

## *Encountering Christ in the Gospel of Mark*

January 19-26 - Week 4, Mark 13-16

There are two popular understandings to what Jesus is talking about in Ch. 13:

- 1) Figurative Translation. When will there be an “End Times” or second coming of Christ. Based on this understanding, who knows when this will happen? What are we to do in the meantime?
- 2) Literal Translation. When in 70AD the Romans literally destroyed the temple in Jerusalem while arresting, torturing, and killing thousands of Jews in the process. Were you aware of this aspect of Jewish/Roman/Jerusalem history before?

Is it possible that both can be true and there are lessons for us to learn today about what happened in 70AD and how we are to prepare for Christ’s second coming?

After now reading the Gospel of Mark and so much of Jesus’ figurative speech, hyperbole, and parables, how do you perceive Jesus’ words, “This is my body” and “This is my blood” as it relates to your understanding on Holy Communion and, in particular, the elements of the bread and the wine/juice?

According to Mark’s Gospel, Jesus knew of those who were plotting to have him arrested, killed, and betrayed well ahead of time. Was Jesus arrested, beaten, and crucified against his own will or did He allow this and willingly lay His life down? Does one or the other make a difference? (eg: Consider how some Christians have blamed all Jews for the Jesus’ death?)

Some Bibles note that some early manuscripts of Mark end at Mark 16:9, does yours? How would you feel if the Gospel of Mark ended with the women trembling and bewildered, saying nothing to anyone, and afraid versus ending with interactions with Mary Magdalene, the two others, the 11 disciples, with the “Great Commission” and His ascension? Where do you believe Mark’s gospel ends and why?

You’ve now read the first Gospel written. Based on this Gospel alone and what you’ve read during these first four weeks, how would you describe Jesus? What did you learn that you didn’t know before? What new questions do you have?