

MARCH through MARK

Plan: Read just four chapters of Mark each week during March, starting March 3 and finishing in time for Easter (March 31).

To help with your reading, below is a breakdown of the book into its main sections, with brief content notes and key verses.

Structure: The book is built around three key revelations – beginning with Jesus’ baptism, turning at his Transfiguration (center of the book), ending with his death & resurrection. With each comes a fuller picture – but often also confusion – about who Jesus is and what he has come to do.

Questions: For each section consider:

- The Messiah as he teaches, heals & suffers to save sinners – how is he *not* as expected and even beyond our hopes?
- The Disciples – Whom does Jesus call? What does it look like for them (us!) to follow him?
- Who believes? How? Mark is full of pictures of those who believe, those who do not, and those slowly coming to see (note these **).

Ch. 1A: The Christ Comes – first confession, declaration

(Confession) *“After me will come one more powerful... [who] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

“You are my Beloved Son, with you I am well pleased”

Ch. 1B-6A: The Christ Announces His Kingdom

“Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.”

“I have not come to call the righteous but sinners”

- 1 – Calls first disciples to follow
 - Kingdom Authority - in word & deed (casts out demons)
- 2 – Who can forgive sins? Who eats with sinners? Who is Lord of the Sabbath?
 - ➔ **** Challenged/rejected** by religious leaders
- 3 – Choosing twelve
 - Two kingdoms (Jesus & Beelzebub)
- 4-6 – Teaching in Parables (some hear, some cannot)
 - Calming the Storm, Healing a Demon-possessed man
 - Healing a sick woman, Raising a dead girl
 - ➔ ****Rejected** in his hometown

Ch. 6-8: Jesus’ Ministry Expands

- 6 – The Twelve sent out (may also be rejected), John martyred
 - 5,000 fed in the desert, walking on water (cf. Red Sea)
- 7-8 – Welcome at the Table? Clean hearts, Canaanite? 4,000
 - ** Visual Parable (of faith): *“I see people...like trees walking around...”*

Ch. 8B-9A: CENTER: The Way of the Cross Announced

(Confession) *“You are the Christ.”*

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

- 8 – Confession: Peter “gets it” ... but not the suffering!
- 9 – TRANSFIGURATION & Descent (Witness of the prophets, affirmation of the Father)
 - “This is my Son—Listen to him!”*
 - ** (Faith of a father): *“I believe, help me overcome my unbelief.”*

Ch. 9-10: The Road to Jerusalem

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” - 10:45

- 9 – Who is greatest? Causing little ones to stumble?
- 10 – Divorce, Welcoming/blessing the little children, The rich young ruler, asking for the best place?
 - ** Blind Bartimaeus – cries for mercy & will not stop!

Ch. 11-13: The King at the Temple

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

- 11 – Entrance. . . . Cleansing the Temple
 - Curse on the Barren Fig Tree (unbelief)
 - Challenge: by whose authority?
- 12 – Faithless Tenants, Three tests for Jesus + Jesus counters
 - ** A Widow’s Faith – giving all
- 13 – Kingdom Coming: Birth pains of the Kingdom
 - Watch!! (disciples prepared to suffer, testify)

Ch. 14-16: The Final March

- 14 – Two suppers/two gifts to remember
 - ** A Woman’s love/generous gift (anointing at Bethany)
 - Jesus gives his body & blood
 - Gethsemane wrestling (*Abba, Father...*), arrested, forsaken
- 15 – Trial, Crucifixion
 - ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’*
 - (Confession): *Surely this man was the Son of God!”*
- 16 – ***“He is risen! Go, tell his disciples....”***