

Weekly Gospel Readings

The 4th Sunday of Mesore

Signs of the End of the Age

On the Fourth Sunday of the blessed month of Mesore, the Church reads [Mark 13:3-37](#). In this reading, Christ provides information about the signs of the end of times, such as the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem ([v. 2](#)), the appearance of false Christ's ([v. 3-6](#)), many wars/natural disasters ([v. 7-8](#)), the occurrence of many afflictions/struggles ([v. 9-13](#)), the appearance of false prophets ([v. 21-23](#)), and the coming down of the Son of Man ([v. 26-27](#)). As the end of the Coptic Year approaches, the Church focuses on readings about the end of times, a reminder to us that life on this Earth is temporary and fleeting. Whether it is the end of the world or the end of our own lives, we must be prepared. From His talk with the disciples, we will focus on two main points: endurance in the face of tribulation and staying awake/ready.

In His talk with the Disciples, Christ emphasizes the importance of having endurance when dealing with difficulties. A life with Christ does not necessarily mean a life with no struggles. In fact, it is quite the contrary. If you look at the history of our Coptic Church, some of the most Holy of Saints were martyred and killed for the sake of Christ. Thus, Jesus tells the Disciples, "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved" ([Mark 13:13](#)). In life, we will face struggle, but as long as we endure and remain steadfast in our faith, we will receive the reward of eternal life.

In the Catholic Epistle from today ([James 4:7-5:5](#)), James emphasizes the importance of remaining loyal to God, even when it may seem difficult. It is written, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." We must resist temptation and always submit ourselves to the will of God, even if there are seemingly easier paths apart from God. As St. Hilary of Poitiers explains, "They are blessed who endure until the goal of perfect happiness is reached, when the expectation of faith reaches toward complete fulfillment." True happiness and fulfillment cannot be reached until we have obtained eternal rest with Christ.

Life on this Earth is temporary. As St. James explains in the Catholic Epistle. "Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." Thus, we must be ready. At any given moment, our lives on this Earth may end and we will be judged by God. Thus, Christ tells the Disciples that they must, "Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come" ([Mark 13:33](#)). By telling the Disciples that no one knows when the time will come, He is encouraging them to continually get more prepared for their Judgement. As St. Athanasius explains:

"Whereas this time is uncertain and always in prospect, we may advance day by day as if summoned, reaching forward to the things before us and forgetting the things behind. For whom, if they knew the day of the end, would not disregard the interval? But if ignorant, would they not be more ready day by day?"

If our time on this Earth were to end today, are we ready? As the Coptic Year ends, let us take the time to contemplate this.

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible, Church Father Commentaries

- Commentaries on the Gospel of St. Mark by Father Tadros Malaty