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DOES MARK'S GOSPEL HAVE AN OUTLINE?

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Mark's Gospel is like a path on which readers can travel, walking with Jesus and experiencing his life, death, and resurrection. As with any journey, this one has a starting point, travel time, and a destination. It begins with the preparatory work of John the Baptist and with Jesus' baptism, moves continually forward toward Jesus' crucifixion, and ends with an empty tomb. If Mark's Gospel is like a path, then an outline of the book is like a road map. It guides the traveler along the path, identifying important turns, intersections, and points of interest. Any map is a simplified representation, so that it does not replace the journey itself but helps the traveler to make sense of the trip. In the same way, an outline is not a substitute for the reading of Mark's Gospel itself but is an attempt to offer guidance about the significant divisions, turning points, interconnections, and developments in the story. This article argues for an overall outline or map of Mark's Gospel, one that takes seriously the narrative shape of Mark and pays close attention to narrative features such as character, setting, and plot, as well as to the patterned arrangement of episodes. Mark's Gospel is a historical narrative, but it is still a narrative, which has implications for the structure of the book.

I. THE PROBLEM OF MARK'S OUTLINE

Does Mark's Gospel have an outline? Some have objected to the whole idea of an outline for Mark's Gospel, if by an outline we mean an identifiable structure made up of discrete units with obvious divisions. Joanna Dewey expresses the objection clearly.[1] According to Dewey, Mark's Gospel is like

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[1] Joanna Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry: Forecasts and Echoes for a Listening Audience," *CBQ* 53 (1991) 221–36. For arguments similar to Dewey's, see Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986) 142–51; idem, "Echoes and Foreshadowings in Mark 4–8: Reading and Rereading," *JBL* 112 (1993) 214; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 15–16; Sharyn Dowd, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 2. For others who object to outlining Mark's Gospel, see D. E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St Mark* (Pelican New Testament Commentaries; Baltimore: Penguin, 1963) 29; Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) 62–64, 74–76; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 1045–49.

an oriental carpet with crisscrossing patterns. It is an interwoven tapestry made up of multiple overlapping structures and sequences that serve to bridge breaks in the narrative rather than create them. Mark's Gospel is too complex. It contains more patterns than can be expressed in an outline, especially since an outline will necessarily highlight certain patterns and by doing so obscure others. By its very nature, an outline also identifies breaks in the narrative and divides the text into separate sequential units. According to Dewey, Mark's Gospel does not divide easily because it consistently bridges breaks through interconnections, repetitions, and anticipations, so that different events and episodes are interwoven into a unified narrative. For Dewey, Mark's Gospel does not have a clear overall structure. Instead it consists of forecasts and echoes, repetition with variations, resulting in the type of narrative that meets the needs of a listening audience.[2] Since Mark's Gospel consists of overlapping patterns, different interpreters will create different outlines depending on which patterns they emphasize.[3] In Dewey's opinion, various outlines tell us more about their creators than about the Gospel of Mark and its structure.[4]

[2] On the significance of a listening audience for the structure of Mark's Gospel, see Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 234–36. See also Joanna Dewey, "Oral Methods of Structuring Narrative in Mark," *Int* 43 (1989) 34–42; *idem*, "Mark as Aural Narrative: Structures and Clues to Understanding," *Sewanee Theological Review* 36 (1992) 48–54; *idem*, "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (ed. Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994) 148–50.

[3] Two of the most well-known attempts to understand the outline of Mark's Gospel illustrate Dewey's point. First, C. H. Dodd ("The Framework of Gospel Narrative," in *New Testament Studies* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953] 1–11), in his "modified form-critical" approach, emphasized Mark's use of a traditional outline of Jesus' ministry in building the framework of his Gospel. Dodd sought to find a pattern in Mark's Gospel that corresponded to the outline of Jesus' life discovered in other early proclamations of the primitive church, and he argued that the broad lines of this outline could represent the general historical chronology of Jesus' ministry. At least, that possibility should not be dismissed. The label for Dodd's method as a "modified form-critical" approach comes from D. E. Nineham ("The Order of Events in St. Mark's Gospel–an Examination of Dr. Dodd's Hypothesis," in *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* [ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955] 223–39), who argued against his view and supported instead the "earlier form-critical" approach that rejected historical chronology entirely as a factor for understanding Mark's overall framework. Second, Norman Perrin ("Towards an Interpretation of the Gospel of Mark," in *Christology and a Modern Pilgrimage: A Discussion with Norman Perrin* [ed. Hans Dieter Betz; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974] 1–78), in his primarily redaction-critical approach, looked for an overall pattern in Mark's Gospel that emphasized the places where Mark, as an editor and writer, made his most obvious contributions. In this way, for example, Mark's summary statements became important dividing lines in Perrin's outline of Mark, marking the transition from one section to another. However, as Dewey ("Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 226–28) argues, a summary statement may more easily make a connection between episodes than a division between distinct sections. For further difficulties with Perrin's use of summary statements as structural devices, see Charles W. Hedrick, "The Role of 'Summary Statements' in the Composition of the Gospel of Mark: A Dialog with Karl Schmidt and Norman Perrin," *NovT* 26 (1984) 289–311. In other words, an outline from C. H. Dodd looks different than an outline from Norman Perrin because they were emphasizing different types of patterns in Mark, one based on Mark's preservation of tradition and the other based on Mark's editing of tradition.

[4] Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 225, 235.

There is an element of truth to this objection. An outline cannot display all the possible relationships that exist between passages in Mark's Gospel. For example, the feeding of the 5000 (6:30–44) comes immediately before Jesus' walking on the water in Mark's Gospel (6:45–52), and the two events are connected. The final statement in the second of these two episodes indicates that the disciples' confusion concerning Jesus' power over the sea grew out of their lack of insight concerning the loaves (6:52). In this way, Mark associated the two events, and an outline ought to make that relationship apparent. However, an outline that connects the feeding of the 5000 with what follows makes it more difficult to notice the relationship between the feeding of the 5000 and the event that precedes it in the narrative. The banquet of Herod (6:14–29) serves as an important background for the banquet of Jesus (6:30–44), since the selfish and destructive King Herod provides a striking contrast to the compassionate shepherd who feeds his sheep. Outlines struggle to show relationships that head in opposite directions.

Moreover, divisions are more obvious in an outline than they are in the narrative itself. Most interpreters point to Mark 14:1–11 as the passage that begins Mark's passion narrative, and with good reason. The plot by the chief priests and scribes and the promised betrayal by Judas both point forward to the crucifixion of Jesus. The gift of perfume from the woman in Bethany, which is understood by Jesus as an anointing for his burial, once again anticipates future developments in the passion narrative. Therefore most outlines put a break between Jesus' eschatological discourse in chapter 13 and the start of the passion narrative in chapter 14. That break, however, obscures the frame that brackets the eschatological discourse. Immediately before (12:41–44) and immediately after (14:1–11) the eschatological discourse, Jesus commends the gift of a woman, each one a sacrificial deed that stands in contrast to the treachery of the scribes.[5] The poor widow who gives her two coins and the woman who gives her costly perfume stand in contrast to religious leaders who devour and kill. The point is that the segmenting in an outline has the potential to conceal the connections between major units.

