

four stories of Jesus

four stories of Jesus

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

four stories of Jesus

synoptic gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

four stories of Jesus

synoptic gospels

Matthew

Mark

Luke

syn - optic

syn = together

optic = relating to sight

the synoptic gospels see things together

four stories of Jesus

Matthew

Mark (the earliest of the gospels, written around 70 AD)

Luke

John

Mark (the earliest of the gospels, written around 70 AD)

historical context

- God's land under Roman rule ... the incongruity
- 66-70 AD, Jewish revolt took back control from the Romans
- 70 AD - the Romans retook Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple
- Mark written with the Temple's destruction in mind
- apocalyptic expectations - God was surely about to act!
- Mark (and Paul) - believed it was **the end of time**

a word about methodology — narrative criticism

We will read Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, and John as narratives, paying special attention to how each author uses...

- plot
- character
- setting
- rhetorical composition
- reader response

Mark's narrative setting

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens **torn apart** and the Spirit descending like a dove **on** him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." ¹² And the Spirit immediately **drove him out** into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

un-domesticating the English translation...

torn apart — σχιζομένους
(σχίζω, schizo)

the boundary between the sacred
and profane is ruptured

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens **torn apart** and the Spirit descending like a dove **on** him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately **drove him out** into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. **And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.**

Mark 15:33-38

torn in two — σχιζομένους
(σχίζω, schizo)

When it was noon, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And he bowed his head and died. At three o'clock, the boundary between the sacred and the profane is ruptured. Jesus said, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. **And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.**

Mark 15:33-38

§ 6 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

MAT 3:13–17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented.^v

¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened^w to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

MAR 1:9–11

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee

and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

LUK 3:21–22

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.

into him (εἰς αὐτόν)

a spirit from the sacred realm invades the secular realm, going *into* Jesus and possessing him

In those days Jesus came from Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove **on** him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately **drove him out** into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

un-domesticating the English translation...

The spirit that possesses Jesus
throws him (ἐκβάλλω) into the wilderness.

Individuals in Mark's narrative world
are possessed by violent spirits...

In those days Jesus came to be baptized
by John in the Jordan. And as he was
being baptized, he saw the heavens
tear apart and the Spirit descending
like a dove **on** him. And a voice
came from heaven, "You are my Son,
the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
And the Spirit immediately **drove him out**
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Mark's narrative setting

Mark's story is framed, beginning and end,
by two scenes in which the boundaries
between the sacred and profane
are breached
with a violent spirit on the loose.

