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NT(IBS)511 X1-Miller

Module 10 Assignment

Notes:

\*All work was done while consulting the following approved translations: NIV, NRSV, ESV

\*\* Any time there is a reference to James and John as a single unit, they will be referred to as Boanerges. (cf. Mark 3:17)

Preliminary Work; 35-36 (setting/contextualization):

a. Boanerges approaches Christ and states that they have a request (35)

i. Mark is introducing the main players of the scene (James and John, sons of Zebedee, and Jesus)

ii. “Then (NIV)” / “And (ESV)” indicates a continuation

* Mark is denoting that this part of the passage occurs at approximately the same place and time as the 3rd prediction in 32-34.
* This also implies to the reader that Boanerges was approaching Christ with others nearby rather than speaking openly amongst the group.

iii. By prefacing the request with “…do for us whatever we ask…,” Boanerges indicates that they understood that their request was not appropriate and might cause friction between them and others (Christ included).

* *This may be an editorial addition by Mark as:*
  + *it does not provide much substance without knowledge of the ill-request to come very soon.*
  + *even with that knowledge, it does not necessarily provide a sense of misunderstanding on the side of Boanerges but does indicate a self-serving nature within the pair.*

b. Christ responds with a non-affirmative, non-dismissive asking of what Boanerges wants (35)

Summary: Mark uses these first two verses to provide a contextual segue into the “meat” of this section of text, by establishing a continuity between this passage and that of 32-34. Mark also paints the pair, Boanerges, in a negative light from the beginning, potentially for the purpose of drawing the reader’s attention to the folly of the pair’s (and later, all the Disciples’) actions.

1. **Identify and define the elements of the misunderstanding of Jesus' passion prediction (and therefore of the meaning of Jesus' messianic identity).**

**1a. What the key elements of the misunderstanding of Jesus' passion prediction (and therefore of the meaning of Jesus' messianic identity)?**

I see 3 key components of misunderstanding in Mark’s description of the events following the 3rd Passion Prediction:

1. Boanerges’ Request; 37

2. Boanerges’ Response to Christ; 39a

3. Disciples’ Attitude Toward Boanerges; 41

**1b. What does each of these key elements mean?**

**1. Boanerges’ Request; 37**

a. Boanerges asks that Jesus would allow each of them a position of prominence/authority in his coming reign.

i. “Let … us” shows a belief of Boanerges that Christ is the ‘shot-caller’ for these coming events.

ii. **The pair indicates their belief that Christ’s reign will involve a subjugation of others, by desiring the first seats of “[his] right and … [his] left.”**

* **This implies a belief that there will be a hierarchy within the reign of Christ wherein one may rule over another.**

iii. *By use of the succeeding statement, “your glory,” while displaying the previously mentioned attitude of Christ being the ‘shot-caller,’ Boanerges does show an understanding/belief of Christ as ruler or Messiah.*

**2. Boanerges’ Response to Christ; 39a**

a. Boanerges expresses a simple belief that they can partake of Christ’s “cup and baptism.”

**i. In a concise manner, the pair displays that not only had they not understood what Christ’s role and purpose really was to begin with, but also now, they had utterly missed the point of Jesus’ response.**

*ii. The pair believes that Jesus speaks in terms of the physical world, and not in terms of ‘kingdom.’*

*iii. This reflects the same attitude that Peter displayed in 8:32, as Boanerges’ minds are focus on human concerns, i.e. the concerns of this world, instead of that which is to come.*

**3. Disciples’ Attitude Toward Boanerges; 41**

a.

i.

1. **Identify and define the elements of Jesus' correction of that misunderstanding.**

**2a. What the key elements of Jesus' correction of that misunderstanding?**

I see 3 key components of correction in Mark’s description of the events following the 3rd Passion Prediction:

1. Christ’s Rhetorical Response; 38

2. Christ’s More Direct Response; 39b-40

3. Earthly Greatness vs. Heavenly Greatness; 42-45

**2b. What does each of these key elements mean?**

**1. Christ’s Rhetorical Response; 38**

a. The immediate response from Jesus is “you don’t know…”

i. While not delivering a reorientation of understanding, Jesus is quick to state that Boanerges’ beliefs/understandings are flawed.

b. Jesus asks Boanerges if any two people can serve one another’s purpose *(analogy with the cup)*

i. In sculpting Jesus’ immediate response to the pairs ill-conceived request, Mark points toward the idea of purpose.

ii. This implies that two people will be rewarded in kind for the merits of their own work for the Father, but that no one besides the Father can prescribe due reward for missional work.

