

## Home Group notes for the week following 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### WAIT AND WATCH

#### AS WE GATHER

In the time of Jesus the temple in Jerusalem was one of the most beautiful buildings in the city. Built of white marble and gold clad stone it had been remodelled and rebuilt by Herod in an effort to placate the Jews. For the traveller approaching Jerusalem it looked like a snow covered mountain, and for the worshipper the sun reflecting from the gold cladding was blinding. The disciples were fascinated by its magnificence.

**READING SCRIPTURE** Mark 13:1-8 [optional readings 1Samuel 1:4-20 and 2:1-10  
Hebrews 10:11-14 + 19-25]

#### THINKING TOGETHER

Jesus responded to the disciple's admiration of the temple by declaring that it would be totally destroyed. Once away from the crowds, His disciples asked Him when the destruction of the temple would occur and how they would know it was to happen (Mark 13:1-4) [His prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70 when Rome totally destroyed Jerusalem and the temple].

In reply to their question, Jesus warned them of a time to come of false teachers / heresies and tumult on earth. He warned them – and us – that these are not indications of His coming again, but are only the beginning of great sorrow and suffering which will precede the Day of the Lord. (Mark 13:5-8a)

Jesus warns specifically against

- False prophets / false Christs (Mark 13:5-6) [see also Matthew 7:15-20 and Acts 20:28-31]  
Teachings / creation of a religion not based on the truth(s) of Christ, give rise to heresies which confuse our faith and understanding of the paradoxes which are part of Christianity

**How do you understand the following paradoxes? Discuss**

- = **God is love, yet God is justice**
- = **We are free, yet God is in control**
- = **We are creatures of time, yet also creatures of eternity**

As Christ-followers we strive to understand our faith yet we can never fully understand our infinite God. We need to see life as a whole. We can only worship, wonder and adore before the ultimate mystery of God

**What are your thoughts and feelings about this last statement? Discuss**

- Nations in conflict, earthquakes and famine (Mark 13:7-8a)  
[optional readings 2Kings 25:2-3 and Ezekiel 6:11]  
Jesus tells us not to be alarmed, these are all what He refers to as “the beginning of birth pains” (Mark 13:8b).

Since the ascension of Jesus we have been living in the (end) times

**What is expected of us, as Christ-followers, as we live in the present, watching and waiting for Christ's return? Discuss (Mark 13:5 and Matthew 28:18-20)**

[optional readings Hebrews 10:19-25 and 1 Samuel 1:10 + 13a]

## **IN CLOSING**

Jesus warned His followers then, and He warns us today, about the future so that we can learn to live in the present, focussing on the moment, and so remain spiritually alert and prepared at all times while we wait for His return.

**How can prayer and loving support make a difference in and to your life?**

## **PRAYER**

Gracious Lord,  
your Son came to bring us good news  
and power to transform our lives.  
Grant that when He comes again to  
judge we may be ready to meet Him with joy.

Amen