Mark's plot

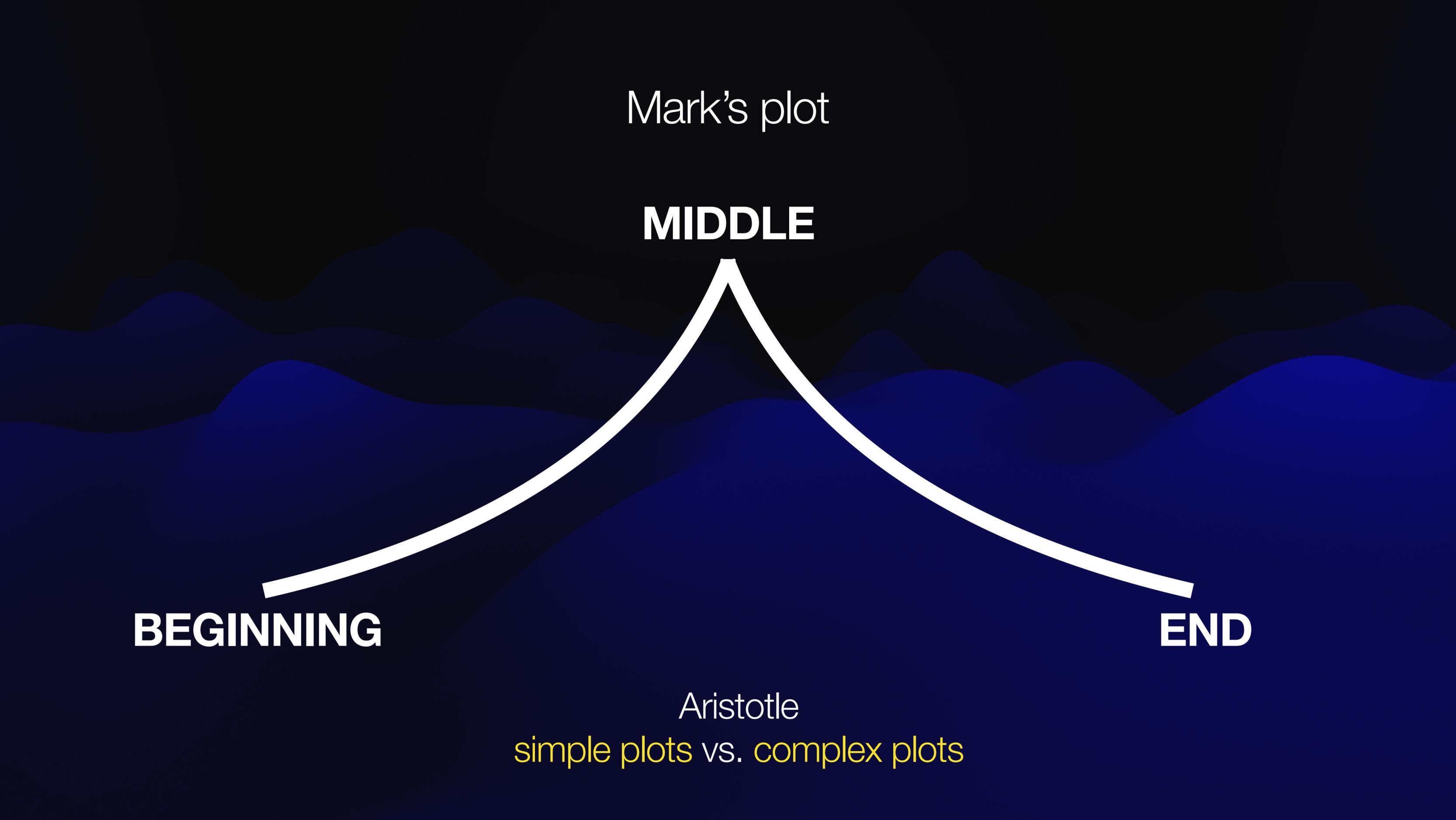
MIDDLE

BEGINNING

END

Aristotle

simple plots vs. complex plots



Mark's plot

MIDDLE

BEGINNING

END

simple plots — “when the change in fortune takes place
without reversal of the situation and **without recognition.**”

Mark's plot

MIDDLE

BEGINNING

END

complex plots — “the change is accompanied by such **reversal**, or by **recognition**, or by both.”

recognition in Mark

A question underlies the entire narrative:

Will the characters in Mark's story
recognize who Jesus is
and respond appropriately?

recognition in Mark

The **reader** is clued in to Jesus' identity from the beginning.

recognition in Mark

The **reader** is clued in to Jesus' identity from the beginning.

Mk. 1:1 — “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

Mk. 1:7-8 — [John the Baptist] proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Mk. 1:11 — And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Mk. 9:7 — Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

recognition in Mark

puzzling fact — **demons** recognize who Jesus is

recognition in Mark

puzzling fact — **demons** recognize who Jesus is

Mk. 1:23-24 — There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.”

Mk. 3:11 — Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!”

Mk. 5:5-7 — Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains [the Gerasene demoniac] was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.”

recognition in Mark

human characters are in the dark...

recognition in Mark

human characters are in the dark...

Mk. 1:27 — They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “**What is this?** A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

Mk. 2:6-7 — Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “**Why does this fellow speak in this way?** It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Mk. 6:2-3 — On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “**Where did this man get all this?** What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?”

recognition in Mark

Mark contains **ironic** moments of recognition

recognition in Mark

Mark contains **ironic** moments of recognition

“Unsound readers” will miss the irony of a statement and accept the literal meaning. “Sound readers” will reject the literal level of meaning as unacceptable... Irony can be used as a rhetorical strategy to bind together a community of “sound readers” who see what other “unsound readers” fail to grasp.

Wayne Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*

Mark’s point to his readers: characters may speak the “right words,” but that doesn’t guarantee they understand what those words mean.

ironic recognition in Mark

Mk. 14:61 — Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” (the “correct” words are on the high priest’s lips)

Mk. 15:2, 9, 12 — Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ... “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ... “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”

Mk. 15:18 — And [the soldiers] began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Mk. 15:26 — The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.”

Mk. 15:32 — “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.”

Mk. 15:39 — [the Roman centurion] “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

recognition: coming to a head...

What about Jesus' own disciples?

The disciples have been present as the questions swirled... who is this man?

- The reader knows.
- Demons know.
- Human characters (including the disciples) are in the dark.
- While some speak true words, they speak them ironically.

The reader watches as the disciples travel with Jesus, hear him teach, and watch him perform miracles. Will they recognize him?

recognition: coming to a head...