Another difficulty is that outlines often do not display the presence of transitional passages, episodes that draw a major section to a close at the same time that they introduce a new one. The two healings of blind men in Mark—the blind man of Bethsaida (8:22–26) and Bartimaeus (10:46–52)—are sometimes identified, probably correctly, as transitional in nature. One of these episodes immediately precedes and the other immediately follows the major section in which Jesus teaches his disciples on the way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:45). I would argue that the two major discourses in Mark—the parables discourse (4:1–34) and the eschatological discourse (13:1–37)—are

[5] On this frame, see Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 233–34; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark," *Semeia* 28 (1983) 39; *idem*, "The Poor Widow in Mark and Her Poor Rich Readers," *CBQ* 53 (1991) 589–604; *idem*, "The Major Importance of the Minor Characters in Mark," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (ed. Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon; Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994) 76–77.

also transitional. They stand at the break between major sections, summarizing important themes from the preceding narrative but also introducing ideas that will be developed in the following narrative. Various outlines differ over whether Mark 1:14–15 is the close of the introduction or the beginning of a new section on Jesus' ministry in Galilee. The transitional character of these verses makes it difficult to know where to place them in an outline.[6]

Nevertheless, although an outline of Mark's Gospel has certain limitations, it is not without merit, and perhaps the metaphor of a road map can help to clarify its purpose and value. A road map does not identify every possible back road or dirt path, nor does it point out every conceivable building or destination. Normally, a road map displays the most prominent roads and points of interest. An outline is not an exhaustive explanation of all possible relationships and transitions within Mark's Gospel. Instead, an outline attempts to exhibit some of the more important structural patterns and turning points in the narrative. Undoubtedly, a map tells us something about the interests and priorities of both the map-maker and those who use it, but that does not mean the map is unrelated to the lay of the land. Although an outline reflects the perspective of an interpreter, it is also able to clarify features that stand out prominently in Mark's text.[7] Yet Dewey's argument provides a useful caution. Mark's Gospel does contain overlapping patterns, and the reality of these overlapping structures means that any interpreter who suggests an outline must identify the purpose for the outline. What features of Mark's Gospel is the outline intended to clarify? The outline can then be judged on the extent to which it fulfills its purpose and on the degree to which it sheds light on meaningful features in Mark's Gospel. In the same way, a map can be judged on its capacity to identify for travelers the most prominent roads and destinations and to reflect these landmarks accurately. The goal of this article, therefore, is to present an outline that clarifies the structure of Mark's Gospel as an episodic narrative, an outline that highlights the reality and importance of the overall narrative shape of Mark's Gospel.[8] In other words,

[6] In the following outline, I identify certain passages as transitional but group them within a major section based on where significant shifts in setting take place.

[7] Dewey ("Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 230) concedes that Mark 8:27–33 appears to serve as an important climax and turning point in the narrative, but she is unclear as to whether her observation of this transition is due to Mark's narrative itself or simply to her own education in print culture and her training in Markan scholarship. Another approach would be to say that her observation of a transition at Mark 8:27–33 reflects both her perspective and a real turning point in the narrative. Dewey's earlier studies on the structure of Mark 2:1–3:6 are convincing because they identify real structural patterns in Mark's Gospel, even though this work undoubtedly also reflects her own interests as an interpreter. See Joanna Dewey, "The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1–3:6," *JBL* 92 (1971) 394–401; *idem*, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1–3:6* (SBLDS 48; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980).

[8] In a sense, the outline of Mark's Gospel is a long-standing interpretive problem but one that deserves renewed attention in light of the many recent studies of Mark's Gospel as narrative. Peter G. Bolt ("Mark's Gospel," in *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* [ed. Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004] 407–10) makes a similar point when he argues that we should return to the study of the history and theology in Mark's Gospel but now in a "postnarrative" move, one that refuses to ignore the gains made through the study

I would argue that Mark's Gospel has an outline in the sense that the text contains identifiable structural patterns and that it is possible for an outline to represent the most prominent of these patterns and by doing so to clarify key principles about the overall character of Mark's Gospel.

The outline offered in this article reflects two significant principles concerning Mark's Gospel. First, Mark's Gospel is a narrative, and like other narratives, it presents a story with setting, plot, and characterization.[9] A shift in setting or a turn in the plot or a change in characterization may mark out a new development in a narrative. The proposed outline highlights the change in Mark's description of the main character, Jesus, a change that begins in Mark 8:27–31. At that point in the narrative, Jesus begins to teach his disciples about his approaching suffering, death, and resurrection. A shift of emphasis in the characterization of Jesus, therefore, divides the book into two halves. In addition, this article contends that Mark used changes in setting to identify different sections in his Gospel and that these shifts in setting also correspond to important developments in the plot. Mark's plot is built around conflict, conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities and between Jesus and his disciples.[10] The clashes between Jesus and the religious authorities revolve around issues of authority, while the difficulty between Jesus and his disciples lies in their inability to grasp the nature of Jesus' identity and mission. In both cases, the conflict moves the story forward to a resolution in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

A second principle is that Mark's Gospel is episodic.[11] The story moves along through the narration of a series of episodes or events in the life of

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of Mark's narrative as a coherent whole. The outline in this article, therefore, takes the narrative shape of Mark and its episodic character as governing principles for understanding the structure. On the importance of a governing principle for determining Mark's outline, see Kevin W. Larsen, "The Structure of Mark's Gospel: Current Proposals," *Currents in Biblical Research* 3 (2004) 155.

[9] For arguments showing that Mark's Gospel presents a coherent narrative, see Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 49–80; *idem*, "'Point of View' in Mark's Narrative," *Semeia* 12 (1978) 97–121. On the study of NT narratives, see Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean?" in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 23–49.

[10] On the conflict between Jesus and the disciples and between Jesus and the religious authorities as well as the way in which these conflicts create developments in the plot of Mark's narrative, see especially Robert C. Tannehill, "The Disciples in Mark: The Function of a Narrative Role," *JR* 57 (1977) 386–405; *idem*, "The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology," *Semeia* 16 (1979) 57–95; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "The Jewish Leaders in the Gospel of Mark: A Literary Study of Marcan Characterization," *JBL* 108 (1989) 259–81; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); *idem*, "The Religious Authorities in the Gospel of Mark," *NTS* 36 (1990) 42–65; David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 84–96, 116–29; Narry F. Santos, *Slave of All: The Paradox of Authority and Servanthood in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 237; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 8–10, 46–48, 272–80; Francis J. Moloney, *Mark: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 159–81.

[11] On the episodic nature of Mark's narrative, see Cilliers Breytenbach, "Das Markusevangelium als episodische Erzählung," in *Der Erzähler des Evangeliums: Methodische Neuansätze in der Markusforschung* (ed. Ferdinand Hahn; SBS 118/119; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985) 157–61.

Jesus. Each episode presents a short scene depicting an incident in Jesus' ministry. The different sections of Mark's Gospel are defined not only by changes in setting and plot but also by literary patterns produced through the artful arrangement of episodes. In other words, Mark arranged analogous or similar episodes into recognizable literary patterns in order to provide structure for the major units in his narrative and to identify some of the primary concerns of the story.[12] Although Mark divided his material into episodes, the overall effect of his work is still a connected narrative, held together by developing plot lines and continuing themes. This is especially true in Mark's passion narrative, which is less episodic and more like a smoothly connected narrative. A description of Mark's arrangement of episodes should balance the episodic and narrative qualities of Mark's Gospel by pointing out both the divisions between different events and the ways in which Mark connects the various parts of his story.

