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NT(IBS)511 Mark

Module 5 Assignment

Segment Survey (Mark 3:20-35)

\*\*\*Primary Source was a non-study Bible (NIV)

**I. Major Divisions**

1. Christ Labeled Insane/Possessed *[3:20-3:22]*

-- Single geographical setting indicated for the entire segment, so division are based on events within.

-- Two similar events occur. Christ’s family labels Jesus “out of his mind,” and the teacher of the law label Jesus “possessed.” Both are in order to explain his recent activity.

2. Christ Responds; The Eternal Sin *[3:23-3:30]*

-- A single, distinguishing event: Christ refutes the Pharisees and warns against saying the Holy Spirit is impure.

3. The Family of Christ *[3:31-3:35]*

-- Tonal change in writing. Atmosphere becomes less grave.

-- Another distinguishing event occurs when Christ explains the concept of the ‘family of God.’

**II. Primary Structures and Interpretive Questions**

Primary Structure 1: Recurrence

*Recurrence 1: A repeating pattern of “[subject]…divided…cannot stand.” As the pattern progresses, the subjects become more specific, indicating a possible secondary structure of particularization.*

*Recurrence 2: A repeating pattern of “mother and brothers.”*

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| --- | --- |
| **Recurrence (Primary) of Phrase w/ Particularization (Secondary)** | **Recurrence of Phrase 2** |
| 3:24; “If a kingdom…it cannot stand.” | 3:31; “…Jesus’ mother and brothers…” |
| 3:25; “If a house … it cannot stand.” | 3:32; “ Your mother and brothers…” |
| 3:26; “If Satan … he cannot stand.” | 3:33; “…my mother and my brothers?” |
|  | 3:34; “…my mother and my brothers!” |
|  | 3:35; “…my mother and sister and brother.” |

*Recurrence 1:*

What is the phrase that is recurring? (Identification)

What does it mean? What is it responding to? (Definition)

What are the elements of particularization present in the recurrence? (Identification)

What do they mean? Are they significant to the pattern of recurrence? (Definition)

What information is highlighted by these phrases? Where do they point the reader, and why did the author choose to use them? (Reason)

How are the subjects of particularization present in the recurring pattern related to one another? (Mode)

Why does the author use a particularization structure within the primary recurring structure? (Reason)

What are the implications delivered by the use of this structure? (Implication)

*Recurrence 2:*

What is the key phrase that is recurring? (Identification)

What does it mean in each instance it is present? Is it always consistent? (Definition)

What information is made more apparent by the use of this phrase? What has the author chosen to use the phrase repeatedly? (Reason)

Are each of the elements of this recurring phrase related? If so, how are they related/how do they interact? (Mode)

What ideas or implications are suggested by the author’s use of this structure? (Implication)

Primary Structure 2: Intercalation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Family Coming** | **Conflict w/ the Pharisees** | **Family Arrives** |
| *3:20-21* | *3:22-30* | *3:31-35* |

What are the individual sections that comprise this structure? (Identification)

What key elements are within the outer sections that are related thus qualifying this structure? (Identification/Definition)

What does each of these mean? (Definition)

What are the key elements of the middle section setting it apart from the first and the last? (Identification/Definition)

What do they mean? (Definition)

What is the author’s purpose of interrupting the natural flow of the narrative by using this structure? (Means)

Why does the author choose the sections that were chosen to comprise this structure? (Reason)

How do the key elements of each section of this structure interact? What characteristics are comparable, and what traits are distinguishing? (Mode)

What information is highlighted by the presence of this structure? (Reason)

What is the full array of implications made by the use of this structure? (Implication)

Primary Structure 3: Interrogation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Question | Answer/Solution |
| **Inter. 1** | 3:23; “How can Satan…” | 3:26; “he cannot … his end has come.” |
| **Inter. 2** | 3:33; “Who are my…brothers?” | 3:35; “Whoever does…is my brother…” |

What questions are being asked by each interrogation? (Identification)

What do they mean? (Definition)

What responses are delivered for each interrogation? (Identification)

What do they mean? (Definition)

Is either set of interrogations more/less significant to the segment as a whole? (Definition)

How do the question and answer pairings interact with one another? (Mode)

What information is highlighted by the use of this structure? (Reason)

What is implied by these interrogations individually? Are there other implications made by having both being present? (Implication)

**III. Strategic Areas**

3:23-26 Displays key elements of *recurrence* and *interrogation.*

3:21-22,26 Displays the key transitions of the *intercalation.*

**IV. Additional Observations**

1. v. 21-22, Both the family of Christ and the teachers of the law are opposing Christ, but on different levels. Depending on the connotations of the phrase “He’s out of his mind,” perhaps the family was concerned. Whereas, however, the teachers of the law are and have been shown, as in v. 22, to be very confrontational.

2. v. 23-29, Christ chooses to use parable-style language to respond to the Pharisees, before really rounding off to his point in v. 28-29. Why was this form of argument used? Would it not have been more beneficial to get to the point of the matter?

3. v. 29, “will never be forgiven,” “an eternal sin,” Very grave, serious, and very concerning, implications made by stating that a particular sin will not be forgiven. Indicates that there is a limit to forgiveness and how far Grace may will able to reach.

4. v. 24-26, Particularization is present, but is possibly insignificant to the meaning of the passage as a unit. kingdom (general), house (less general/more specific), Satan (specific).

