

The Gospel of Mark

Lesson 3

The Tragedy of Unbelief

Jesus did everything that should be expected of the promised Messiah. He fulfilled the O.T. prophecies, He taught with great authority, and He did the signs and wonders that only God can do. Nevertheless, the religious establishment was not believing in Him, and we find that even His own brothers and sisters were not believing in Him (John 7:5). Therefore Jesus explained to His disciples the importance of His spiritual family, and He began teaching in parables that unbelievers didn't understand.

Read Mark 3:7 – 4:34

1. Describe the mixed crowd that followed Jesus in Mark 3:7-10, 20. Can you feel the press of the great crowd that pushed in on Him?
2. What was the purpose of the inner circle of 12 disciples in Mark 3:14?
3. Who came from Jerusalem to spy on Jesus and cause trouble (Mark 3:22-30; Matt 12:14)? What outrageous charge did they bring against Jesus (Mark 3:22)?
4. What was Jesus' logical defense in Mark 3:23-27? What was His warning against their unbelief in 3:28-29?
5. Who came to inhibit Jesus' ministry, and "take custody of Him" in Mark 3:21 and 3:31-35? Comparing these passages to John 7:5, does it seem like His family was believing in Jesus' ministry at this point?

6. What is the purpose statement that Jesus gave for speaking in parables in Mark 4:10-12? At this point in His ministry, Jesus was getting various reactions from preaching the Word of God so he explained the different responses with the parable of the sower and the soils.

7. What are the four different soils in Mark 4:3-20? Notice the sower (Jesus) and the seed (the Word) remain the same, but the soils are all different. What people in Jesus' audience could equate to the four different soils?

8. In order to further explain the importance of bearing "fruit", Jesus told the parable of the lamp in Mark 4:21-25. Equating the ministry of the disciples to the light of the lamp, what was their stewardship?

9. The parable of the seed growing gradually in 4:26-29, is only found in the Gospel of Mark. Compare this parable to 1 Peter 1:23-25. Do you think Jesus is referring to the growth of the early church, or the spiritual growth in a believer?

10. Even though His disciples couldn't always understand, they asked questions and sought out the interpretations of the parables. Does Mark 4:34 explain what He meant in 4:11-13? In what way is the kingdom like a mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32)?