The remaining parts of this article describe the main features of a narrative outline of Mark's Gospel: the division of Mark's story into two halves according to a shift in characterization and the further separation of each half into sections according to changes in setting. The parameters of these sections are further supported by shifts in the plot and the patterned arrangement of episodes. The article builds on previous attempts to understand how narrative categories help to explain the design of particular sections in Mark's Gospel. However, it also attempts to make further progress by looking at Mark in its entirety, since little study has been done on how narrative features relate to the outline of Mark's Gospel as a whole.[13] According to the outline presented in this study, the first half of Mark's Gospel (1:1–8:26) emphasizes the power of Jesus, while the second half highlights the suffering of Jesus (8:27–16:8). Each half of the narrative contains three major sections. Mark's Gospel begins with the preparation for Jesus' ministry in the wilderness (1:1–13), his initial ministry in Galilee (1:14–3:35), and his ministry on and around the Sea of Galilee (4:1–8:26). The story ends with Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52), his ministry at the temple (11:1–13:37), and his death on the cross and resurrection (14:1–16:8). For each of these sections, it will be necessary to explain the general shift in setting as well as to survey the arrangement of episodes and the developments in the plot that help to signal a new division.

II. MARK'S OUTLINE AND JESUS' CHARACTERIZATION

The most obvious structural marker in Mark's Gospel is the statement by the narrator in Mark 8:31 that Jesus began (ἤρχατο) to teach his disciples

[12] One of the effective ways in which Mark was able to write a compelling story was by arranging episodes in patterns that provoke comparison and create irony and paradox. See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 18–20.

[13] The outline presented in this article is, in general, similar to the "rough score" for Mark's Gospel suggested briefly by Malbon ("Echoes and Foreshadowings" 214), although Malbon's "rough score" has no distinct place for the prologue of Mark's Gospel.

that the Son of Man must suffer many things. A new phase in Mark's characterization of Jesus begins at this pivot point in the story, one in which Jesus openly talks with his disciples about his coming death and resurrection. Jesus provokes this new stage by questioning his disciples about his identity, first in terms of what others say about him and then in terms of their own understanding (8:27–30). Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ, and the remaining narrative unpacks what it means for Jesus to be the Messiah.

Prior to this dividing point in the narrative, the emphasis in Mark's portrayal of Jesus is on his miraculous works and authoritative teaching. Jesus comes into Galilee as a spokesman for God, proclaiming the nearness of God's kingdom and the necessity of repentance and faith in light of its approach (1:14–15). Jesus calls disciples, and without question or delay they leave behind their families and occupations to follow him (e.g. 1:16–20). He teaches in the various synagogues throughout Galilee and eventually in open places, when the crowds who want to hear him become too large, and the people are immediately struck with amazement over the authority of his teaching (e.g. 1:22). He has control over unclean spirits, silencing them and casting them out of the tormented victims that they have possessed (e.g. 1:23–27). Jesus is able to take away sickness, deformity, and apparently even death (e.g. 1:29–30; 2:1–12; 5:35–43). He has power over nature, so that he can still storms (4:35–41), multiply food (6:30–44; 8:1–9), and walk on water (6:45–52). He bests his opponents in debate, with the result that they repeatedly are left with nothing to say (e.g. 2:1–3:6). It is not surprising that people would respond to Jesus with complete astonishment and declare, "He has done all things well" (7:37). This portrait of Jesus as a powerful miracle worker and authoritative teacher prepares the way for Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ at the midpoint of Mark's narrative.

In the second half of the narrative, the emphasis in Mark's portrayal of Jesus is on his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus begins to teach his disciples more frequently in private, often focusing on his own approaching passion and the implications of this destiny for them as his followers (e.g. 8:31–38). They must live with self-denial and a willingness to sacrifice and serve others (8:34; 9:35; 10:42–45). The second half of Mark's Gospel includes fewer reports of miraculous actions on the part of Jesus. The transfiguration provides for a select group of disciples a taste of Jesus' coming glory in the kingdom, but the news concerning that event was to wait until after the resurrection (9:2–10). The remaining miracles in the second half include one exorcism (9:14–29), one healing of a blind man (10:46–52), and one nature miracle in the cursing of the fig tree (11:12–14, 20–21). Later in the story, the narrator mentions Jesus' presence in the home of Simon the leper but never clarifies whether or not the man was ever healed (14:3). The second half of Mark's Gospel puts a greater emphasis on the supernatural knowledge of Jesus concerning the future, although the content of Jesus' prophecies creates a sobering picture. His predictions often focus on the details of his future suffering (e.g. 10:33–34), the prospect of persecution for his followers (e.g. 13:9–13), and the coming failure of his disciples (e.g. 14:27–31). Jesus continues to outdo his opponents in every debate, but the hostility grows

dramatically, ultimately leading to Jesus' arrest, trial, mocking, and crucifixion through the cooperative work of the religious and political authorities. Just as Jesus' predictions concerning his death prove true, so also do those concerning his resurrection, as God vindicates his Son by raising him from the dead. Yet, for those who have eyes to see, even at the cross the identity of Jesus is apparent, since it is at the moment of Jesus' death that the centurion confesses Jesus to be the Son of God (15:39). In this way, the title of Mark's Gospel, "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," finds its fulfillment in the confessions of Peter and the centurion.

The most significant contrast between the two halves of Mark's Gospel involves this shift in the characterization of Jesus, but other contrasts exist. The first half takes place in and around Galilee, while the second half occurs on the way toward or in Jerusalem. However, interestingly enough, the first half starts with a reference to Judea and Jerusalem (1:3) and the second half ends with a reference to Galilee (16:7). One extended discourse of Jesus appears in the first half, the parables discourse on planting seeds (4:1–34). In this teaching section, Jesus repeatedly commands his audience to "hear" (4:3, 9, 23, 24; cf. 4:33). One extended discourse of Jesus is found in the second half, the eschatological discourse on the final harvest at the coming of the Son of Man (13:1–37). In this teaching section, Jesus repeatedly calls on his audience to "watch" (13:5, 9, 23, 33, 35, 37). Jesus charges others to remain silent in both halves of Mark's Gospel, but the recipients of these commands change. In the first half, Jesus directs his commands concerning silence to the demons (1:23–25, 34; 3:11–12) and to those who have benefitted from his healing ministry (1:43–44; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26). In the second half, he tells his disciples to remain silent (8:30; 9:9). At the beginning of the narrative, the heavens are torn open, and a voice from heaven identifies Jesus as the beloved Son of God (1:10–11). At the end of the narrative, it is the veil of the temple that is torn, and immediately following this event the centurion identifies Jesus as the Son of God (15:38–39).

