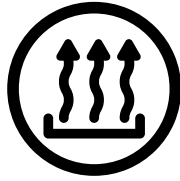




The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

what is the coolest building/monument you've ever seen in person?

Read out loud as a group

Mark 12 Recap: In Mark 12, Jesus does a lot of discussion with the Chief Priests and Leaders. Jesus shares the parable of the tenants with them, talks about taxes to Caesar, marriage after resurrection, that the most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself, Jesus warns against pride of the Pharisees, and celebrates the modest gift of a widow.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 13:1-13 (NIV)

¹ As Jesus 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 Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple while everyone else admires it. Why do you think it is often difficult to discern what is spiritually fragile or lacking beneath outward success?

Possible Answers: it's easy to get caught up in how impressive something looks when you are only using your eyes to judge something. We have to rely on and seek out the Spirit to help us discern true spiritual strength vs spiritual fragility.



Jesus describes suffering as “birth pains.” What does that metaphor suggest about the purpose of pain in God’s redemptive plan?

Possible Answers: the birthing pains are only for a set time as are the times of tribulation, then there's a joyful arrival of a new life (ie eternal life with Jesus), birth pains increase in frequency and duration before the child is born so too do wars and tribulations increase in frequency and duration before Jesus returns.



Verse 9 says persecution becomes an opportunity for witnessing. Why do you think that suffering often clarifies and deepens Christian testimony?

Possible Answers: Because it reveals the deepness of the Gospel's truth. Who would die for a lie? It strengthens both the followers and those who see them. It also showcases God's strength in being our support and hope in times of trouble. etc.



Pastor Davis Johnson has said this about wrath: “fueled and funded by God’s love, God’s wrath is His consistent opposition to evil and sin”. How does this definition impact you? How does it affect previous notions of God’s wrath?

Possible Answers: Will vary.

MARK 13:14-37 (NIV)

¹⁴ “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. ¹⁶ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁷ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ¹⁸ Pray that this will not take place in winter, ¹⁹ because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

²⁰ “If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. ²¹ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. ²² For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

²⁴ “But in those days, following that distress,
“the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;

²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

²⁶ “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

²⁸ “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Read out loud as a group

“a. When you see the ‘abomination of desolation’: This mention of the abomination of desolation is taken from [Daniel 11:31](#): They shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. This described a complete desecration of the temple, prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanies in the time between the Old and New Testaments.

ii. The Hebrew word translated abomination in [Daniel 11:31](#) is shikkoots. It appears in the Old Testament 29 times, and it has the idea of a filthy, disgusting idol. However, this is more than just an idol. First, it is an idol set in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem – standing where it ought not, and as Matthew puts it, standing in the holy place ([Matthew 24:15](#)). Second, this is a filthy, disgusting idol that brings desolation – the complete and devastating judgment of God.”

- David Guzik, [Study Guide for Mark 13](#)



What feelings come up for you when we discuss end times theology?

Possible Answers: Will vary.

NOTE: encourage members to cling to the hope of the spiritual “promise land” instead of the fear of the tribulation to come.



When times get tough, what is tempting to put your trust in apart from Jesus?

Possible Answers: May vary. Financial success, outward displays of wealth/success, emotional support from relationships, job descriptions, etc. None of these things are themselves morally bad but anything can become THE THING that we get our okayness in. Our okayness should first and foremostly come from Jesus.



Jesus repeatedly says, “Be on your guard” and “Keep watch.” What is the difference between spiritual vigilance and fearful obsession? How can you be spiritually watchful?

Possible Answers: spiritual vigilance is a dependence on the Holy Spirit and confirming with trusted Christian community. It also is rooted in hopefulness that whatever happens will be used by God and will not be forever. Fearful obsession is rooted in anxiety and the desire to be in control; That somehow we’ll do better if we know what’s happening when in reality we can rely on the guidance of the Spirit in the moments of trial or confusion.

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- The disciples are dazzled by the temple's size and beauty. What are the things we assume are stable, impressive, or untouchable in our lives today?
- What does “not letting him find you sleeping” look like for you this week?