What about Jesus' own disciples?

Jesus brings the question to a head at Mark 8:27.

recognition in Mark

Jesus first asks, “Who do people say that I am?”

Mark 8:27-28

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

- John the Baptist
- Elijah
- one of the prophets

recognition in Mark

an already-established narrative thread

Mark 6:4-6

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."

- John the Baptist
- Elijah
- one of the prophets

recognition in Mark

Jesus to the disciples, “But who do you say that I am?”

Mark 8:27-29a

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, **“But who do you say that I am?”**

recognition in Mark

and Peter provides the climactic answer...

Mark 8:27-29

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” **Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”**

recognition in Mark

but did Peter get it right?

Mark 8:27-29

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” **Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”**

**Is this
a moment
of true recognition**



recognition in Mark

how does Jesus respond to Peter's confession?

Mark 8:27-30

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." **And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.**

Jesus' puzzling response. Biblical scholars term this feature of Mark's narrative **the Messianic secret**

recognition in Mark

what is going on here?

Mark 8:27-30

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sternly ordered (ἐπιτιμάω)

The word translated “sternly ordered” is the Greek verb *epitimaō*.

recognition in Mark

what is going on here?

Mark 8:27-30

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” **And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.**

where else does Mark use the verb ἐπιτιμάω?

recognition in Mark

what is going on here?

Mk. 1:23-25 — There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” **But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent...”**

rebuked (ἐπιτιμάω)

The word translated “rebuked” is the Greek verb *epitimaō*.

recognition in Mark

what is going on here?

sternly ordered (ἐπιτιμάω)

The word translated “sternly ordered”
is the Greek verb *epitimaō*.

Mk. 3:11-12 — Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!” But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

recognition in Mark

summary...

to the man in the synagogue with an unclean spirit

who called him the Holy One of God

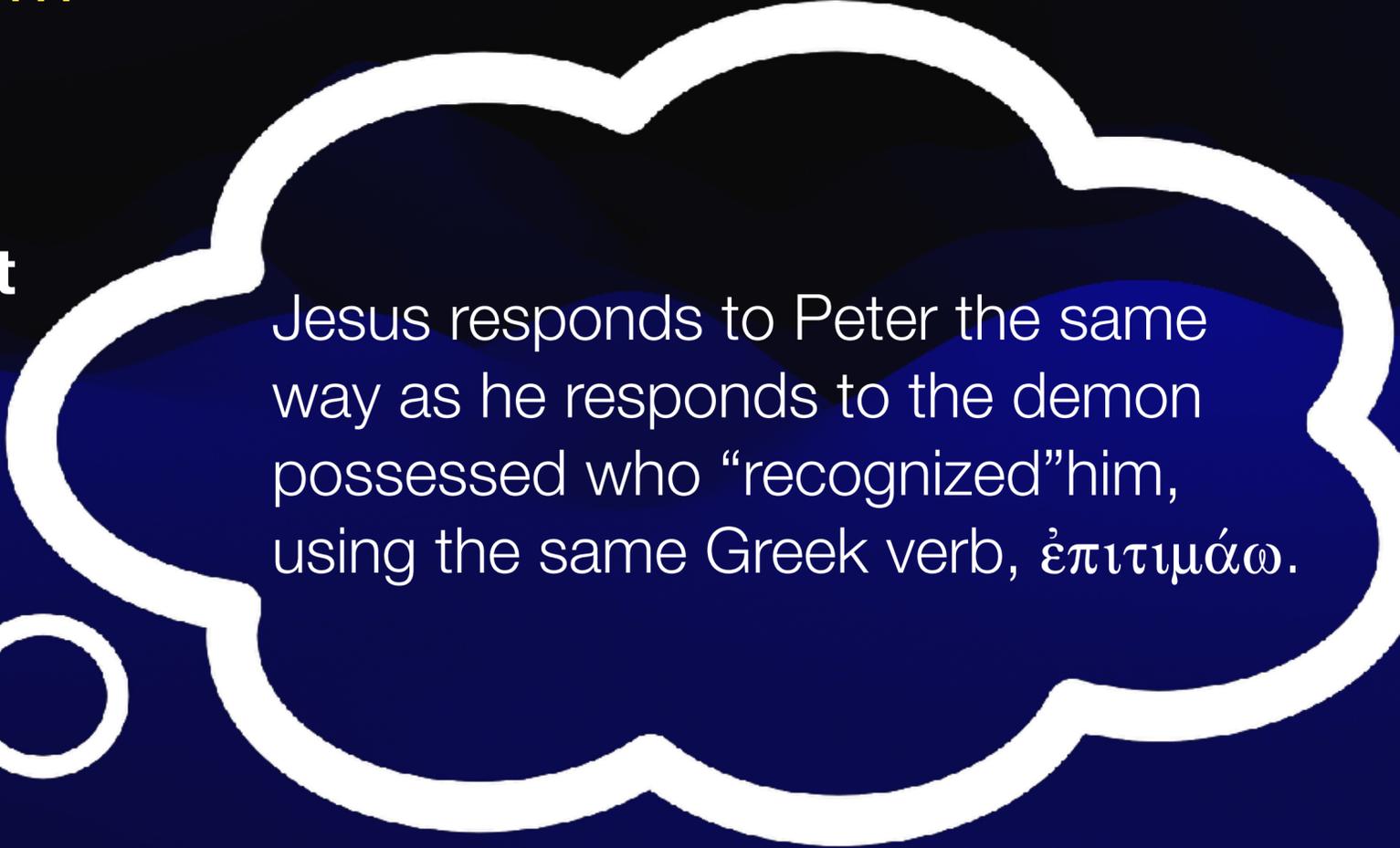
Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent..."