Changes in the portrayal of other characters occur over the course of the story. The opponents of Jesus shift primarily from the scribes and Pharisees in the first half to the chief priests, elders, and scribes in the second half. This shift in opponents, representing an escalation in power and position, marks an increase in danger for Jesus. The disciples display a lack of understanding in both halves, but the nature of their incomprehension changes from a lack of insight into Jesus' power and care for them to a lack of insight into Jesus' destiny and into the implications of that destiny for their own lives. The early parts of the story emphasize the popularity of Jesus with the crowds, as people overcrowd him in such a way that it makes it difficult for Jesus to preach and to find time alone with his disciples. However, by the end of the story a crowd participates in Jesus' arrest (14:43), and another crowd calls for Jesus' crucifixion at his trial before Pilate (15:8–15). All of these contrasts between the two halves of Mark's Gospel, along with the explicit statement that Jesus was beginning a new phase of his teaching in 8:31, serve to identify the major turning point in the narrative.

III. MARK'S OUTLINE AND THE NARRATIVE'S SETTINGS

The first half of Mark's Gospel divides into three major sections according to setting: the wilderness (1:1–3), Galilee (1:14–3:35), on and around the Sea of Galilee (4:1–8:26). Likewise, the second half has three major sections according to setting: the way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52), the temple (11:1–13:37), and the places and events surrounding the cross (14:1–16:8). Each of these will be surveyed in order.

1. *Preparation for Jesus' ministry in the wilderness (1:1–13).* Mark's Gospel opens with the statement, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, Son of God" (1:1). Mark follows this up immediately with a scriptural quotation that speaks of a messenger from God who will cry out in the wilderness in order to prepare the way of the Lord (1:2–3). All the events within Mark's introductory section take place within the wilderness (ἔρημος).[14] John the Baptist appears in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance (1:4). At the end of this section, the Spirit moves Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan (1:12–13). Therefore, Mark uses ἔρημος as a description of the setting near the beginning and at the end of this section (1:3, 4, 12, 13), marking off the limits of his introduction. Elsewhere in his Gospel, Mark never uses ἔρημος as a noun to describe a setting but always as an adjective to modify τόπος, doing so at the times when Jesus seeks out deserted places for privacy, rest, and prayer (1:35, 45; 6:31, 32, 35).

Mark's introduction focuses first on John the Baptist as the messenger of God who prepares the way for the mighty one who is coming (1:2–8). John appears in the wilderness preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins (1:2–4). People from Judea and Jerusalem come to him to be baptized, but in the process he points them to one who is mightier, to one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (1:5–8). The focus then shifts to Jesus, the beloved Son of God, who comes to be baptized by John (1:9–11) and to be tempted by Satan in the wilderness (1:12–13). The pattern for the introduction therefore progresses from John arriving in the wilderness to John baptizing in the Jordan to Jesus being baptized in the Jordan to Jesus being moved into the wilderness.[15]

The introduction sets up the plot and Jesus' subsequent dealings with the other people in the narrative by clarifying the basic identity of Jesus. He is the Christ, the beloved Son of God, the mightier one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit, the one who overcomes Satan. Of course, the introduction does not reveal every aspect of Jesus' identity and mission, since the rest of the

[14] On the wilderness as the dominant setting for Mark's introduction, see Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary* (JSNTSup 164; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 81–82, 95.

[15] J. Ramsey Michaels, *Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 44. For a similar argument concerning the chiastic structure of Mark's prologue, see Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 108–13.

narrative serves to detail what it means for Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. Mark's introduction also functions in a similar way to the first chapters of Job, providing a heavenly perspective on the main character and placing the story within the larger struggle between God and Satan.[16] However, after Jesus comes into Galilee, the direct involvement of God and Satan recedes into the background. God only rarely enters directly into the narrative (e.g. 9:7), and even at the cross he is absent; Jesus dies with a cry of dereliction, forsaken by God. Satan also steps out of the narrative.[17] Jesus has bound this "strong man" (3:27). Although Jesus acknowledges that Satan still is able to steal away God's word from the hearts of some (4:15), Mark's narrative never explicitly portrays Satan doing so. Peter is called "Satan" by Jesus, apparently because he seeks to distract Jesus from his destiny in the cross (8:33). Satan's role is played out by a human being who foolishly speaks from a human perspective. In the introduction, Mark places the story of Jesus within the context of the conflict between God and Satan but then shows how this story is played out in the lives of ordinary people who come into contact with Jesus.

2. *Jesus' initial ministry in Galilee (1:14–3:35).* Mark makes reference to the gospel at the beginning of the book (1:1), but then also in 1:14–15. The gospel is now the message of Jesus, who calls on people to repent and believe in light of the nearness of the kingdom. In this way, Mark 1:14–15 points back to the introduction by directing attention once again to the message of the gospel. However, a shift takes place that also moves the story forward. The ministry of John the Baptist comes to an end, and Jesus arrives in Galilee to begin his public work. Galilee becomes the general setting for Jesus' early ministry throughout 1:14–3:35.[18] Other locations are mentioned—for example, by the Sea of Galilee (1:16; 2:13; 3:7), in Capernaum (1:21; 2:1), in deserted places (1:35, 45), at a mountain (3:13)—but all of these are within the more general setting of Galilee. Mark summarizes the setting for this portion of Jesus' ministry by stating that Jesus went into synagogues throughout Galilee, preaching and casting out demons (1:39).

This section on Jesus' initial work in Galilee includes two main summary statements, one on the content of Jesus' preaching (1:14–15) and the other on the extent of Jesus' healing ministry (3:7–12). Each summary statement is immediately followed by an episode in which Jesus calls disciples, first the inner circle of disciples, who are called to follow Jesus so that they might become fishers of men (1:16–20), and second the twelve disciples, who are

[16] France, *Gospel of Mark* 59. For literary studies on the purpose for Mark's introduction, see especially Frank J. Matera, "The Prologue as the Interpretive Key to Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 34 (1988) 3–20; M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1–15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," *Semeia* 52 (1990) 45–81.

[17] For a similar point about the role of Satan in Mark's narrative, see Ernest Best, *The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology* (SNTSMS 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).

[18] B. M. F. van Iersel, "Concentric Structures in Mark 1:14–3:35 (4:1) with Some Observations on Method," *BibInt* 3 (1995) 87–88; *idem*, *Mark* 113–14. Also see Iersel, "Concentric Structures" 86–90 on the cohesiveness of Mark 1:14–3:35 as a major unit within Mark.

called to be with Jesus so that they might serve as his representatives (3:13–19). Mark follows up these call narratives with reports on the differing responses to the power and authority of Jesus. The responses range from amazement (1:22, 27) to hopeful interest in Jesus' help (1:30, 32, 37, 40, 45) to rejection (3:21, 22, 30) to acceptance of his teaching as the will of God (3:34–35). In this way the order of material at the beginning of this section runs parallel to the order of material at the end: summary, call, varying responses to the authority of Jesus (1:14–45; 3:7–35). At the center of this section, stands a series of conflict stories that describe the growing difficulties in the relationship between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees (2:1–3:6). The conflict starts with an unspoken objection (2:6–7) and progresses to a determination to kill Jesus (3:6).

