An Examination of Jesus' View of Women through Three Intercalations in the Gospel of Mark

David E. Malick

Introduction

A basic tenet in the hermeneutics of theology is to build a doctrine upon the clearer, or less disputed, passages and then interpret the more difficult passages in light of the clearer passages.[1] However, in gender studies, the ground is often first broken in the rough terrain of 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, or with the household codes of Ephesians 5–6, Colossians 3, and 1 Peter 2–3. This study will examine three passages involving women in Mark's gospel—in Mark 3, 5, and 14—all of which are undisputed in terms of significant lexicography, grammar, or relevant gender theology. As clearer passages, they form part of a greater foundation to the theology of gender studies.

The message of these passages is amplified through the literary technique known as intercalation,[2] where a first story is begun, then interrupted by a second, inner, story told to its conclusion,[3] whereupon the first story resumes and is told to its completion.[4] This method of storytelling invites the reader to compare and contrast the outer and inner stories,[5] resulting in a new story outcome that includes, but also transcends, the component stories.[6] A key to interpreting an intercalation is to recognize the way in which the writer has brought the two stories together, and yet holds them apart, to produce an interpretation of the stories.[7] The three Marcan intercalations we will examine involve women, two of whom are anonymous, namely, Jesus' mother in Mark 3, the woman with the hemorrhage of blood and Jairus's daughter in Mark 5, and the woman who anoints Jesus for his burial in Mark 14.[8]

Because Jesus did not set forth a didactic discourse on the topic of women, we must discern his view of women in the same way that we discern other issues in the gospels. Narratives do not explicitly tell us, but show us, their theology.[9] For instance, in an epistle by Paul, the Apostle explicitly states that Adam was a type (*typos*) of Christ (Rom 5:14), but the Gospel of Luke shows us that Jesus is the new Adam by running his genealogy back to Adam, and then rearranging the order of the temptation account from that in Matthew to match the temptation of Adam and Eve in the garden.[10] Luke shows us what Paul tells us.

So, too, when we read the narratives in Mark, we should look for how the narrative shows its theology of women rather than for explicit, didactic statements about women. We need to ask questions such as: How does Jesus interact with women when he encounters them? What is the writer doing with the material to communicate a theological message? Is the arrangement of the material significant to its message, since how the writer communicates a message is as much a part of the message as what the writer says?[11]

For instance, the sermon-sign structure in Mark 7 sets forth Jesus' proposition that it is not that which goes into a person that makes him unclean, but that which comes out of a person's heart that defiles (Mark 7:14–23). This teaching (sermon) section is then followed by three[12] narrative pictures (signs) that specifically demonstrate the truth of the sermon as Jesus goes among people whom Israel would consider to be unclean, including (1) the Syrophoenician woman (7:24–30), (2) the deaf-mute in the Decapolis area whom he touched (put his fingers into his ears and touched his tongue, Mark 7:31–37), and (3) the four thousand, who were probably Gentiles (Mark 8:1–9). At the head of this symbolic trio is Jesus' encounter with a Gentile woman of the Syrophoenician race (Mark 7:26). Unlike the disciples in the immediately preceding sermon, who did not understand what Jesus said when he spoke in a parable (Mark 7:14–18), she not only understands the metaphor Jesus spoke to her, but immediately adapts it to persuade him to provide her with the overflow of his blessings to Israel: "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs" (Mark 7:28 NASB). Accordingly, Jesus tells the woman her request has been granted: "Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter" (Mark 7:29). The structure of the sermon-sign contributes to the meaning of the text by showing the significance of what Jesus has just taught—a person is not unclean because of what he or she eats. Moreover, the details of the encounter show that this Gentile woman is unique in Mark's gospel because she understands Jesus' parables, engages with his words beyond the Twelve, and thereby sets forth the significant theology that Gentiles may share in the blessings to Israel. Mark shows his theology through the literary device of sermon-signs. Furthermore, his view of women is clarified through an encounter with one whose understanding exceeds that of the Twelve.

