

Our last week in Mark brings heightened tension. Jesus' teachings take on added urgency, and those opposed to Jesus also hasten arrangements to bring Jesus to an end. The brutality and suffering Jesus experienced makes the resurrection all the more miraculous, and Mark's strange ending leaves us wondering what our response to the resurrection should be.

Mark 13

If you had one voicemail to leave to those close to you before you died what would it say? Time it – if it takes longer than 30 seconds to read then cut it.

Now read Mark 13 – what instructions do you hear Jesus giving the disciples?

Mark 13:24-25 is a quote of Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4 – both parts of Isaiah that have to do with final judgment against those resisting God. Why would Jesus quote these verses now?

Also take note of Mark 13:32-37. Next time you hear of someone who knows when final judgment is coming, point his or her nose to these verses.

Mark 14

Mark 14:12-26 describes The Lord's Supper, or what we also call Holy Communion. Notice that, for Jesus, this giving of the bread and wine is tied to the Jewish holiday of Passover. Read Exodus 12 and write down the similarities in themes you see.

Exodus 12

Mark 14:12-26

Mark 15

Mark 15 recounts the death of Jesus. In addition to reading the chapter, let's imagine that we were one of the disciples witnessing these events.

- What would your emotions be as the crowd asked for Barabbas?
- What would you feel as YOU shouted for Pilate to crucify Jesus in Mk. 15:14?
- What would your reaction be to seeing Jesus crucified between two thieves?
- If you could say something to Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus – what would you say?
- If you limited yourself to one memory of Jesus in the gospel of Mark – what would it be?

Mark 16

Mark 16 offers a glimpse of how the Bible came together. Generally, the older a manuscript is the more accurate it is believed to be because it is closer to the date the events described occurred. The oldest manuscripts of Mark end with Mark 16:8 and do not have Mark 16:9-20.

How do the added verses of 9-20 change your opinion of the ending of Mark's gospel?

if Mark ended at 16:8

Mark's ending including 16:9-20