



◦ BETWEEN TWO ADVENTS ◦

THE GOSPEL *of* MARK

Week 1
Discipleship Study
Questions



Mark Part 4: Between Two Advents

This Advent, we're turning to Mark 13—one of Jesus' most challenging and misunderstood teachings—to learn what it means to live faithfully “between two Advents.” Rather than giving His disciples a timeline, Jesus offers pastoral wisdom for staying awake, discerning, and steady in a world that often feels like it's shaking. In this chapter, He speaks both to the *near horizon* of the temple's destruction and the early church's trials, and to the *far horizon* of His future return and the renewal of all things.

Through disruption, tribulation, and cosmic upheaval, Jesus invites His followers to endure with courage rather than fear. Week by week, we'll see how He prepares His people for faithfulness— not by predicting dates, but by forming hearts that can stand firm. This series explores what we do when the things we've trusted begin to fall, how we remain discerning in a world full of noise, and where hope is found when life feels uncertain. Ultimately, Advent points us not only back to the manger but forward to the moment when Christ returns in glory. Until then, Jesus calls us to stay awake, live on mission, and hold fast to the hope that the kingdom remains even when everything else shakes.

Read the Scripture:

Individual: Read the passage from two or three different translations.

Group: Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

Speak the Scripture:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

Group: Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

Understand the Scripture:

Individual or Group: Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

Dig Deeper into the Scripture:

Individual: Work through the Digging Deeper questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member if you choose.

Group: Work through the Digging Deeper questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Small Group Guidelines

This is a Safe Group

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware of how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

Listen

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

No Rescuing or Fixing

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

Use "I" Statements

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

Don't Over-Talk

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

Fight for Relationship

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

Week 1

Background: As Jesus leaves the temple in Mark 13:1–8, He shifts His disciples' attention from the majesty of the buildings to the reality of what is coming—both the destruction of the temple and the birth pains of a new age. As we enter the Advent season, we remember that we live between Christ's first coming and His promised return. This passage helps us stay awake to the hope we have in Him, without being overwhelmed by fear or distracted by false signs.

Read: Mark 13:1-8

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

Digging Deeper:

When you think about Advent, which comes more naturally to you: looking back to Jesus' first coming or looking ahead to His second? Why?

The disciples marvel at the grandeur of the temple, but Jesus responds with a prediction of its destruction (vv. 1–2). Why do you think Jesus redirects their attention so sharply? What might this reveal about what matters most to Him?

Jesus describes wars, earthquakes, and famines, yet says, "This is only the beginning of birth pains" (v. 8). What does this metaphor of "birth pains" suggest about God's purposes in times of turmoil?

Where do you personally feel the tension of living “between two Advents”—the world as it is and the world God promises to bring?

In a world filled with alarming headlines, how can Christians respond in a way that reflects trust in God rather than panic or apathy?

End this time with a prayer. Heavenly Father, as we live between Christ’s first coming and His promised return, give us hearts that are watchful, wise, and full of hope. Help us not to fear the turmoil around us but to trust Your presence and Your purposes. During this Advent season, awaken us again to Your grace, Your authority, and Your coming kingdom. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*****NOTE: There will not be discipleship group questions for the weeks of December 21 and December 28. *****