLSB)

We mentioned in verse 9 that verses 9-11 form a unit and verses 12-13 form another. Verses 9-11 dwell on persecution from without, from both Jews and Gentiles. Verses 12-13 speak of persecution from within. Compare Matthew 10:21-22. Ylvisaker is of the opinion that apostates are included in this verse. That could be. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: The apostates frequently became the most fanatical of persecutors.
Lenski: Jesus is speaking of frightful cases of denunciation in pagan courts, some of which happened during the ten great Roman persecutions. (Buls)

Hendriksen: Because of basic religious difference, intra-family relationships were often far from ideal. It is clear that the cleavage took place on account of Christ. (Buls)

Nothing divides close relationships quite so much as do differences in religion. Look at Luke 12:49-53. Betrayal, rebellion, death among close relatives are mentioned in Mark 13:12. Lenski quotes Besser who says that two things are stronger than natural love, the one born of hell, the other born of heaven. (Buls)

13:13 ALL MEN WILL HATE YOU – This is so because God’s Law offends and because Jesus claimed to be the only way to salvation (John 14:6). (TLSB)

This qualification indicates that the abuse heaped upon the disciples is really intended for Jesus, and that the disciples are persecuted only because they identified with Him. It is was the sense of a communion of suffering with Jesus that gave to the early church a sense of privilege that they could assume the hurt was directed toward Christ, (Phil 1:29 ff; 3:8-11; Col 1:24). (Lane)

firm to the end. Such perseverance is a sure indication of salvation (cf. Heb 3:14; 6:11–12; 10:36). (CSB)

By God's grace through faith in Christ alone. (TLSB)

The verse begins with a future periphrastic, passive voice. It denotes constant action. "You will be constantly hated, etc." This speaks of the general hatred of the world for the Christians. The Christian can expect hatred from the most unexpected quarter. Why can the Christians expect this hatred? Because of Jesus' name. Obviously Jesus means that this person confesses the name and teaching of Jesus. Even among Christians it happens that those who remain faithful to Jesus' Word are hated by other who call themselves Christians. (Buls)

But the last sentence in this verse is very comforting. All things in this life come to an end, no matter how beautiful or terrible they may be. "He who endures" means the person who stands up under adverse circumstance. "To the end" means "until death" not "until the end of the world." Though of course there will be instances in which the end of the world will be the deliverance of Christians who are still living at that time. (Buls)

Here we have a prophecy and a promise. Beginning with verse 6 Jesus predicts a number of items. The most comforting of all is "shall be saved." (Buls)

"But the one who endures to the end will be saved." Jesus is not claiming that it is within one's own power "to endure," nor is he saying that endurance is a work that saves. One endures by the grace of God; it is God who works faith and keeps us in it through the worst of trials. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

hoopomen – To remain or have the fortitude to persevere. This can only come from the power of the Holy Spirit working within us through Word and Sacraments. Interestingly in today's society if one stands firm in the freedom of the Gospel, he/she might well be accused of being inflexible, stubborn or even to have a terrorist mindset. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

Galatians 5:1, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Hebrews 6:11-12, "we want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

Hebrews 10:36, "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

13:3–13 Jesus warns His disciples about the coming troubles they will face as they bring the Gospel into the world. He encourages them to trust God and rely on the Holy Spirit, especially when they face opposition and persecution. Nobody likes to be shown his or her sin. As Christians proclaim Law and Gospel, they need to be ready to endure the loss of everything, including their lives. Because God wants all people to hear the Gospel, He prolongs the NT age so that the Church may witness to all the earth. To Him alone we owe the survival of our personal faith as well. • "Lord of harvest, great and kind, Rouse to action heart and mind; Let the gath'ring nations all See Your light and heed Your call." Amen. (*LSB* 830:6) (TLSB)