

Mark 2:1-12, Dawn of Controversy
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Overview

Follow Mourlon Beernaert's analysis of 2:1-3:6.

1. Five sections

- a) 1-12, Healing of the Palsy
- b) (10-12, Power to Forgive Sin--embedded in previous narrative)
- c) 13-17, Levi (eating with sinners)
- d) 18-22, Question of the Fast
- e) 23-28, Picking Seed on the Sabbath
- f) (27-28, Lord of the Sabbath--embedded in previous narrative)
- g) 3:1-6, Healing the Withered Hand

2. Chiastic links

- a) a, g deal with healing
- b) b, f emphasize Lordship of Christ. First two references to "Son of Man" in the gospel, with its links back to Dan. 7:13, 14. (Distribution:)

										1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	2						2	3	2			1	4			
	x						x	x	x			x	x			
	x						x	x	x				x			
								x					x			
																x

- c) c, e deal with eating, and both mention the Lord's disciples (the first two references to this term in Mark; here's the distribution of the rest. General shape: early and late peaks (ch. 2, 14), both in context of meals with the Lord; central section, 6-10, characterized by ref's.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6		
										1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	4	2	1	1	5	3	8	4	5	2	1	1	5	0	1		
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
	x	x			x	x	x	x	x				x				
	x				x	x	x	x					x				
	x				x		x	x					x				
					x		x		x				x				
							x										
							x										
							x										

3. Contrast the two halves

- a) a, b, c deal with sin (power to forgive sin; eating with sinners); both narratives feature the Scribes (2:6, 16)
- b) e, f, g deal with the Sabbath (picking grain; healing on the Sabbath); both narratives feature the Pharisees (2:24; 3:6).

4. Distinct center:
 - a) Only a question; not associated with a specific action.
 - b) Question posed by the *disciples* of John and of the Pharisees, not by the Jewish leaders themselves. A completely different level of question; more for genuine information than as a challenge.
 - c) Associated with neither sin nor the Sabbath; focus on the Lord as the heavenly Bridegroom, which with 10-12 and 27-28 is a strong claim to deity.

5. The opposition grows progressively stronger.
 - a) 2:6, scribes question in their hearts
 - b) 2:16, scribes & pharisees challenge the disciples
 - c) 2:24, Pharisees challenge him directly
 - d) 3:6, plot to destroy him.

6. Lessons:
 - a) Shows the complete blossoming of opposition, and sets the stage for the crucifixion, already at the beginning of ch. 3!
 - b) Caps the *demonstration* of the Lord's authority in ch. 1 with three *assertions* of it.

7. This study: 1-12, Healing of the Paralytic. It is itself broadly chiasitic in form:

a) Public Response	1-2	12b
b) Paralytic comes/leaves	3-4	12a
c) Jesus speaks to the Paralytic	5	11
d) Interchange with the Scribes	6-7	8-10

A. 1-2, Public Response

1. After a cooling-off period of some time he tries to reenter Capernaum, perhaps "secretly" (cf. 1:45). But news gets out "immediately" that he is there, probably once more in Simon's house (Gundry reports a study that anarthrous use of *oikos* means one's own house, and traces the phrasing back to Peter). The scene of 1:33 returns, except that now the street before the door is even fuller than before; have people come from out of town to be healed?

2. His chosen activity in 2b: speaking the word ("preach" is a translation decision; this is not *khrussw*). Recall the centrality of this activity from ch. 1.

B. 3-4, Paralytic Comes to Jesus

1. Palestinian houses: flat-roofed, with beams covered with branches that are in turn plastered with mud, accessible by an outside staircase. Used to dry grapes or other crops in the hot sun.

2. Carried by four men, who have no compunctions about tearing up the roof; are they Simon, Andrew, James, and John with yet another "catch" (cf. 1:32)? Then this would be Peter's house and there would be no difficulty to the disassembly.

3. Like the Leper, this man's illness is a vivid picture of the burden of sin. Compare John 5, a lame man who "had no man" to bring him to the source of healing. Both cases emphasize the helplessness of one in this position, emblematic of our helplessness apart from the Lord. Either our friends must bring us, or he must find us where we are, but we are powerless to come ourselves.

Hypothesis: are the healings selected to emphasize spiritual lessons?

C. 5, Jesus Speaks to the Paralytic

1. The Lord here begins with forgiveness, not healing.
 - a) Corresponds with the nature of the meeting as one of teaching and not healing.
 - b) It may even be that this was the main burden of the man's heart, since the Jews widely associated illness with sin. Peter & co are not necessarily making the same error they made in 1:32. They may have brought him specifically to hear the teaching.
 - c) Also, calculated to make his claim before the watching scribes.
2. Predicated on "their faith," that of the four as well as the paralytic. The only way to access God's power.
3. "Saw their faith." True faith issues in works; it is visible. Not an esoteric, inner thought, but a driving force in the life.

D. 6-7, Opposition of the Scribes

Their presence is likely due to the report of the leper at the end of ch. 1. They have come to check out this worker of miracles, and they recognize the magnitude of his claim in forgiving sins.

E. 8-10, Jesus to the Scribes

1. 8-9, His knowledge of their inner thoughts. Characteristic of "him with whom we have to do," Heb. 4:13; this same power available to Spirit-empowered believers, cf. Acts 5:3. Remember that the Lord's earthly life uses only those resources available to us, and by his own word, John 14:12, the disciples shall do his works, and even greater ones, "because I go to my Father" and send back the Spirit.
2. 10, his claim: "the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins."
 - a) First use of "son of man" in the gospel, the Lord's favorite term for himself. Drawn from Dan. 7:13,14 to emphasize his place as the one to whom the Father has given all authority on earth.
 - b) "On earth" is important. The old amillennial teaching tends to spiritualize the Lord's impact, but it is real and concrete

and tangible.

F. 11, Jesus Speaks to the Paralytic

Healing by a word; cf. John 5:8 for the same event at the pool of Bethesda, and Acts 3:6; 9:34 for Peter's demonstration of this same power, per John 14:12.

G. 12a, Departure of Paralytic

Why does he leave right away? Not because he doesn't want to stay for the sermon, but because the Lord has just told him, "Go to your house." The walking is a practical demonstration of the healing, and part of the message.

H. 12b, Public Response

Overwhelmed at the unprecedented display of God's power.