

WEEK 3 (Mark 1-13)

Moving through Mark's Gospel this week, you're likely to notice some overlap with Matthew's account (by the way, scholars think Mark wrote the first Gospel, and that Matthew and Luke had access to it). There are also differences, like the way Mark begins with the baptism of Jesus. There's no genealogy or 'Christmas story' here; Mark jumps in with Jesus as an adult at the start of His public ministry, and from this point forward, the pace is brisk.

Mark describes Jesus calling disciples (chap 2)—like Levi, who is also known as Matthew (*that* Matthew). Mark knows Jesus is misunderstood by family members (chap 3). Mark also says more than once that Jesus instructs people not to say anything about what He has done for them (for example, 1:43-45)—which seems counter-intuitive. Wouldn't it be smart for Jesus to have as many as possible spreading the news? And yet, He asks them not to. Why might that be?

On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus heals a blind man (10:46-52). A bit later, Mark tells of religious leaders who are looking for ways to kill Jesus (11:18); each of these stories has something to say about seeing, as though Mark wants readers to consider their own view of Jesus.

Jesus will predict Jerusalem's destruction (chap 13) in a way that's reminiscent of ancient prophets—and we're reminded that Jesus is among their number. He is more than a prophet, yes—but He is not less than a prophet, either.

Next week, we'll hear Mark's account of Jesus' last hours with close friends before he is arrested, tried, and crucified. Before that, though, try making a list of parables Jesus tells and miracles He performs. What jumps out when you scan that list?