5. v. 30, Teachers of the law claim that the Holy Spirit is an impure spirit. Is there a potential plea of ignorance for their behalf since the Holy Spirit had not manifested itself in this particular way before (i.e. by breaking traditions).

6. v. 27, What the point of the “strong man’s house” analogy? What purpose does it serve, and what meanings is it translating?

7. v. 35, Jesus reverses the order of the object, (‘mother and brothers’ becomes ‘brother … and mother’). Also, introduces the ‘sister’ object at the very end of the statement. Was this necessary to complete the imagery of a family, or is there another reason? Was it added later for other reasons?

**V. Interaction With Secondary Sources**

Stein, R. H. (2008). *Mark*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. p. 177-190

* Stein acknowledges the intercalation structure, while inquiring to its purpose and origin on page 177. “Should they be viewed as a single unit that has been split apart for the purpose of sandwiching 3:22-30 between them, or were they originally two separate units?”
* Stein goes on to expressly state that it is his belief that this section constitutes a “Markan sandwich.” However, he debates whether this is the truest nature of the passage. (I.e. in the A1, B, A2 structure of intercalation, are A1 and A2 actually related as a unity.)
  + At this level, I believe that Stein is justified in considering it a possibility that while this appears to be an instance of intercalation, it may not be substantial to the meaning of the passage. There are similarities between the beginning and ending portions of the segment, and there is certainly a distinguished section in the middle portion that is set apart, and while I believe it to be intercalation in substance as well as structure, I can understand the desire to analyze it further.
* On p. 178, Stein eventually surmises that it is likely a true “Markan sandwich,” believing that there is ample evidence that 3:31-35 is a continuation of 3:20-21.
  + As I state previously, I agree with Stein in this matter. Though, my reasoning is not in line with his in that Stein believes there is ample evidence to say that it is a continuation, but I reached the conclusion that there simply was not enough evidence to support that it was not a continuation and to assume such would be counterproductive to studying the passage.
* Stein divides this segment into 5 segments: 3:20-21, an introductory statement involving Christ’s family; 3:22, transition to the controversy with the scribes; 3:23-27, Christ’s defense; 3:28-30, charging the scribes; 3:31-35, resumption of the Christ’s family narrative.
  + I understand the reasoning, and agree with the distinction Stein presents, but I feel that his middle three sections would be better described as subdivisions of one major division.
* Stein makes the claim of p. 189 that this passage reveals Christ to be “stronger” than demons, as well as Satan, which is poised as the purpose of 3:27 and the “strong man’s house” analogy.
  + I am quite satisfied with this interpretation, and I am contented that I question that I posed in this survey was answered so quickly by addressing this commentary. It seems that this would be an intuitive interpretation, but it had not occurred to me before.
* To close out his commentary on this segment, Stein responds to the introduction to the “eternal sin” by explaining the nature of the sin, and consoling any reader that may fear the sin by saying “the very concern over this issue is almost a certain indication that a person has not committed this sin.”
  + Responding from the position of the reader, a student of the Word, and a leader of the church, I feel that it would have been highly irresponsible to disregard this portion of the text, without addressing it in some fashion. I whole-heartedly agree with Stein assertion that one’s own concern betrays their innocence in this area, and I am satisfied with the quality of his commentary here.

Donahue, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel of Mark*. (D. J. Harrington, Ed.) (Vol. 2). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press. p. 128-136

* p. 130-131, Donahue acknowledges the repetitive pattern in the use of “divided” in the segment, providing explanation on the relationship between the instances and the foreshadowing nature in view of the kingdom and house of Herod the Great.
  + I was unaware of the connection of this recurrence to historical events. Knowing this adds meaning to the parable to me, personally, and I believe will serve me well as a pedagogical tool.
* p. 131-132, Donahue provides the reader with his own response to the “eternal sin” instanced in the passage. He goes on to explain that “blasphemy,” as used here, is different from the meaning of its typical usage, claiming that here it is more akin to the Old Testament language of the “hardening of one’s heart.”
  + As I stated during my response and interaction to Stein, I appreciate that the author has taken the time to respond to such an important and sensitive portion of the segment. I also suppose that I have taken for granted that some readers would not understand that “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” is a different circumstance than typical “blasphemy.”
* p. 132, Donahue mentions the presence of a preparation/realization structure in 3:31-35, but does not elaborate on the primacy of it and its relevance to the meaning of the unit overall.
  + I agree that the structure is present, as I saw it during my survey work, but it was my opinion that while the structure may be meaningful in a self-contained package, it does not provide any additional insight that is not presented by the interrogation I cite in the same space.
* p. 133, Donahue recognizes the sandwiched narrative structure that defines the intercalation.
  + My response to this would be similar to that of Stein earlier.
* p. 134, Donahue shows an instance of the inclusion structure between 3:22,”he has Beelzebul,” and 3:30, “he has an impure/unclean spirit.” He goes on to explain that this is used to “intensify previous themes” suggesting that Donahue believes this to be a primary structure critical to understanding the passage.
  + If this is what Donahue believes, then I disagree with him. While the inclusio is present in the passage, it does not fit (in my mind, at least) the qualification for primacy. As I said in my response to the preparation/realization structure, it may carry along its own self-contained meaning, but as for the passage as a unit, it provides little more.