to the unclean spirits who shouted,
"You are the Son of God!"

Jesus sternly ordered them not to make him known.

when Peter said, "You are the Messiah."

Jesus sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.



Jesus responds to Peter the same way as he responds to the demon possessed who "recognized" him, using the same Greek verb, ἐπιτιμάω.

recognition in Mark

a moment of (apparent) recognition leads to the **“triple rebuke”**

Mark 8:30-33 — And he **sternly ordered them** not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him**. But turning and looking at his disciples, **he rebuked Peter** and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.

the same Greek verb, ἐπιτιμάω (*epitimaō*) is used three times...

1. Peter confesses Jesus as “the Messiah,” and Jesus rebukes the disciples to silence.
2. Jesus foretells his passion, and Peter rebukes Jesus
3. Jesus rebukes Peter and calls him “Satan.”

recognition in Mark

per Aristotle, a generic expectation of Greek narrative is anagnorisis, a moment of recognition, Oedipus Rex being the classic example (when Oedipus finally learns the truth of who he is and learn the identity of his wife).



anagnorisis | ,a,nag'nôrəsəs | noun

• the point in a play, novel, etc., in which a principal character recognizes or discovers another character's true identity or the true nature of their own circumstances

Is anagnorisis happening in Mark? Or **is Mark violating his readers' generic expectations?**

reversal in Mark

The other generic expectation of Greek narrative is **reversal** (peripeteia). We see a definite turning of the narrative at Mark 8:30.



peripeteia | ˌperəpəˈtē(y)ə, | noun

• a sudden reversal of fortune or change in circumstances, especially in reference to fictional narrative

- for Jesus, the plot turns from **success story** to **passion story**
- for the disciples, the plot turns from a moment of apparent recognition to a story about their **incomprehension** that will end with **betrayal**, **denial**, and **desertion**.

incomprehension

Peter's confession is followed by three predictions of the passion...
but the disciples clearly do not understand.

incomprehension

first prediction of the passion — Mk. 8:31

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly.

disciples' response — Mk. 8:31-35

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

incomprehension

second prediction of the passion — Mk. 9:30-31

he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.”

disciples' response — Mk. 9:32-35

But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way **they had argued with one another who was the greatest**. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”

incomprehension

third prediction of the passion — Mk. 10:32-34

He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”

disciples' response — Mk. 10:35-39

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” And they said to him, “**Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.**” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able.”

incomprehension

The disciples in the story are unable to comprehend what discipleship looks like.
They cannot accept that Jesus will be anything but a successful Messiah.

Mark's concern:

The current leadership of Mark's church are like these disciples;
they fail to demonstrate the leadership qualities the church needs to survive in troubled times.

betrayal and desertion

It only gets worse...

betrayal and desertion

Judas

his **betrayal** is foretold ...

Mk. 14:17-21 — When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

... and carried out

Mk. 14:43-46 — Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

betrayal and desertion

ten more disciples

Jesus predicts the rest of the disciples will **desert** him ...

Mark 14:27 — Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters.”

Literally, the Greek says “You all will be scandalized” (πάντες **σκανδαλισθήσεσθε**).

The same Greek word is used in Mark 4:16-17 (the parable of the Sower).

And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, **when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away** (literally, “are scandalized”).

... and all (except Peter) flee when Jesus is arrested

Mark 14:50 — All of them **deserted** him and fled.

betrayal and desertion

As we near the end of the story,
Judas and the ten will have betrayed or deserted Jesus.

