

Gospel of Mark – session 2: Laying the foundations

Begin by reading Mark 1: 1-13

Make a very brief list of the key points in these 13 verses.

Other accounts

If you have time, see the parallel accounts in

- Matthew 3:1-4:11
- Luke 3:1-22, 4:1-13
- John 1:19-34

Assuming that Mark's Gospel was the first to be written, how would you compare it to the other accounts?

The prophecy

Read Isaiah 40:1-11 (you may find it uplifting to read the rest of the chapter too)

Background: it is thought that the previous 39 chapters of Isaiah were written by Isaiah (son of Amoz) in the 8th Century BCE when Judah was threatened by invasion from the Assyrians. However, this section is thought to have been written much later (6th Century BCE) when the Jews were in exile in Babylon.

- How do you think the Jews understood this passage at the time?
- How do we as Christians understand the passage? What references in this passage do we assign to Jesus?
- How might we interpret the passage in current events?

Prepare for discussion

- Why do you think people responded so readily to John the Baptist?
- How would you react to the person of John?
- How would you react to his message?
- Do you think Jesus was already aware of who he was and his destiny?
- If so, when do you think he became aware?
- How do we recognise our identity and purpose in life?
- How should we be signposts to Jesus?
- How can we prepare for mission?