

SAMPLE SURVEY OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Sample Survey of the Gospel of Mark

- I. General Materials: Biographical
- II. Structure: (A) Main Units and Sub-units

S U P E R S C R I P T I O N	MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST	MINISTRY OF JESUS		
			PERSON/IDENTITY OF JESUS	PASSION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS
1:1	1:2 - 13	1:14-15	1:16 ————— 8:30	8:31 ————— 16:8

GENERAL ENCAPSULATION OF JESUS' MESSAGE

(B) Major Structural Relationships, and Interpretive Questions

①. Movement from General to Particular (Particularization): Superscription

1.1. General Heading
to the Book –
“Beginning of the
Gospel of Jesus
Christ, Son of God”



1.2 – 16:8 Specifics, or specific content,
of the beginning of the gospel of Jesus
Christ, Son of God

Questions:

- a. What are the major elements in the superscription of 1:1, and what is the precise meaning of each? How does Mark's account in 1:2 – 16:8 provide specific content to the general heading of 1:1, and illumine 1:1? How does the superscription of 1:1 illumine 1:2 – 16:8, i.e., How does it provide an orientation for understanding 1:2-16:8 in the large and individual passages throughout 1:2 -16:8?
- b. Why did the evangelist provide this general heading for his book? And why did he develop it as he did in 1:2-16:8?
- c. Implications? (i.e., What are theological implications of the answers to the questions above?)

Definitive
Qs

Rational
Qs

② Introduction (Preparation/Realization)

1.2 - 13 - The Ministry of John the Baptist- provides background or setting for the main concern of the book, viz., the ministry of Jesus (Preparation)



1.14 – 16:8 – Realization for which 1:2-13 is the introduction, or preparation

Questions:

- a. What are the major components of this description of the ministry of John the Baptist in 1:2-13, and what is the meaning of each? How does this description of John's ministry provide background and illumination to Mark's presentation of Jesus' ministry in 1:14- 16:8? How does John's Ministry prepare the people and Jesus for the Ministry of Jesus, according to Mark's gospel?
- b. Why did Mark thus introduce the ministry of Jesus by this description of John's ministry? Why, according to Mark's Gospel, did the ministry of John, as described here, thus prepare the people and Jesus for the work of Jesus that follows?
- c. Implications?

Definitive
Qs

Rational
Qs

③. Movement from General to Particular (Particularization) : Encapsulation

1. 14-15 – General
Encapsulation of
Jesus' Message
(General)

Given special content throughout
1:16-16:8 , specifies what it means
that “the time is fulfilled, and the
kingdom of God is at hand; repent,
and believe in the gospel”
(Particulars)

Questions:

- Definitive Qs
 - a. What is the precise meaning of the main components in 1:14-15, and how is each developed, or given specific content, throughout 1:16-16:8? How is the material in 1:16-16:8 Illumined by the general encapsulation of 1:14-15?
- Rational Qs
 - b. Why did the Evangelist set this encapsulation over the specifics of Jesus' message and ministry in 1:16-16:8 as he has? Why, according to Mark's Gospel, did Jesus proclaim the message set forth in 1:14-15 and develop it as he did?
 - c. Implications?

④. Repetition (Recurrence) of the Theme of Secrecy

* Repeatedly Jesus commands silence on the part of demons who know him as Son of God (1:25, 34; 3:11-12), or on the part of the disciples who confess him as Christ (8:30), or on the part of persons who have been healed (1:43-45; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, but see 5:19-20; cf. 9:9, 30)

Questions:

- a. What is the meaning of each of these commands to silence? How are these individual instances related to each other and how do they illumine each other? Is there a development in this series of commands to silence, and if so, what is the meaning of this development?
- b. Why, according to Mark's gospel, did Jesus thus repeatedly issue this command to silence where and how he has?
- c. Implications?

Definitive
Qs

Rational
Qs

⑤ Repetition (Recurrence) of Difference (Contrast)

Between Jesus and the Religious (And Political) Leaders:
Conflict (2:6-8, 15 – 3:6,20-30; 6:14-29; 7:1-23; 8:11-13, 31; 9:30-32; 10:32-34; 11:18, 27-33; 12:1-27, 38-40; 14:43 – 15:39)

And Between Jesus and the Disciples, who in contrast to Jesus are presented as hard-hearted and without understanding (6:45-52, 8:14-21, 32-33; 9:14-29, 38-41; 10:13-16, 35-45; 14:26-50, 53-72)

Questions:

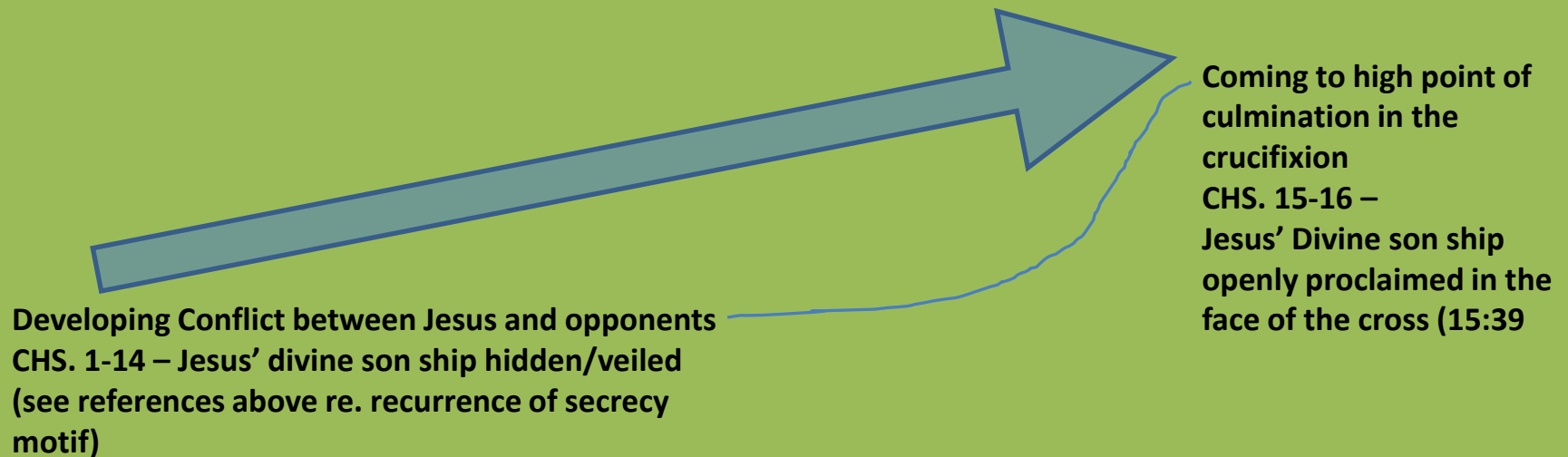
- a. What are the major components in the difference between Jesus and the religious (and political) authorities throughout Mark's Gospel, and what is the meaning of each of these components? Is there a development in the conflict/differences between Jesus and the authorities, and if so, what is the meaning of this development? How are the major aspects of the differences between Jesus and the authorities related to each other, and how do they illumine one another?
What is the specific meaning of the differences between Jesus' understanding and heart-attitude and that of the disciples throughout Mark? How are the various aspects of these differences between Jesus and the disciples related, and how do they illumine each other?

Definitive
Qs

- b. Why did these differences (including conflict) between Jesus and the authorities exist, and take the form they did, according to Mark's Gospel? Why did the conflict develop as it did? Why did Mark thus present these differences and relate them to one another as he did?
Why these differences between heart-attitude and understanding on the part of Jesus versus his disciples, according to Mark's Gospel? Why did Mark present these differences between Jesus and his disciples as he has?
- c. Implications?

⑥. Climax with Contrast

(Related to Recurrence of Contrast between Jesus and opponents; and Recurrence of Secrecy Motif)



Questions:

Definitive
Qs

- a. Exactly how does the Narrative of Mark's Gospel build toward the high point of culmination in Jesus' crucifixion? How does the climax of the crucifixion illumine Mark's narrative in the large as well as individual passages throughout CHS. 1-14? How does the development in CHS. 1-14 illumine the crucifixion? What is the meaning of the change from the hiddenness /secrecy of Jesus' Divine sonship in CHS. 1-14 to the breaking of the secret by the centurion in 15:39?

Rational
Qs

- b. Why did Mark thus bring his narrative to a high point of culmination in the crucifixion? Why did he introduce this shift from secrecy to proclamation of Jesus' divine sonship as he has? Why, according to Mark's Gospel, did the ministry of Jesus thus culminate in the crucifixion?
- c. Implications?

III. Questions – See above under II.

IV. Key Verses/Strategic Areas

(A) 1:1,14-15 – Represents Particularization

(B) 1:2-13 – Represents Introduction

(C) 1:34; 8:30 – Represents Recurrence of Secrecy Motif

(D) 3:6; 14:1 – Represents recurrence of contrast between Jesus and Religious (Political) Leaders

(E) 15:33-39 – Represents Climax

V. Higher – Critical Data

We note, for example, that the author apparently knew Aramaic; but that his readers (at least generally) did not. He thus translates Aramaic terms in to Greek (5:41; 15:22, 34), (Relates to author and audience.)

VI. Other Major Impressions

(A) Although Jesus repeatedly refers to himself as “Son of Man,” no one else in Mark’s Gospel refers to Jesus by this designation (2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62)

(B) This Gospel is characterized by fast-paced action, indicated, among other things, by the repeated use of “immediately” (e.g., 1:10,12,17,20,21,19,30,42; 2:8,12; 5:30, 42; 6:27, 45, 50, 54; 7:25)