One of the well-known compositional patterns in Mark's Gospel is that of intercalation. Mark's intercalations or sandwiches involve the insertion of one episode into the midst of another. After beginning the narration of one event, Mark would stop in the middle of it, move to another event, and then return to the first to complete it.[19] In a sense, the structural pattern of Mark 1:14–3:35 is an intercalation on a larger scale.[20] Inserted into the middle of this section is a series of controversy stories in which Jesus disputes with the religious leaders (2:1–3:6). The first chapter of Mark's Gospel ends with a description of Jesus' popularity in light of his miraculous power (1:45). The crowds are so great that he is no longer able to openly enter into a city, thus finding it necessary to stay out in deserted areas. Even there, the crowds come to him from all directions. Immediately after the controversy stories in 2:1–3:6, the narrative appears to resume where it left off in 1:45. Once again, Jesus has moved away from the city, this time out to the sea, and the crowds flock to him from every direction to seek his help for the sick and possessed (3:7–8). In other words, 1:45 and 3:7–8 serve as a frame around the controversy stories in 2:1–3:6.[21] Therefore, the section on Jesus' initial ministry in Galilee begins with a summary of Jesus' work and a description of the responses to it (1:14–45), then the focus changes to accounts of conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (2:1–3:6), and after this the narrative returns to a summary of Jesus' work and a description of the responses to it (3:7–35).

[19] John R. Donahue (*Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* [SBLDS 10; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973] 43) lists the following passages as examples of intercalations in Mark: 3:20–21 [22–30] 31–35; 5:21–24 [25–34] 35–43; 6:7–13 [14–29] 30–32; 11:12–14 [15–19] 20–26; 14:1–2 [3–9] 10–11; 14:12–16 [17–21] 22–25; 14:54 [55–65] 66–72. On intercalations in Mark's Gospel, see also James R. Edwards, "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," *NovT* 31 (1989) 193–216; Tom Shepherd, "The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation," *NTS* 41 (1995) 522–40.

[20] For a similar point, see Dewey, "Mark as Interwoven Tapestry" 228. For the division of this major unit into basically the same three subsections as those suggested in this study, see Iersel, "Concentric Structures" 90–95; *idem*, *Mark* 119.

[21] Dewey, "Literary Structure" 394–95; idem, *Markan Public Debate* 105–6. On the concentric arrangement of the controversy stories in 2:1–3:6, see especially Dewey, "Literary Structure" 394–99; idem, *Markan Public Debate* 109–30. This concentric pattern is reflected in the outline at the end of the article.

This section on Jesus' initial ministry in Galilee is important for understanding the two main plot lines that connect the story as a whole, the conflict between Jesus and his disciples and that between Jesus and the religious authorities. Here Mark details Jesus' initial expectations of his disciples. He expects them to leave behind the routine pattern of life and to follow him (1:16–20; 2:13–14). He wants the twelve to be with him, because his plan is eventually to send them out with authority to preach and cast out demons (3:13–14). He does not expect his disciples to follow all the traditions and scruples of the Pharisees (2:15–16, 18, 23–24). He assumes that they accept his authority and follow his teaching (2:10, 19–20, 28). With regard to the other plot line, the religious leaders come into conflict with Jesus early in the narrative because they immediately question his authority. They object to his claim to forgive sins (2:6–7), to his association with sinners (2:16), and to his failure to follow their traditions on fasting and the Sabbath (2:18, 24; 3:2). The scribes from Jerusalem go so far as to accuse him of casting out demons by the power of Satan (3:22–23, 30). Therefore even at the beginning of the narrative, the religious leaders take on themselves the task of seeking to destroy Jesus (3:6). The remainder of the narrative reveals whether or not the disciples will live up to the expectations of Jesus and whether or not the religious leaders will achieve their goal of doing away with Jesus.

3. *Jesus' ministry on and around the Sea of Galilee (4:1–8:26).* In Mark 3:9, the disciples prepare a boat for Jesus while he is ministering to a large crowd along the seashore. If the crowd becomes too large, Jesus will be able to enter into the boat and remain a safe distance from the crowd. This detail concerning the boat is dropped at this point in the story only to be revived again in Mark 4:1. In 4:1, Jesus is teaching the crowd beside the sea, and the size of the crowd causes Jesus to enter the boat and to teach from it as it floats on the sea. Prior to 4:1, Mark shows Jesus alongside the sea (1:16; 2:13; 3:7) but never in a boat on the sea. From 4:1 until 8:26, Jesus is in and out of the boat traveling back and forth across the Sea of Galilee. In Mark 6:45, Jesus initiates a sea crossing by urging his disciples to go ahead of him to the other side to Bethsaida. Jesus meets them by walking on the sea, but a wind has blown the vessel off course so that they arrive at Gennesaret rather than Bethsaida. In the final episode in this section (8:22–26), Jesus and his disciples finally arrive by boat at Bethsaida, and from that point on in the narrative the boat motif disappears. Through the repeated mention of the boat and the continual crossing of the Sea of Galilee, Mark distinguishes 4:1–8:26 from the preceding and following sections of the narrative.[22]

At the beginning of this section is a series of parables in which Jesus describes the nature of the kingdom. This parables discourse is transitional in that it serves to explain the varying responses to Jesus in the preceding

[22] See especially Norman R. Petersen, "The Composition of Mark 4:1–8:26," *HTR* 73 (1980) 194–96. On the idea that the boat motif binds together the individual stories in 4:1–8:26, see also Werner H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974) 30; Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium* (HNT; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987) 93; Iersel, "Concentric Structures" 88.

chapters and introduces material that will become important in the following narrative.[23] At the beginning of the last section, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming a message about the kingdom of God. Responses varied, ranging from devotion to antagonism. The parables of the kingdom, particularly that of the four soils (4:1–20), serve to make sense of these differing reactions to the message of the kingdom.[24] At the same time, Mark introduces within this parables discourse the theme of the incomprehension of the disciples.[25] When they come to Jesus asking him to explain the meaning of the parables, Jesus expresses surprise that they are not able to understand especially since they have been given the mystery of the kingdom of God (4:10–13). The mysterious character of the kingdom and the difficulty that the disciples have in understanding the values associated with it become prominent themes within Mark 4:1–8:26.

One particularly prominent structural pattern in this section is a series of three boat scenes that present Jesus with his disciples: the stilling of the storm (4:35–41), the walking on the water (6:45–52), and the conversation concerning leaven (8:14–21).[26] Jesus crosses the sea a number of times with his disciples in Mark 4:1–8:26, but these three boat scenes are the only episodes that actually occur on the sea during a crossing. In each of them, either Jesus or Mark himself criticizes the disciples for their lack of faith or understanding (4:40; 6:52; 8:17–18). The second and the third boat scenes are preceded by episodes in which Jesus teaches and feeds a large crowd, the feeding of the 5000 (6:30–44) and the feeding of the 4000 (8:1–10). In a similar way, the passage prior to the first boat scene involves Jesus' teaching to a large crowd, the parables discourse in 4:1–34. In addition, each boat scene is followed by a description of Jesus' healing ministry (5:1–20; 6:53–56; 8:22–26).