In Jesus' day, no one would have thought to ask him a question about women in leadership, so he did not address it directly. However, when a situation involving a woman did cross his path, he stepped up to meet it. He also showed some of what he thought on this issue by how he related to women in his world—often interacting with them in ways that taught, corrected, and rebuked the Twelve. Many of these insights are set forth particularly by the literary use of intercalations, where outer and inner stories are juxtaposed so that the reader will compare them and draw conclusions beyond those found in the individual stories.

DAVID E. MALICK has a ThM and completed PhD coursework at Dallas Theological Seminary. He was an assistant professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, Alabama. He now practices law at RichardsonClement PC, and continues to teach the Scriptures at Christ the King Anglican Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Jesus' relatives and the Beelzebul controversy

Mark 3:20–35 (outer story 3:20–21; inner story 3:22–30; outer story 3:31–35)

Some have argued that the most anyone can say about Jesus' treatment of women is that he was positive toward them in that he spoke with them (Mark 7:24–30; Luke 10:38–42; John 4:1–42), was sensitive to those in need (Mark 1:29–31; 5:21–43), and let those who were unclean touch him (Matt 9:18–26; Luke 8:40–56), but he did not affirm them by appointing them leaders in his community.[13] Some in the Roman Catholic Church have gone so far as to say that Jesus' treatment of his mother, Mary, demonstrates his unwillingness to promote women into leadership, since she was a very special person, but she did not baptize him and she was not a priest. Accordingly, the argument goes that, if Mary was not chosen by Jesus for these leadership positions, no woman should be in church leadership.

One need not resolve this apparent impasse with the questionable arguments of a book such as *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*, which asserts that the apocryphal gospels give women freedom that cannot be found in the canonical gospels. It then claims that the unified church under Constantine put away all of the apocryphal works, such as the Gospel of Thomas, that allowed for a wide variety of beliefs.[14]

On the contrary, a canonical response within the Gospel of Mark may provide at least one reason why Mary was not part of the leadership during the time of Jesus—she was resistant to how Jesus was presenting himself.[15] From a distance, we often assume that, with all of the special revelation Mary received surrounding the birth of Jesus, she was completely compliant and in agreement with the ways in which he ministered and demonstrated who he was. But she, like the rest of us who read the synoptic gospels, was building her theology from the ground up, one brick at a time. When the shepherds came to the stable and reported what the angel had said to them, Luke states that "Mary treasured up all of these things (*rēmata*) pondering (*symballousa*) them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).[16] This does not mean that she completely understood and integrated her Christology at this time.

The first hint we have of Mary's confusion over Jesus' actions is seen when, at the age of twelve, Jesus, without explanation, stays behind at the Passover feast in Jerusalem to be among those of his Father. Mary is the one who questions Jesus, asking, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you" (Luke 2:48). And, upon Jesus' answer, the narrator states that his parents "did not understand the statement which he had made to them" (Luke 2:50).

Likewise, when the wine ran dry at the wedding of Cana, it was Mary who came to Jesus to resolve the dilemma, and Jesus responded with a phrase that demons often used to question Jesus' authority;[17] he said literally, "What with me and with you, woman? (*ti emoi kai soi, gynai*)," which is glossed in the NASB as "Woman, what do I have to do with you?" Then Jesus adds, "My hour has not yet come" (*oupō ēkei ē ōra mou*). This may well imply that Mary wanted Jesus to make a public demonstration of who he was, but he did not think it to be the right time yet; when Jesus went public with his identity, he was soon killed.[18] Therefore, he did what she asked him to do, privately, and she complied, instructing the servants to do whatever he told them (John 2:5).[19]

So, too, when we come to the intercalation in Mark 3:20–21, Mary appears to be out of alignment with what Jesus is doing at the beginning of his ministry. We are told in the outer story that Jesus returned home,[20] and a multitude of people gathered to the extent that Jesus and his disciples could not even eat a meal. When his "own people" (*oi par autou*)[21] heard of this, they went out to take custody[22] of him, saying that "he has lost his senses," or is out of his mind (*exestē*).[23] This section, unique to Mark, is clarified in Mark 3:30 where his "own people" are identified as his mother and his brothers (*ē mētēr autou kai oi adelphoi autou*).[24]

This alignment of Mary with Jesus' brothers may be significant because of the hostile dialogue between Jesus and his brothers prior to the Feast of Booths in John 7:1–9, where we learn that they did not believe in him (*oude gar oi adelphoi autou episteuon eis auton*). As in John 2, where Jesus addressed Mary's request for a public display of who he was, Jesus again says to his brothers that he will not go publically to the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem because his time has not yet fully come (John 7:8). Now, in Mark's outer story, Jesus' mother and brothers join forces to abduct him because they think he has lost his mind.

