

## How to Study the Bible, October 7 & 10

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### Finding and Following the Story Line

#### **Progression: The organizing principle of composition.**

Authors are literary artists. They use logical tools like words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to create a literary work of art that communicates a meaningful message. They build around a central principle that unifies and gives order to their composition. They employ a variety of “literary devices” in order to achieve their purpose and make their composition understandable. There is always a logical progression that unites the paragraphs, an idea that holds everything together and advances the author’s argument. This progression is evident within sections of a Bible book as well as in the entire book. There are five kinds of progression in literature. Every discourse uses at least one and often more than one of these.

**Historical.** Emphasis is on “what?” Example- Genesis 1-11: These chapters are organized around four events, creation, the fall, the flood, and Babel. Other examples include, Exodus, Numbers, and 1 & 2 Kings.

**Biographical.** Emphasis is on “who?” Example- Genesis 12-50. These chapters are organized around four people, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Other examples include, 1 & 2 Samuel (Life of David), Job, and the Gospels.

**Chronological.** Emphasis is on “when?” Examples- Judges- time references and cycle of history, Haggai- 4 dated messages. John 1-2, 21 is built around a 7-day cycle.

**Geographical.** Emphasis is on “where?” Example- Acts: the progress of the Gospel from Jerusalem (1-7), to Judea and Samaria (8-12), and to the ends of the earth (13-28). Exodus is another example: Israel is in Egypt (1-12), in the wilderness (13-18), and at Mt. Sinai (19-40).

**Logical or Ideological.** Emphasis is on “what?” Example- Romans: The need for righteousness (1:18-3:20), God’s provision of righteousness (3:21-31), appropriation of righteousness by faith (4:1-5:21), and the application of righteousness to life (6:1-8:39). In Galatians Paul defends the Gospel: the source (1-2), content (3-4), and application (5-6) of the gospel. Most epistles are built around a central theme that is logically presented. John’s Gospel is written logically to convince the reader that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God* (20:31).

What kinds of progression do you see in Mark 3? Draw a double line // where the progression indicates a change in the narrative (where paragraphs divide). What is the central idea that unites these paragraphs? How does the chapter (story) build (develop, progress to a climax)?

Mark 3:1-35 (NASB)

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. They were watching Him *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And He said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent. After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him. // Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and *also* from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him. And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him; for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him. Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God!” And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was. And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He *could* send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons. And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, “Sons of Thunder”); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. When His own people heard *of this*, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.” The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.” And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. “If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. “If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished! “But no one can enter the strong man’s house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house. “Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent *word* to Him and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.” Answering them, He said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

### Mark 3:1-35

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. <sup>2</sup> And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. <sup>3</sup> And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” <sup>4</sup> And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. <sup>5</sup> And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. <sup>6</sup> The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him. // <sup>7</sup> Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea <sup>8</sup> and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. <sup>9</sup> And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, <sup>10</sup> for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. <sup>11</sup> And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” <sup>12</sup> And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. <sup>13</sup> And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup> and have authority to cast out demons. <sup>16</sup> He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); <sup>17</sup> James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); <sup>18</sup> Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. <sup>20</sup> Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. <sup>21</sup> And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.” <sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” <sup>23</sup> And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. <sup>28</sup> “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— <sup>30</sup> for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” <sup>31</sup> And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” <sup>33</sup> And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” <sup>34</sup> And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.” (ESV)

What kind(s) of progression do you see in the following passage?  
Draw lines // where you think the paragraph divisions should be.

Mark 1:21-39 (ESV)

And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. <sup>22</sup> And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup> And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup> “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.” <sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” <sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup> And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup> And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. <sup>31</sup> And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. <sup>32</sup> That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered together at the door. <sup>34</sup> And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. <sup>35</sup> And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, <sup>37</sup> and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” <sup>39</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Mark 1:29-39 (ESV)