The portrayal of the disciples in this section grows increasingly negative. They fail to understand the parables (4:10–13; 7:17–18; 8:15–16), lack sufficient faith in Jesus' miraculous power (4:40; 8:4, 15–16), and show confusion over his identity (4:41; 6:49). Mark characterizes the disciples as those who have hardened hearts and who lack spiritual perception (6:52; 8:17–21). In other words, the plot line concerning Jesus' relationship with his disciples takes a turn within this section, a shift in which distinctly negative characteristics emerge in the portrait of the disciples. By way of contrast, the relationship between Jesus and the religious leaders changes little. Jesus

[23] On the structural function of the parables discourse in dividing Mark's presentation of Jesus' Galilean ministry into two halves, see Iersel, *Mark* 74–76, 110–13.

[24] France, *Gospel of Mark* 182. See also John Paul Heil, "Reader-Response and the Narrative Context of the Parables about Growing Seed in Mark 4:1–34," *CBQ* 54 (1992) 271–86.

[25] See Petersen, "Composition" 206–7; Iersel, "Concentric Structures" 87; *idem*, *Mark* 113, 122. Greg Fay ("Introduction to Incomprehension: The Literary Structure of Mark 4:1–34," *CBQ* 51 [1989] 65–81) points out that the literary structure of Mark 4:1–34 introduces and highlights the lack of understanding on the part of the disciples.

[26] On this point, see especially Petersen, "Composition" 195. This article by Petersen is particularly helpful for understanding the overall structure of Mark 4:1–8:26. See also Malbon, "Echoes and Foreshadowings" 214; Tannehill, "Disciples in Mark" 398–99; Iersel, *Mark* 120–26; Robert P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 63–73.

continues to reject their traditions (7:1–23), while they refuse to acknowledge his divine authority (8:11–12).

The last episode in this section is the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–26). In the immediately preceding episode, Jesus criticizes his disciples as those who have eyes but cannot see (8:18). Jesus then heals a blind man, but the healing does not take place all at once. Instead Jesus must lay his hands upon the man twice (8:25). This episode functions as another transitional passage in the narrative. Based on his reception of sight, the healed man stands in contrast to the disciples in the preceding narrative, since they have displayed a spiritual blindness. The fact that Jesus healed him with a second touch creates a hope and expectation that the disciples can be helped through another touch from Jesus. In this way the episode prepares for the next section, one that focuses on Jesus teaching his disciples about what it means to follow him.

4. *Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52).* In Mark 8:27, Jesus is in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, and while he is on the way he asks his disciples a question about his identity. Peter makes his confession that Jesus is the Christ (8:29), after which Jesus begins to teach his disciples about the coming suffering of the Son of Man (8:31). The setting of this episode as "on the way" marks off the beginning of a new section in the narrative. Throughout this section, Mark provides continuing reminders that Jesus is on the way (9:33, 34; 10:17, 32, 46, 52), and Mark 10:32–34 makes it clear that this travel along the way is leading up to Jerusalem where Jesus will suffer, die, and rise again. Although Mark uses the word "way" (ὁδός) elsewhere in his Gospel, he makes the term function as a description for a setting only in 8:27–10:52. This section ends with Bartimaeus, a blind beggar healed by Jesus, following him on the way (10:52). In the next episode, Jesus enters Jerusalem and its temple (11:1–11). Therefore, the setting shifts once again, and the focus of Jesus' ministry changes.

In Mark 8:27–10:52, Mark arranges his material around three passion predictions by Jesus.[27] In each, Jesus points forward to the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man (8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34). Each prediction is followed by a display of misunderstanding on the part of the disciples: Peter rebukes Jesus for his teaching about the messianic role (8:32); the disciples discuss among themselves the question concerning which of them is the

[27] The study of the structure of 8:27–10:52 was emphasized in the writings of Eduard Schweizer and Norman Perrin. See Eduard Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (NTD; 4th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975) 214; *idem*, "Toward a Christology of Mark?" in *God's Christ and His People* (ed. Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks; Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977) 32; *idem*, "The Portrayal of the Life of Faith in the Gospel of Mark," *Int* 32 (1978) 388–89; *idem*, "Die theologische Leistung des Markus," in *Das Markus-Evangelium* (ed. Rudolf Pesch; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979) 178, 183–84; Norman Perrin, "The Christology of Mark: A Study in Methodology," *JR* 51 (1971) 179; *idem*, "Towards an Interpretation" 3–13; Norman Perrin and Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (2d ed.; New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) 239–40, 247–51.

greatest (9:33–34); James and John ask for the most honored positions in Jesus' kingdom (10:35–41). After each instance of misunderstanding, Jesus responds by teaching his disciples about the nature of true discipleship (8:34–38; 9:35–50; 10:42–45). This repeated pattern of prediction/misunderstanding/teaching about discipleship provides the basic structure for Mark 8:27–10:52.

The focus of Mark 8:27–10:52 is clearly on the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Even when he delivers a demon-possessed boy or disputes with the Pharisees over the subject of divorce or instructs a rich man concerning the path to eternal life, Jesus takes time with his disciples at the end of the event to teach them privately about the implications of what just happened (9:28–29; 10:10–12, 23–31). The negative picture of the disciples continues to grow in this section. Before they did not show insight into Jesus' power and care for them. Now, they fail to grasp the role of the Messiah, one that leads Jesus to suffering and service. In addition, they cannot see the implications of Jesus' teaching concerning his destiny for their own responsibilities as his followers. While Jesus has been teaching them about God's thoughts, they continue to set their minds on a human way of thinking (8:33). Their misunderstanding concerning the cost of following Jesus will lead to failure in discipleship in the passion narrative, the final section in Mark's Gospel.

The section ends with the healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52). By this point in the narrative, the disciples are just as blind as they were before, lacking in spiritual perception. The renewed sight of Bartimaeus, who follows Jesus in the way, stands in contrast to the ongoing difficulty of the disciples. The expectations created by the previous healing of a blind man have not yet been fulfilled in the narrative. So the section concludes with a contrast between a healed, seeing follower of Jesus and struggling disciples. The episode also points forward to the following narrative, since Bartimaeus cries out to Jesus, using the title "Son of David" (10:47–48). The next section opens with the triumphal entry in which the crowd takes up the perspective of Bartimaeus, calling out their blessings toward Jesus and the coming kingdom of David (11:9–10; cf. 12:35–37).

5. *Jesus' ministry at the temple (11:1–13:37).* All the events within 11:1–13:37 take place either on the way to the temple, in the temple, or on the way out of the temple.[28] The section begins with the triumphal entry, in which Jesus comes to the city of Jerusalem and immediately enters the temple (11:1–11). At the end of the section, as he is exiting for the last time, Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple (13:1–2). After traveling to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sits down opposite the temple and gives his eschatological discourse to his closest disciples (13:3–37). Although the temple is mentioned again in the following narrative—in the false testimony against Jesus (14:58; 15:29) and at the tearing of the veil (15:38)—it never again functions as a setting for an episode.

[28] On the setting for this section, see Iersel, *Mark* 346.

