

Interpretation Questions

1. What are the key components of the second framing section (10:46-52) and what does each mean?

A. Setting and Actors, vv. 46

- i. The healing takes place as Jesus is leaving Jericho
- ii. The text indicates that Jesus came to Jericho and then left – he does not seem to have stayed long or done much else that Mark feels is significant in Jericho
- iii. There does not seem to be any significance tied to this taking place in Jericho – though it helps mark it as a separate unit of text and continues Jesus’s journey toward Jerusalem from northern Israel which began in Mark 8
- iv. The text names 4 people or groups present in the unit:
 - a. Jesus
 - b. His disciples
 - c. A great crowd
 - d. Bartimaeus – it is interesting that the blind man has a name in this miracle and that even his father is named; perhaps the man or his father were of some reputation that makes them worthy of naming – though the text gives no specific indication that this is the case
- v. Bartimaeus is sitting at the roadside

B. Bartimaeus’s Cry, vv. 47-48

- i. Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is passing by
- ii. Bartimaeus cries out to Jesus calling him “Son of David” indicating that Jesus has a wide-spread reputation and a reputation as one tied to prophecies of Israel’s royal lineage
- iii. **Bartimaeus asks for mercy, not for healing**
- iv. The crowd rebukes Bartimaeus telling him to be quiet – initially this seems to suggest oppression against the blind man, but v. 49 indicates that is not likely the case (see C.iii below)
- v. Bartimaeus cries out louder, repeating his request for mercy verbatim – which indicates a great level of faith

C. Jesus Hears, vv. 49-50

- i. Jesus stops, indicating that he was passing by Bartimaeus on the roadside – he was en route and was not looking for people to heal
- ii. Jesus says (to no one in particular) to call the beggar – so Jesus must have heard Bartimaeus’s cries over the cacophony of noises made by a large crowd of people
- iii. The crowd tells Bartimaeus to “take heart” that Jesus is calling him – this indicates that the crowd’s harshness before was not contempt for the beggar but perhaps rather esteem for Jesus.

iv. **Bartimaeus “sprang” up and goes to Jesus – so much enthusiasm, hope and faith!**

D. Bartimaeus’s Request, v. 51

- i. Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants – this seems like an odd question; one would assume that it would be obvious what the beggar would want...
- ii. Finally granted an audience with Jesus, Bartimaeus asks Jesus to heal his sight

E. The Outcome(s), v. 52

- i. Jesus says two things to Bartimaeus
 - a. “Go your way” – Jesus puts no demands on Bartimaeus but sets him free to live his life
 - b. **“Your faith has made you well” – the faith Bartimaeus showed in the desperation of his cry is the reason Jesus heals him**
- ii. Mark concludes this section with parallel responses to Jesus’s statements to Bartimaeus
 - a. Bartimaeus does indeed regain his sight, as Jesus promised
 - b. **More interestingly, given his freedom to “go his way,” Bartimaeus chooses instead to follow Jesus!**

Summary

- 1. Jesus was passing by a man who refused to be overlooked and cried out louder than the crowd asking for mercy.
- 2. This faith is the reason Jesus sites for the beggar’s healing, and it is also the reason the healed beggar follows Jesus.
- 3. **Many people have been healed so far in Mark, but this is the first one who chooses to follow Jesus after being healed. The faith of the beggar is the recurring theme in this segment, and it informs the outcome where the unique aspect is not what Jesus does but what the one who is healed does.**

2. *Based on my Interpretation work on 8:22-26 (Video #3 above), in what ways are 8:22-26 and 10:46-52 alike? In what ways do they differ? Displaying similarities and differences in succinctly stated points arranged in parallel columns, with descriptive labels defining the similarities/differences, is expected.*

Note: Mark 8:22-26 will be referred to as Passage A and Mark 10:46-52 as Passage B

Similarities	Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Healings:</i> Perhaps it goes without saying, but both stories are of men regaining their ability to see • <i>Locations:</i> The locations of both healings are noted, but neither seems to be significant • <i>Outside the Village:</i> both healings take place outside the village; though in A Jesus takes the blind man there, while in B the beggar is already outside • <i>Sending:</i> Jesus sends both blind men on their way having restored their sight • <i>Personal Interaction:</i> In some healings in Mark the individual being healed may not say or do anything (e.g. – 3:1ff, the man with a withered hand); in both of these stories the focus is not on Jesus's power to heal but rather on another aspect of the personal interactions between Jesus and the blind men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Role of the Crowd:</i> In passage A, the crowd brings the blind man to Jesus; in passage B, the crowd initially tries to silence the beggar from bothering Jesus • <i>Attribution of the Healing:</i> in A the healing seems to be attributed to the laying on of Jesus's hands, while in B, Jesus does not lay hands on the beggar, but rather the healing is attributed to the beggar's faith • <i>Efficacy of Jesus's Healing:</i> Jesus's healing in A requires multiple attempts (though no explanation is given for why), while in B only one attempt is necessary • <i>Response:</i> The blind man in A goes home (we assume), as instructed; the blind man in B follows Jesus • <i>Reverence for Jesus:</i> The blind man in A does not show any particular regard for Jesus's social stature; the man in B refers to him as "Son of David" and "Rabbi" • <i>Focus of the Narrative:</i> In A Jesus is the main focus of the narrative with attention to his words and actions; in B the narrative focuses on the blind man – he even has a name!

3. *What is the significance of these similarities/differences?*

A. Similarities

- a. There does not strike me as much in the way of significance regarding the scant similarities in these stories
- b. Perhaps *the* significant aspect of both stories is simply that they are healing miracles regarding the ability to see – since they from the opening and closing of an *inclusio*, this similarity should not be overlooked

B. Differences:

- a. Perhaps the most significant difference is the attribution of the healing – the beggar's faith – in fact the other differences hinge on this difference:
 - i. The focus of the story is on the beggar rather than Jesus which is consistent with the beggar's faith being the central point of the story
 - ii. The beggar's reverence for Jesus is seen multiple times – he refers to Jesus as “Son of David” twice accompanied by a cry for mercy, and he calls Jesus “Rabbi”
 - iii. Jesus sites the blind man's faith as the reason for the healing
 - iv. The man's faith results in him following Jesus rather than just returning home
- b. The outcome of B (the beggar's choice to follow Jesus) is the biggest focus of the story; **the beggar's faith does not end with the healing but continues to change his life.**