

Starters or Refreshments: Week 2

Behold!

Aims this week: To look at the life of Jesus and how people reacted to him.
To look at who Jesus is for us

Recap on last week:

The Old Testament is the account of God calling the Israelites into a relationship (covenant).

God says to Abraham: "I will be your God and you will be my people".

The Joseph events: Israelites in slavery, God leads them out of slavery with Moses. Promised land.

Falling away from God. Kingdom(s) fall. People in Exile.

Return from Exile. Promise of a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31 .31-32) "written on your hearts".

Looking to a time when all will *know* God, not just *about* God

Someone will bring this about: a leader or anointed one; Messiah (Hebrew) or Christos (Greek).

The New Testament is the account of the New Covenant.

Mark's Gospel. People's experience of Jesus.

Chapter 1. What is said about Jesus? How do people react to him?

v. 1 Christ, Son of God

v. 2 Link with Old Testament

v. 10 In baptism Jesus identifies with rest of humanity and is filled by the Holy Spirit

v. 11 "You are my Son, the beloved"

v. 18 Simon and Andrew follow Jesus. What does that say about what they thought about him?

v. 21 First impressions in the synagogue?

v. 23 Reaction of the 'unclean spirit'?

v. 35 Jesus' need for space and prayer etc

Emerging themes: busy-ness, popularity, compassion, questioning of 'who is this?', of 'don't tell'.

Some more passages to look at:

Mark 2 .1-12 Jesus heals a Paralytic

Mark 2 .13-17 Jesus calls a Tax Collector

Mark 3 .1 – 6 Jesus heals on the Sabbath

Mark 4 .35-41 Jesus calms the storm

Mark 6 .1-6 Jesus rejected in his home town synagogue

Mark 6 .30-44 The feeding of the Five Thousand

In each: With whom is Jesus associating? How do people react? What questions are being raised?

Chapter 8 : The Big Question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Mark 8 .14 – 21 "Do you not yet understand?"

Mark 8 .22 – 26 A blind man is healed but struggles to make sense of what he sees.

Mark 8 .27 – 30 "Who do people say I am?" and "Who do you say I am?"

Mark 8 .31 – 33 But Peter still doesn't really understand.

Jesus often says, "Don't tell anyone". Why?

1. Everyone expected a very different sort of Messiah. Someone militant to overthrow the Romans. The idea of a strong king like David,
2. People need to make up their mind and not just "follow the crowd". Mark wants us to read the evidence then make up our own mind about Jesus.

Pictures of Jesus. Who do you think he is? See Paul's Letter to the Ephesians Chapter 3 (overleaf)

Ephesians 3

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.