

PARTIAL INTERPRETATION: MARK 8:22-10:52

3.19

This is a *partial* (only) presentation of my work on the first framing section of the *inclusio* surrounding Mark 8:22-10:52 (meaning Mark 8:22-26). *Its meant to illustrate making observations and drawing basic inferences as part of conducting Interpretation work.*

An excerpt from my Survey of 8:22-10:52

Primary Structure #1: Inclusio

Opening Frame → Mark 8:22-26 Jesus heals a blind person	Central Section Mark 8:27-10:45	← Closing Frame Mark 10:46-52 Jesus heals a blind person
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Partial (only) Set of Interpretive Questions (In this video, I answer Question 1 with regard to 8:22-26 as model for how to do IBS Interpretation. For your assignment, I'm asking you to begin by answering Question 1 with regard to 10:46-52. Therefore, Question 1 is stated a bit differently in your assignment than what I have here.)

- 1. What are the key components of *each* framing section (8:22-26; 10:46-52) and what do they mean?**
2. In what ways are 8:22-26 and 10:46-52 alike? In what ways do they differ? (*Use my Interpretation work on 8:22-26 and your work on 10:46-52 as the basis for this work.*)
3. What is the meaning of these similarities/differences?
4. How do the similarities and differences between the framing sections help us understand the meaning of the content between the framing sections in 8:27-10:45?

#1. What are the key components of the first framing section and what do they mean?

Mark 8:22-26

I see four components in this event: (These are my **Anchor Points**; This answers the ID portion of my question: “What *are the key components . . . ?*”)

1. Setting 22a
2. Healing Phase 1 22b-24
3. Healing Phase 2 25
4. Aftermath 26

1. Setting 22a (Now I am answering the *meaning* portion of my question: “*what do they mean?*” I begin by *gathering evidence* and drawing *basic inferences* from the evidence.)

- a. Event takes place in Bethsaida
- b. At minimum, this marks a shift of scene from what came before
- c. No explicit significance is attached to Bethsaida
- d. Possibly it took place just when they entered. But text does not make this clear, indicating exactly when this event took place or where it happened in Bethsaida is not significant.
- e. IOW, Mark only calls attention to the fact that it took place in this city.

2. Healing Phase 1 22b-24

- a. A few unspecified people take two actions **all 22b**
 - i. bring a blind man to J
 - ii. beg him J to “touch” the man
 1. no meaning is provided to indicate the significance of “touch”
 2. context (J’s repeated episodes of healing by J’s touch [1:41; 3:10; 7:33] or expectations of healing by touching J or his clothing [5:27-31; 6:56] and that fact that the man was blind) indicates they wanted J to touch the man and thereby heal him
 3. these actions indicate an expectation on the part of these actors that

- a. J is capable *and* willing to touch/heal the non-seeing man
- b. J takes three actions (all expressed by verbs in Gk) **all 23**
 - i. ACTION 1: led (perfect tense) the blind man
 - 1. *Location, direction* outside the village
 - 2. *Absence of stated purpose* no reason is specified for this action
 - 3. *Means of action* leads the man by grasping his hand
 - a. Necessary because the man cannot see to walk along
 - b. May indicate personal investment on J's part; he doesn't tell the people (or anyone else) who brought the man to lead the blind man; J does it himself
 - ii. ACTION 2: spits (my mother told me never to spit; but Jesus does it; go figure ☺)
 - 1. Into blind man's unseeing eyes
 - 2. I infer here that spittle was thought to have some healing effect (cf. 7:33)
 - iii. ACTION 3: repeatedly asks the man a question
 - 1. *Circumstance* took the man's hand
 - a. no reason is specified for doing this
 - b. may have been to get the man's attention
 - 2. *Nature of asking* expressed in imperfect; **not a one time question**; may indicate persistence on J's part or that it took a while for the blind man to answer
 - 3. *Content of question*
 - a. Simple, non-specific question
 - b. Asks if the man can see anything at all (no eye chart with letters in decreasing size; no asking if he can see better with A or with B)
 - c. May indicate the man had been able to see at some point (otherwise how would he know what seeing was).
 - d. I want to be careful about making too much of a question Mark states in briefest fashion
- c. non-seeing man replies **all 24**

- i. *accompanying circumstance* man looks up no significance seems to be attached to this actions since this action not related to any other stated posture; may indicated (based on his statement) that this action resembled looking around
- ii. Response the man does in fact see
 - 1. *Object of seeing* people
- iii. *Qualification of response by comparison* “but”
 - 1. seen people are like trees
 - a. means he can’t make them out as people; vision indefinite
 - b. indicates he knows what people look like
 - 2. “trees” are moving
 - a. must be somewhere where people are around
 - b. went out of Bethsaida, but are still where people are

3. Healing Phase 2 all v. 25

- a. J’s action
 - i. repeated action *again* J does this
 - ii. J places hand on blind man’s eyes
 - 1. in Phase 1 J did not touch man’s eyes; he spit on them
- b. blind man’s 3 actions as a result;
 - i. he saw clearly
 - 1. **character of sight in contrast with Phase 1: unclear v. clear**
 - ii. he was restored
 - iii. he saw everything clearly
 - 1. **degree of clarity** everything

4. Aftermath v. 26 all

- a. Jesus two command to seeing person
 - i. go home = basic command

1. the significance of this statement is not clear; where else would the man go? Why is this command necessary?
- ii. manner of going home (NEG)
 1. NEG command: do not go into any villages on his way home
- b. No report if man did so.
- c. No reasons are given for twofold command
- d. Apart from some explanatory comment I cannot place too much emphasis on this concluding command; doesn't mean it isn't significant; it just means that I don't see *Mark* calling attention to it.

SUMMARY (Work for *clarity*!)

- This is a fairly bare bones healing episode, meaning Mark provides little in the way of details: a city is named without comment, “some” undefined/unspecified people bring a blind man to Jesus, and so on.
- **The only aspect of the episode that receives any elaboration is the two-stage, gradual nature of healing process of the blind man. I take this as Mark's way of emphasizing this particular aspect of this healing narrative over against other aspects of the story. See points #2 and #3 above.**