Only Peter remains...

Simon Peter — his rise and fall

8:29



Simon Peter — his rise and fall



- one of the first two disciples (along with his brother Andrew) to be called — Mark 1:16-20
- first on the list of the twelve apostles — Mark 3:13-19
- a member of the “inner circle” of disciples, “Peter, James, and John” — Mark 5:37
- the first human character in the story to recognize Jesus’ identity — Mark 8:29

Simon Peter — his rise and fall



the moment of Peter's confession is his high point in the story.
He has apparently recognized what the reader has known all along.
But... the rug is suddenly pulled out from under him at Mark 8:30.

Simon Peter — his rise and fall



- at the high point of Peter's story, Jesus "rebukes" his disciples to silence.
- Peter, horrified at Jesus' description of what will happen in Jerusalem, "rebukes" Jesus.
- Jesus in turn "rebukes" Peter and says, "Get behind me, Satan."
- Peter and the disciples do not comprehend the nature of discipleship.
- They all fail: Judas betrays Jesus; ten more are scandalized and desert Jesus; and Peter...

denial

Peter denies Jesus

his denial foretold ...

Mk. 14:26-31 — When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.’

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Even though all become deserters, I will not.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” But he said vehemently, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all of them said the same.

denial

Peter tries to keep his vow...

Mk. 14:53-54 — They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

denial

Peter tries to keep his vow...

but then he is challenged by a servant-girl

Mk. 14:66-72 — While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

denial

This is the last time we see Peter within Mark's story,
broken, humiliated, and in tears...

he has lost all honor
the reversal is complete

Does **anyone** in Mark's story
offer the role model of a good disciple?

There is another group of followers of Jesus much less familiar to readers of Mark, for the story of these disciples is told in a muted voice. These characters rarely appear in the narrative. Most remain nameless throughout the gospel; the reader will finally learn the names of three of them at 15:40, sixteen verses before the story's end. Though they remain virtually voiceless, their actions are paradigms of discipleship. They are, by the way, the only group of characters in the gospel who receive Jesus' consistent and unambiguous affirmation. They are women.

Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

There are women in the story,
but they are nameless

15:40



1:30 Simon's mother-in-law	3:31 Jesus' mother	5:25 hemorrhaging woman	5:40 Jairus' wife	6:17 Herodias	7:25 Syrophoenician woman	14:3 woman w/ ointment
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Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

the male disciples are gone,
absent from the stage, since 15:1

15:40

1:30	3:31	5:25	5:40	6:17	7:25	14:3
Simon's mother-in-law	Jesus' mother	hemorrhaging woman	Jairus' wife	Herodias	Syrophoenician woman	woman w/ ointment

Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

Jesus “breathes his last” at 15:39

15:40

1:30 Simon's mother-in-law	3:31 Jesus' mother	5:25 hemorrhaging woman	5:40 Jairus' wife	6:17 Herodias	7:25 Syrophoenician woman	14:3 woman w/ ointment
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Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

at 15:40, the narrator's point-of-view changes

15:40

1:30	3:31	5:25	5:40	6:17	7:25	14:3
Simon's mother-in-law	Jesus' mother	hemorrhaging woman	Jairus' wife	Herodias	Syrophoenician woman	woman w/ ointment

Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

15:40

no longer facing the cross, the reader now sees what Jesus saw while hanging from the cross

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- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1:30 | 3:31 | 5:25 | 5:40 | 6:17 | 7:25 | 14:3 |
| Simon's
mother-in-law | Jesus'
mother | hemorrhaging
woman | Jairus'
wife | Herodias | Syrophoenician
woman | woman w/
ointment |

Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

(Mark 15:40-41)

15:40



Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

Three of the women are finally given names.
The same three who will go to the tomb on Easter.

15:40



Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

... and “many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem” were present

15:40



Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

On Easter, the two Marys and Salome bring spices to the tomb to anoint Jesus

NB: “Anointed One” is a messianic title

15:40



Mark 15:40, a second moment of reversal

“within the Marcan story, only the women follow Jesus to the end”

Elizabeth Malbon

15:40



who, for Mark, is a true disciple?

In Mark's story, saying the right words counts for little.
Even the demons **say** the right words.

While Peter **says** the right words,
he and the other disciples are scandalized
by the suffering that is to come,
and they desert Jesus.

The female followers of Jesus recognize him,
not with words but with *diaconia*,
and follow him to the end.

but Mark would not be Mark
were this story wrapped up so neatly...

the ending of the Gospel of Mark

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8