

Segment Survey: Mark 1:1–15

8.16

I. Major Divisions

1	3	4	8	9	11	12	13	14	15
Gospel beginning; Prepare the Way!		John preaches, Baptizes in wilderness		Jesus baptized, ‘christened’ “beloved Son”		Spirit takes Jesus to wilderness		Time fulfilled! Kingdom at hand!	

[Titles = no more than five words each; meant to accurately capture the content of the passage in a memorable fashion.]

II. Primary Structures and Interpretive Questions

[Note that for each structure, I clearly identify the structure (e.g. “inclusio”), cite evidence for each component of the structure citing chapter and verse, and I ask questions *of the structure* and list them *immediately* below my structure.]

Primary Structure 1. Preparation/realization

Preparation

1:1–3 wilderness messenger

to prepare the way of the Lord

⇒

Realization

1:4–15 John prepares, Jesus arrives

What are the key elements of the preparation? (definition/identification)

What does each mean? (definition)

What are the key elements of the realization? (definition/identification)

What does each mean? (definition)

How do the specific elements of the preparation section prepare us for the specific elements of the realization section? (mode)

How do the specific elements of the realization illuminate the preparation? (mode)

Why does the author use this preparation/realization structure? (reason)

What are the full implications of this structure for the original readers? For us today? (implications)

[Note that I ask certain kinds of question (noted in parentheses), *about the structure*, in a particular order. All three of these factors are *important*.]

Primary Structure 2. Inclusio involving the terms “gospel” and “king”/“kingdom”

1:1	gospel of Jesus Christ	↔	1:14	gospel of God
			1:15	gospel (object of belief)

1:1	“son of God” = king	↔	1:15	“kingdom”
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What are the key framing elements for this segment? (identification)

What do these terms mean in each of these occurrences? Do they always mean the same thing? (definition)

How does framing this passage using these terms illuminate the material in between? (mode)

How does the material in between this framing material illuminate the latter? (mode)

Why does the author use these terms to frame the passage? (reasons)

What are the full implications of this inclusio? (implications)

[Note that I ask certain kinds of question (noted in parentheses), *about the structure*, in a particular order. All three of these factors are *important*.]

Primary Structure 3. Comparison 1

John and Jesus portrayed alike, using same verbs

<i>John 1:4-8</i>	↔	<i>Jesus 1:9-15</i>
a. Appears in wilderness 4	↔	goes to wilderness 12-13
ἐγένετο		ἐγένετο
b. Preaching described 4, 7	↔	preaching described 14-15
Both call for repentance		
κηρυσσων . . . μετανοίας		κηρυσσων . . . μετανοεῖτε

Yet, Jesus clearly superior to John

(involving a comparison that distinguishes the two, but which designates qualities that differ in degree [hence comparison], not kind [which would be contrast])

- John *prepares* the way for the κυριος (v. 3) = he appears, carries out his task successfully, the recedes.
- Jesus, now prepared for, takes center stage
- John's role limited but critical, Jesus' role the focal point

In what ways are John and Jesus alike? In what ways do they differ? (identification)

What do these similarities and differences mean? (definition)

In what ways are these similarities alike? In what ways are they different? (mode)

Why does the author draw attention to these similarities/differences? (reasons)

What are the full implications of these similarities/differences? (implications)

4. Primary Structure 4. Comparison 2

These events (1:4-15) = those spoken of by Isaiah (1:1-3)

What questions would you ask about this structure?

III. Strategic areas

- 1:2-3 key *preparation* and *comparison* 2 statements
 1:14, 15 key statements of *inclusion* in Jesus' preaching

[Note how I select a *few* verses **and I justify each choice based upon my structures.**]

IV. Observations

1. The “gospel”, however Mark goes on to define it, concerns Jesus Christ, Son of God.
 1:1. No definition of “gospel” would be valid apart from this individual, so defined (as “SoG”).
 - The genitive “of Jesus Christ” could mean either “the gospel *about* Jesus Christ” or “the gospel *preached by* Jesus Christ” (note emphasis on Jesus preaching 1:14-15)
2. The “gospel” mostly gains definition from Isaiah 40 where the coming of this messenger who will prepare the way of the Lord is foretold. In other words, Mark begins (a significant point) defining this “gospel” by citing Isaiah. In what way is this quotation significant for defining what is about to take place? 1:2–3
3. Isaiah’s messenger apparently prepares the way for the Lord by calling for repentance for forgiveness of sins, apparently embodied by baptism. 1:4–5
4. Jesus baptism differs from that of Judea/Jerusalem folks because
 - Judea/Jerusalem baptism in water 1:5
 - Jesus baptism in water *and* in (ἐν w/dative) Holy Spirit 1: 8, 9, 10
 - What is the significance of the H. S. for Jesus’ baptism?
 - How does that distinguish Jesus’ baptism from the baptism of those from Jud/Jer?
5. Jesus is noted as from Galilee (location possibly significant as noted in book survey)
6. Jesus’ divine sonship emphasized

1:1 by Mark

1:11 by heavenly voice

What does divine ‘sonship’ mean in this context?

7. John the Baptist plays a significant role in this passage, but has almost no role in what follows. See 6:14–29; 9:13; 11:30.
8. Satan (v. 13) also plays a major role in this passage, though does not appear directly in the rest of the gospel.
9. wilderness repeated
1:3, 4 John
1:12, 13 Jesus
Meaning/significance of ‘wilderness’ emphasis?
10. The narrator attributes the scriptural quotation of 2b-3 to Isaiah
 - V. 3 is Is. 40:3
 - 2b comes from Mal.3:1 and Ex. 23:20
 - Why is all attributed to Isaiah?
 - Isaiah is the only names source for a scriptural quotation in Mark (see

V. Interaction with secondary sources

[Note that I accurately document where I found my information. Not also that I am concerned with the structure of this short segment *as a whole* rather than examining this or that detail.]

Joel Marcus. *Mark 1–8*. AB 27A. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

- Marcus labels 1:1-15 as the “Prologue” (137).
- He cites scholars that see the end of the prologue at 1:13. Key arguments
 - Spirit no longer mentioned in 14-15; prominent in 1-13
 - Change in grammar with first words of v. 14

- Change of local from wilderness to Galilee
- Marcus argues for an ending at v. 15
 - Double occurrence of “gospel” forms an emphatic inclusio with 1:1-2 (all above from p. 137)
 - 12-13 imply Satan defeated; part of “good news” in 14-15 = announcement of God’s victory (straddles 137-138)
 - “to proclaim” and “to come” in 14-15 tie to same verbs in 1:4, 7, 9
 - Jesus’ call to repentance recalls John’s call to repentance in 1:4
- In the end, Marcus sees it as wise to see 1:14-15 as transition, both ending what began at 1:1 and beginning what proceeds from 1:14-45
- My assessment is that Marcus is a wise man ☺ Most of his reasons for placing the primary divide at 1:15 while at the same time seeing 1:14-15 as transitional I have found myself.
- Marcus sees two sections within 1:1-15 (all on 138)
 - 1:1-8 dealing with JB
 - 1:9-15 dealing with Jesus
 - I would separate 1:1-3 since these prepare us for the information on JB and Jesus. I could go with his broad division of the material on JB and Jesus, though I see smaller divisions within the section on Jesus that I outline and support above.