The outer story breaks off prior to its completion, and an inner story commences describing a conflict between Jesus and the Jerusalem scribes who accuse him, not of being out of his mind, but of being possessed by Beelzebul and of casting out demons by the power of the ruler of demons (Mark 3:22).[25] Jesus confronts the scribes' accusation, stating that Satan cannot cast out Satan because a divided kingdom cannot stand (Mark 3:23–24).[26]

When the outer and inner stories are read together, Jesus' parabolic proclamation in the inner story appears to be problematic—if a house divided cannot stand, how can his house stand, since his own family appears to be divided, with his mother and brothers waiting to take him away? While the scribes in the inner story make a spiritual charge against his character that he is demon-possessed (based upon his activity of casting out demons), Jesus' family makes a psychological charge against his character that he is out of his mind (based upon his activity of ministering without eating).[27] Moreover, in the context leading up to this intercalation, Jesus' closest followers are identified in the call of the Twelve (Mark 3:13–19). In the last verse of the unit, just before the story dealing with Jesus' family, one of the Twelve is identified as "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him" (Mark 3:19). Every manifestation of Jesus' house appears to be divided, from the Twelve to his biological family. The reader is left with the question presented by Jesus himself—how can Jesus' house stand?

The answer is given when the outer story is resumed in Mark 3:31–35.[28] So often, we tend to read Jesus' words outside of the crucible of this context, and they appear to be the musings of one in a daze:

> "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about on 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 3:31–35)

These words are not those spoken by someone in a spiritual trance, but make explicit the truth that Jesus' family consists of those who obey his Father, even if one of the Twelve will betray him and his own mother and brothers think he has lost his mind.[29] In other words, Jesus' house may appear to be divided, but it is not, because his house does not consist of those who are called as part of the Twelve or of those who are biologically related to him. Rather, his house consists of those who obey his Father—they comprise his true family.[30] Therefore, Jesus' house will stand.[31]

Narrative intercalation: Mark 3:20–35

The outer story	The inner story
Continuity: We meet Jesus' relatives	Discontinuity: We never meet Jesus' relatives
Spatial setting: A house	Spatial setting: Jerusalem
Temporal setting: Continues	Temporal setting: Continues
Charge: Relatives make psychological charge against his character based on his activity—is Jesus crazy?	Charge: Enemies make spiritual charge against his character based on his activity—is Jesus demon-possessed?
Jesus counters with authoritative statement	Jesus counters with authoritative statement
Implied question: Is Jesus' house divided?	Statement: A divided house is unable to stand!
Jesus redefines his family along moral lines. Implication: His house is not divided.	

This theological theme rises again in the narrative picture of Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved standing at the foot of the cross in John's gospel:

> When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own *household.* (John 19:26–27)

These words again appear to be odd when placed in a vacuum. Mary is not John's mother, and John is not Jesus' brother,[32] but, as they identify with him at his crucifixion, they become part of Jesus' true family—those who do the will of God.[33] Therefore, they are to care for each other as family henceforth.

One contribution of Mark's intercalation is that it shows the humanity of Mary. Yes, she received the word of God through the angel Gabriel before her miraculous conception. Yes, her very words before Elizabeth became part of Scripture as she echoed themes proclaimed hundred of years earlier by Hannah. Yes, she heard the words of the shepherds, and of Simeon and Anna in the temple at Jesus' dedication. But Jesus' ministry did not develop as she expected, and she appeared to find herself at odds with him on numerous occasions, even to the point of thinking he had lost his mind. This activity may well account for one significant reason why Mary was not given a leadership role by Jesus.[34] Mary is not even named among the women in Luke 8:1–3 who play an essential part in his itinerant ministry. Therefore, Mary's position is not controlling in a discussion about women in leadership. But, in the end, she grows in her understanding and stands in solidarity with Jesus at the foot of the cross, thereby entering into the true family of God.[35]