Mark structures his narrative in 11:1–13:37 around three successive journeys by Jesus to the temple on three successive days.[29] On the first, Jesus simply enters the temple, surveys the situation, and leaves for Bethany with his disciples (11:11). On the next day, he casts out of the temple those who were buying and selling and allows no one to carry a vessel through the temple area (11:15–17). On the third day, Jesus enters the temple and engages in a series of controversies with the religious leaders (11:27–12:44). This series of controversies begins with Jesus' refusal to respond to the demands of the chief priests and elders that he offer some justification for his display of authority (11:27–33). Instead, Jesus offers a parable that promises their coming judgment (12:1–12). The rest of Jesus' teaching in the temple appears in two sets of three encounters (12:13–44). In the first set of three, Jesus answers questions brought to him by religious leaders, with the third passage portraying the positive example of the scribe who is not far from the kingdom of God (12:13–34). In the second set of three, Jesus takes the initiative to state his own perspective as it stands against the teaching and behavior of the scribes, with the third passage portraying the positive example of the poor widow who gives everything (12:35–44).

The escalating conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities moves to the forefront in Mark 11:1–13:37. By coming to Jerusalem, Jesus must deal directly with the chief priests, scribes, and elders (11:18, 27; 12:12); he had prophesied that they would cause his death (8:31; 10:33). After Jesus' demonstration in the temple, these powerful opponents begin making plans on how they might destroy him (11:18). The conflict revolves around Jesus' God-given authority and their refusal to accept it (11:27–33). Jesus compares the religious leaders in Jerusalem to wicked workers in a vineyard who refuse to give the owner what rightfully belongs to him and who kill his servants and even his son with the hope of stealing the vineyard (12:1–12). They are bringing deserved judgment upon themselves. Therefore, the end of the story line for the religious leaders, found not in the last section of the Gospel but in the predictions of Jesus, involves judgment and condemnation (12:9, 40). The exceptional scribe, who acknowledges the truth of Jesus' teaching, represents another possibility (12:28–34). Later in the narrative, Joseph of Arimathea, the exceptional council member, also gives hope that at least some religious leaders might seek the kingdom of God and receive a better fate (15:42–47).

For the most part, the disciples move into the background within Mark 11:1–13:37. One part of their story, however, is more prominent in this section than in other parts of the narrative. Will the disciples ever gain the insight necessary to become fishers of men? Jesus' eschatological discourse helps to answer this question. In it, Jesus predicts that the disciples will

[29] For a study that emphasizes the three-day pattern in Mark 11–13 and the double triadic arrangement of Jesus' teaching in the temple in 12:13–44, see Stephen H. Smith, "The Literary Structure of Mk 11:1–12:40," *NovT* 31 (1989) 104–24. For similar emphases, see also Klemens Stock, "Gliederung und Zusammenhang in Mk 11–12," *Bib* 59 (1978) 481–515; Kelber, *Story of Jesus* 57–70; Perrin and Duling, *New Testament* 251–52; Breytenbach, "Markusevangelium als episodische Erzählung" 165–66.

testify concerning him as part of the process by which the gospel goes out to the nations. Because of their commitment to Jesus, they will be hated and persecuted (13:9–13; cf. 10:39). Even after incomprehension and failure, there is hope for the disciples. In a sense, the end of the story line for the disciples does not come at the end of the narrative but rather in these predictions of Jesus in the eschatological discourse.

Jesus' discourse in chapter 13 stands as a transition between Mark's description of Jesus' activities in the temple and his narration of Jesus' death and resurrection.[30] Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple and then through his teaching shows how this destruction should be understood within the framework of the events at the end of the present age. In the eschatological discourse, Jesus predicts the coming of false Christs who perform signs and wonders for the purpose of leading others astray (13:5–6, 22). The following passion narrative reveals the way of the true Christ, which is the way of the cross. Jesus' life and destiny become the pattern for his own followers, who must be willing to suffer for his name (13:9–13). The eschatological discourse also serves as a reminder that Jesus as the Son of Man will be vindicated (13:26; cf. 14:62), as will his followers (13:13, 27).

6. *Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection (14:1–16:8).* Within Mark's Gospel as a whole, the passion narrative is somewhat unique. For example, the passion narrative does not have a clear, unifying setting. All of the events take place in and around Jerusalem, but the city of Jerusalem itself is hardly mentioned.[31] The only direct reference occurs when Mark describes a group of women who have come up to Jerusalem with Jesus (15:41). Instead of making Jerusalem a clear defining setting for the events in chapters 14–16, Mark uses a series of settings: in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper (14:3), a large upper room (14:15), the Mount of Olives (14:26), Gethsemane (14:32), the home of the high priest (14:53–54), the palace (15:16), Golgatha, the place of the skull (15:22), and the tomb (15:46; 16:2). In a sense, all of these settings move Jesus toward the cross or away from it after his death.

Another unique feature of the passion narrative is that it is less episodic.[32] In comparison to the rest of Mark's Gospel, it reads more like a smoothly connected narrative with each event leading naturally into the next. The passion narrative, therefore, is a series of interconnected events: the anointing at Bethany (14:1–11), Jesus' last supper with his disciples (14:12–25), Jesus' prayer and arrest in Gethsemane (14:26–52), the trial before the Sanhedrin along with the description of Peter's denials (14:53–72), the trial before

[30] On the structural function of the eschatological discourse of Mark 13 as the center dividing Mark's presentation of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem into two halves, see Iersel, *Mark* 74–76, 110, 346.

[31] For the setting of Mark's passion narrative as in and around Jerusalem, see Iersel, *Mark* 346.

[32] On the continuous nature of Mark's passion narrative in contrast to Mark 1–13, see Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probings of Mark in Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 102, 118. Collins attributes this greater narrative coherence not only to the inner logic of the events narrated but also to the use of a pre-Markan passion narrative by Mark when writing his Gospel.

Pilate followed by the soldiers' mocking of Jesus (15:1–20), the crucifixion and burial (15:21–47), and finally the discovery of the empty tomb (16:1–8). These changing events take place in rough correspondence with changes in specific settings.

The passion narrative serves to bring resolution to the two prominent plot lines in Mark's Gospel. Mark's portrayal of the disciples moves in a different direction beginning in chapter 14. First, Mark splits off the story line of Judas from that of the rest of the disciples. Judas turns into a traitor, betraying Jesus to the chief priests for silver (14:10–11, 43–46). Second, Mark shows the rest of the disciples moving from misunderstanding to failure. The disciples have not been able to comprehend the importance of suffering and sacrificial service, and so at the moment of crisis, when they are called upon to suffer, they stop following Jesus. At the arrest of Jesus, all the disciples flee except Peter (14:50). Although Peter continues to follow from afar for a time, he also eventually fails by denying Jesus three times (14:54, 66–72). Mark's portrayal of the disciples ends with Peter weeping after his denials. Although the disciples are referred to later, they never again appear in the remaining narrative. Their story is left off at the point where it illustrates the disastrous results of failing to count the cost of devotion to Jesus.

Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for many (10:45; cf. 14:24). In Gethsemane, Jesus bows to the will of the Father; he will not avoid the cross (14:35–40). The passion narrative begins with a repetition of the desire on the part of the religious authorities to destroy Jesus (14:1–2), and much of the remaining narrative explains how they go about fulfilling this desire. The result is a deeply ironic story in which the religious leaders help to fulfill the will of the Father through their own malicious schemes. This irony is clear in the series of mocking scenes in which Jesus is ridiculed. For the religious authorities it is preposterous that Jesus could be a prophet (14:65) or a savior or the Christ, the king of Israel or the one on whom they should believe (15:31–32). Yet for those who understand the thoughts of God these words describe his true identity. In a sense, the resurrection is God's answer to the religious leaders. They were wrong about Jesus, and they did not destroy him, because God has overcome his death with new life.