* Different cups = different purpose
* Different purpose yield different rewards

iii. In other words, *Jesus seems to mean “I cannot give you my purpose, therefore I cannot give you my reward. Seek the purpose of the Father for your life.”*

c. Jesus further asks if the pair can be gifted with his gifts, “baptized with the baptism [he] is baptized with…”

i. **This reinforces the aforementioned ideas of individuals being purported for different missional work.**

ii. Christ implies that no two people can have one another’s baptism, or in other words, no two people will gain one another’s spiritual gifts.

* Different baptisms = different equipment

d. **Mark seems to paint the picture that throughout Christ’s rhetorical questions and metaphorical response, he is explaining to Boanerges that he is not, in fact, the ‘shot-caller,’ but that the Father, who is the One to purpose and equip individuals for missional work, is the One who prescribes rewards in the coming “glory.”**

**2. Christ’s More Direct Response; 39b-40**

a. Christ changes his approach to explanation; 39b

i. Christ seemingly concedes that the pair will share these aspects of missional service with him *(the cup and baptism)*.

* **Mark uses the repeated verbiage to indicate that Christ is no longer speaking rhetorically, but more directly to the current understanding of the pair.**
  + This indicates a likely change of meaning.
  + **Christ is being more literal in saying that Boanerges will be baptized by the Holy Spirit and will serve a heavenly purpose, but maintains that it will be separate, in a sense, from his own.**

b. Christ clarifies the point that he is not the ‘shot-caller,’ and does not have the authority to grant Boanerges’ request; (40)

i. “Not for me to grant” = Literal, direct assertion that they misunderstand what Christ’s ‘position’ as Messiah is.

* Also indicates that the hierarchy of Heaven will not reflect the same type of rule as those of earth
  + Christ indicates there will be a right and left seat to him in glory, implying that he will rule/reign.
  + Christ shows that his rule is given to him, not taken by him, as he does not have the authority to assign certain roles within the heavenly hierarchy.

**ii. Jesus indicates here that he is, for lack of better terminology, subservient to God the Father, and that there is a structure to these events that even he cannot change.**

**iii. “for whom they have been prepared” = past tense; Christ implies that the plan of future events, and the results of these events, has already been established.**

c. Mark is indicating the desire by Christ to bring the pair to true understanding by elaborating on the multiple teaching approaches taken.

i. *Those without understanding have previously often been left to ponder a subject, but here Jesus’ change to an overtly direct approach indicates an urgency to help these ones understand.*

**3. Earthly Greatness vs. Heavenly Greatness; 42-45**

a.

i.

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**SUMMARY:** **Mark has intertwined the indications of misunderstanding with correction by Christ through exemplary lessons. By informing the Twelve (and others) of the actual nature of true discipleship, Christ strips the disciples of the delusion that discipleship is simple, indicating that sacrifices will have to be made.**

1. **How does the disciples' misunderstanding and Jesus' correction of that misunderstanding help us understand what it means to recognize Jesus as the "Christ"?**

* Christ has explained that discipleship is a lifestyle rooted in sacrifice of self to greater purpose.
* Christ’s correction of the manner by which mankind places value on certain things/ideas indicates that we are to see beyond ourselves.
* Christ implies that disciples are to model sacrificial nature by emulating him, and the way he serves the Father.
* Christ’s allusion to the purpose of his sacrifice being to save souls, accompanied by the implication that only he was sufficient for such a purpose, models the process of serving a greater purpose.

**SUMMARY:** **Through this passage, and the sequences of misunderstanding and correction, Mark builds the idea of Jesus as “Christ” by purporting him to be the ultimate model of a disciple, as he is a disciple to the Father and serves the greater purpose of redeeming mankind.**