Jairus's daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage

Mark 5:21–43 (Outer story 5:21–24; inner story 5:25–34; outer story 5:35–43)

This material is set forth as an intercalation in all three synoptic gospels (cf. Matt 9:18–26 and Luke 8:40–56). Time seems to run as a continuous thread throughout the two stories and thus becomes the constant that highlights the contrast.[36] Other than Jesus, the only named person in these stories is Jairus,[37] and he is identified as an important man, one of the rulers of the synagogue. He also comes with a matter of extreme urgency, announcing that his dear daughter (*thygatrion*)[38] is near death and asking Jesus to come and lay hands on her so that she might be made well (*sōzō*) and live (*zaō*).

However, as Jesus goes with Jairus, he is interrupted by an unclean woman in the crowd who touches Jesus' garment and unintentionally stops the rescue mission as Jesus turns to ask the crowd, "Who touched my garments?" Although Jairus says nothing, Jesus' disciples are indignant:[39] "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus continues to search to find the one who had done this.

At this crossroad, as the clock continues to tick for Jairus and his daughter, the tension in the two stories rises, contrasts multiply, and we are once again given a glimpse into Jesus' view of women.

Jairus is obviously a male, and the woman with the hemorrhage is obviously female. Jairus is named, but the woman is anonymous. Jairus is a leader of a synagogue, but the woman may not have gone to synagogue because her constant bleeding would have made her ritually impure according to Leviticus 15:25–27.[40] Jairus is a father with an ailing daughter, but the woman has no family to speak of.[41] Jairus has asked Jesus publically to heal his daughter, but the woman sought Jesus secretly.[42] The looming question at this nexus is whether Jesus will arrive in time to heal Jairus's daughter. This delay for an unknown, unclean woman may cause the death of Jairus's daughter. Maybe that is one reason why the disciples were so impatient with his question.

Nothing in these stories disparages Jairus, but everything coalesces to focus on the obscure woman.[43] Jesus will bring this vital rescue mission for a prominent religious leader to a standstill to exalt her faith. The narrator has allowed us to know her musings before she is publically identified:[44] "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well." And her thoughts are realized when she touches his garments "and immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed from the suffering, or torment (*apo tēs mastigos*)."

Jesus does not allow her faith and healing to remain private. He asks, "Who touched my garments?" and looks around to see who has done it.[45] She alone knows the answer to his question and humbly comes to him in fear and trembling, telling all the truth. That truth includes the information the narrator has already shared with the reader about her long period of uncleanness, her suffering (*pathousa*) at the hands of many physicians who only made her condition worse, and her poverty because she "had spent all that she had" for treatment. When Jesus stops an emergency run for the leader of a synagogue for this woman, he emphasizes just how important she is in his eyes. Then he emphasizes her faith: "Daughter, your faith (*pistis*)[46] has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your suffering (*apo tēs mastigos sou*)."

At this point, the first story resumes with the hard announcement by those who came from the house of the "ruler of the synagogue" (*erchontai apo tou archisynagōgou*)[47] that his daughter is dead.[48] But the echo and example of the woman from the inner story becomes the lesson that Jesus must give to "the ruler of the synagogue" (*tō archisynagōgō*): "Stop being afraid, only believe" (*mē phobou, monon pisteue*).[49] This unknown, unclean woman who suffered for twelve years believed that Jesus could save her. Jairus is told to emulate her faith as he hears that his twelve-year-old daughter has died.[50] Not only did Jesus show his interest in the unknown woman by stopping to make public her faith, but her faith is now used to instruct the ruler of the synagogue. These narrative encounters of Jesus with women are not only stories about what happened, but of what happens; they are theological pictures that demonstrate the value of women to teach others, even male leaders in the community.

