

**Weekly Gospel Readings**  
**The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Mesore**

**Signs of the End of the Age**

**Endurance in Tribulation**

*“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved” ([Mark 13:13](#)).*

As the end of the Coptic year approaches, the Church deliberately places before us readings that remind us that life on this earth is temporary and fleeting. Those readings take on a tone of watchfulness and accountability, reminding us that “The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” ([1 Peter 4:7](#)). Whether it is the end of the world or the end of our own lives, we must be prepared.

Today, the Fourth and final Sunday of the blessed month of Mesore, the Church reads [Mark 13:3-37](#). In this reading, Christ provides information about the signs of the end of times, such as the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem ([v. 2](#)), the appearance of false Christ’s ([v. 3-6](#)), many wars/natural disasters ([v. 7-8](#)), the occurrence of many afflictions/struggles ([v. 9-13](#)), the appearance of false prophets ([v. 21-23](#)), and the coming down of the Son of Man ([v. 26-27](#)). From this conversation with His disciples, we will focus on two main points: endurance in tribulation and watchfulness in readiness.

Christ emphasizes to His Disciples the importance of having endurance when facing difficulties. A life with Christ does not necessarily mean a life with no struggles; in fact, it is quite the contrary. If you look at the history of our Coptic Church, some of the most Holy of Saints were martyred and killed for the sake of Christ. Thus, Jesus tells the Disciples, “And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved” ([Mark 13:13](#)).

St. Paul’s Epistle to the Thessalonians today ([1 Thess. 2:13–3:13](#)) confirms this truth when He reminds them that afflictions are not accidents but part of the Christian calling, appointed by God as a means of purifying faith; “in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. For now, we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord ([1 Thess. 3:7-8](#)). As St. John Chrysostom teaches, “The endurance of the saints is not a passive waiting, but an active striving, a daily confession of Christ even amidst sufferings.” Thus, endurance is the seal of true discipleship, and through it, Christ promises salvation.

In the Catholic Epistle from today ([James 4:7-5:5](#)), St. James emphasizes the importance of remaining loyal to God, even when it may seem difficult. It is written, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” We must resist temptation and always submit ourselves to the will of God, even if there are seemingly easier paths apart from God. As St. Hilary of Poitiers explains, “They are blessed who endure until the goal of perfect happiness is reached, when the expectation of faith reaches toward complete fulfillment.” True happiness and fulfillment cannot be reached until we have obtained eternal rest with Christ. Therefore, the Church constantly reminds us in the Midnight prayers that vigilance must be joined with repentance: “Behold, the Bridegroom is coming at midnight; blessed is the servant whom He finds watching.”

St. James also reminds us that life on this Earth is temporary; “Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes” ([James 4:14](#)). Thus, Christ

tells the Disciples that they must, “Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come” ([Mark 13:33](#)). The Lord is encouraging them to continually get more prepared for their Judgement. As St. Athanasius explains: “Whereas this time is uncertain and always in prospect, we may advance day by day as if summoned, reaching forward to the things before us and forgetting the things behind. For whom, if they knew the day of the end, would not disregard the interval? But if ignorant, would they not be more ready day by day?”. Today’s Praxis ([Acts 11:19–30](#)) provides a living example: though scattered by persecution, the believers in Antioch remained steadfast, devoted themselves to the Lord, and even in the face of famine, extended love to their brethren in Judea.

Thus, as the Coptic year draws to its close, the Church teaches us to live every day as though it were the last. Are we ready? Let us take the time to contemplate this.

**Sources:**

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible, Church Father Commentaries
- Commentaries on the Gospel of St. Mark by Father Tadros Malaty
- St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Thessalonians
- St. Hilary of Poitiers, Commentary on Matthew
- St. Athanasius, Festal Letters