IV. CONCLUSION

Narrative features, such as characterization, setting, shifts in the plot, and arrangement of episodes, serve to highlight important patterns in the overall structure of Mark's Gospel. A change in Mark's characterization of Jesus divides the narrative into two halves. Other major divisions within the book coincide with changes in setting and plot. Within major sections, Mark arranges episodes in a way that gives the narrative a sense of structure and overall design. The following outline summarizes the preceding discussion in the article. It is a map highlighting many of the prominent literary structures and patterns in Mark's episodic narrative. As a map, it functions as a guide to travelers who take up and read the Gospel of Mark and who, by doing so, follow Jesus along the way to Golgotha and an empty grave.

THE FIRST HALF OF MARK'S GOSPEL: JESUS AS THE POWERFUL MESSIAH (1:1—8:26)

I. Preparation for Jesus' Ministry in the Wilderness (1:1–13)
   A. Opening (1:1)
   B. The Preaching of John the Baptist in the Wilderness (1:2–4)
   C. The Baptizing Work of John in the Jordan (1:5–8)
   D. The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan (1:9–11)
   E. The Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness (1:12–13)

II. Jesus' Initial Ministry in Galilee (1:14–3:35)
   A. Summary and Initial Response (1:14–45)
      1. [Transition] Summary of Jesus' Preaching in Galilee (1:14–15)
      2. Calling of Disciples: The Inner Circle (1:16–20)
      3. One Day in Capernaum (1:21–39)
      4. Healing of the Leper (1:40–45)
   B. Controversy with Religious Leaders (2:1–3:6)
      1. Conflict over Healing and Forgiving Sin (2:1–12)
      2. Conflict over Eating with Sinners (2:13–17)
      3. Conflict over Fasting (2:18–22)
      4. Conflict over Eating on the Sabbath (2:23–28)
      5. Conflict over Healing on the Sabbath (3:1–6)
   C. Summary and Initial Decision (3:7–35)
      1. Summary of Jesus' Healing in Galilee (3:7–12)
      2. Calling of Disciples: The Twelve (3:13–19)
      3. Rejection by Jesus' Family and by the Scribes (3:20–30)
      4. Jesus' True Family (3:31–35)

III. Jesus' Ministry on and around the Sea of Galilee (4:1–8:26)
   A. Cycle 1: Calming of the Sea (4:1–5:20)
      1. [Transition] Jesus' Ministry to the Crowd: Teaching in Parables (4:1–34)
      2. First Boat Scene: Stilling of the Storm (4:35–41)
      3. Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac (5:1–20)
   B. Interval: Faith and Unbelief (5:21–6:29)
      1. The Faith of the Hemorrhaging Woman and Jairus (5:21–43)
      2. Unbelief at Nazareth (6:1–6)
      3. Mission of the Disciples and the Unbelief of Herod (6:7–29)
   C. Cycle 2: Walking on the Sea (6:30–56)
      1. Jesus' Ministry to the Crowd: Feeding of the 5000 (6:30–44)
      2. Second Boat Scene: Walking on the Water (6:45–52)
      3. Healing at Gennesaret (6:53–56)
   D. Interval: Matters of the Heart (7:1–37)
      1. Dispute over Tradition (7:1–23)
      2. Healing of a Gentile Woman's Daughter (7:24–30)
      3. Healing of Gentile Deaf Mute (7:31–37)
   E. Cycle 3: Conversation on the Sea (8:1–26)
      1. Jesus' Ministry to the Crowd: Feeding of the 4000 (8:1–10)
      2. Test from the Pharisees (8:11–13)

3. Third Boat Scene: Warning about Leaven (8:14–21)
4. [Transition] Healing of the Blind Man of Bethsaida (8:22–26)

THE SECOND HALF OF MARK'S GOSPEL:
JESUS AS THE SUFFERING SON OF GOD (8:27–16:8)

I. Jesus' Ministry on the Way to Jerusalem (8:27–10:52)
   A. Cycle 1: Prediction and Response (8:27–38)
      1. First Passion Prediction (8:27–31)
      2. Misunderstanding by the Disciples: Rebuke of Peter (8:32–33)
      3. Jesus' Instructions on Discipleship: Taking Up the Cross (8:34–38)
   B. Interval: Jesus as Powerful Son of God (9:1–29)
      1. The Transfiguration (9:1–8)
      2. Teaching on Elijah (9:9–13)
      3. Healing of the Possessed Boy (9:14–29)
   C. Cycle 2: Prediction and Response (9:30–50)
      1. Second Passion Prediction (9:30–32)
      2. Misunderstanding by the Disciples: Debate about the Greatest (9:33–34)
      3. Jesus' Instructions on Discipleship: Learning to be Last (9:35–50)
   D. Interval: Jesus as Authoritative Teacher (10:1–31)
      1. Teaching on Divorce (10:1–12)
      2. Children and the Kingdom (10:13–16)
      3. The Rich Man (10:17–31)
   E. Cycle 3: Prediction and Response (10:32–45)
      1. Third Passion Prediction (10:32–34)
      2. Misunderstanding by the Disciples: Request of James and John (10:35–41)
      3. Jesus' Instructions on Discipleship: Learning to be a Servant (10:42–45)
   F. [Transition] Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52)
II. Jesus' Ministry at the Temple (11:1–13:37)
   A. First Trip to the Temple (11:1–11)
      1. Travel to the Temple: The Triumphal Entry (11:1–10)
      2. Observation of the Temple and Departure to Bethany (11:11)
   B. Second Trip to the Temple (11:12–19)
      1. Travel to the Temple: Cursing of the Fig Tree (11:12–14)
      2. Cleansing of the Temple (11:15–18)
      3. Departure out of the City (11:19)
   C. Third Trip to the Temple (11:20–13:37)
      1. Travel to the Temple: Cursed Fig Tree and the Prayer of Faith (11:20–26)
      2. Teaching in the Temple (11:27–12:44)
         a. Question and Parable about Jesus' Authority (11:27–12:12)
         b. Jesus' Authority to Meet Challenges (12:13–34)
            i. Question about Taxes (12:13–17)

ii. Question about the Resurrection (12:18–27)
iii. Question about the Greatest Commandment (12:28–34)
c. Jesus' Authority to Challenge (12:35–44)
i. Jesus against the Teaching of the Scribes (12:35–37)
ii. Jesus against the Behavior of the Scribes (12:38–40)
iii. Jesus against Wrong Perspectives on Giving (12:41–44)
3. [Transition] Departure out of the Temple and Prediction of Its Destruction (13:1–37)

III. Jesus' Death on the Cross and Resurrection (14:1–16:8)
A. Anointing at Bethany and Betrayal Plot (14:1–11)
B. The Last Supper (14:12–25)
C. Prayer and Arrest at Gethsemane (14:26–52)
D. Trial before Sanhedrin and Denials by Peter (14:53–72)
E. Trial before Pilate and Mocking by Soldiers (15:1–20)
F. Crucifixion and Burial (15:21–47)
G. Resurrection (16:1–8)