The narrative chords between Jairus's daughter and the woman who was healed sympathetically resonate for the benefit of Jairus and the reader.[51] Both Jairus's daughter and the woman are called "daughter" (*thygatēr* in Mark 5:34–35 and *thygatrion* in 5:23).[52] These emotional titles express the endearment of family that Jesus feels toward the suffering woman, as Jairus feels for his daughter. No doubt, when Jesus called the woman "daughter," that word resonated deep within Jairus as he thought about his dear, sick girl. Just as Jairus's daughter needed to be healed, or saved (*sōzō*, Mark 5:23), so too was the woman healed, or saved, from her illness (*sōzō*, Mark 5:29, 34). Now that Jairus's daughter has died, the need for salvation is even greater, and it will result in a resurrection (*anistēmi*, Mark 5:42). Furthermore, it is only at the end of the first story that we learn that Jairus's daughter was twelve years old (Mark 5:42).[53] Obviously, Jairus knew this all along, but now the reader is brought under the umbrella, revealing that the length of the woman's suffering and the age of the suffering daughter were the same (Mark 5:25, 42). This woman's faith, after twelve years of suffering, was directly applicable to Jairus, whose twelve-year-old daughter had just died. And, just as Jesus made an unclean woman who touched him instantly clean, he was able to make an unclean daughter who had died[54] instantly clean by touching her and telling her to rise.[55] The first healing happened in secret, but was made public by having the woman confess in public, while the second healing occurred before others—Peter, James, John, and her parents—but was then sworn to secrecy,[56] emphasizing that the point of the miracles may not have been the healings themselves, but the interaction between the faith of the woman and the needed faith of Jairus in Jesus.

The structure of this intercalation is evident in the following table:

Narrative intercalation: Mark 5:21–43

The outer stories	The inner story
Continuity: Journey to save Jairus's daughter	Discontinuity: We never meet Jairus's daughter
Spatial setting: A plea to come heal Jairus's daughter	Spatial setting: Woman with a hemorrhage
Temporal setting: Continues	Temporal setting: Continues
Contrasts: Jairus is male, leader of synagogue, father, asks Jesus publicly to heal daughter, receives miracle in private, sworn to secrecy	Contrasts: Woman is female, has no name, excluded from synagogue (Lev), no family mentioned, touches Jesus secretly, receives miracle secretly, confesses in public
Continuity: Female, twelve years old, unclean (dead), is touched by Jesus, delay in healing	Continuity: Female, sick for twelve years, unclean (hemorrhage), touches Jesus, healed instantly
Gap: Will Jesus arrive in time to heal the little girl? Delay for woman may cause girl's death.	Resolution: The girl has died / hope / resurrection!

Through this confluence of two stories, Jesus is not only seen to be interested in women, even at the distress of a prominent male religious leader, but to provide an essential lesson to that leader in the face of his terror by the faith of a woman in the midst of her suffering.

The death plot of the leaders and the anointing at Bethany

Mark 14:1–11 (Outer story 14:1–2; inner story 14:3–9; outer story 14:10–11)

This Markan intercalation is also employed by Matthew (Matt 26:1–16), but Luke only includes the outer story (Luke 22:1–6). The inner story appears to stand on its own in John (John 12:1–8).

The outer story begins two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread with a plot by the Jewish religious leaders (the chief priests and the scribes) to secretly apprehend Jesus and kill him (Mark 14:1–2).[57] In light of Jesus' popularity with the people, the dilemma before the leaders is how they can arrest him secretly:[58]

> [T]he chief priests and the scribes were seeking[59] how to seize Him by stealth and kill *Him;* for they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise there might be a riot of the people."

The theme of Jesus' impending death crosses into the next story where Jesus is anointed for his burial. Again, the unspoken question arises—How is the death of Jesus going to happen? Further-

more, the second narrative takes place at a different location—in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper (Mark 14:3). The irony is apparent: in the setting of the holy feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, the religious leaders are plotting Jesus' murder, while Jesus is just outside the holy city in the home of an unclean leper. The reader may wonder, "Who are the upright?" Appearances may be deceptive. This irony will only increase as the stories unfold.

The inner story develops as an anonymous woman breaks an alabaster jar of nard and pours it down upon Jesus' head (Mark 14:3).[60] The value of the oil is amplified by the piling up of adjectives: an alabaster vase of ointment, pure nard, expensive (*alabastron myrou nardou pistikēs polytelous*). The value of her gift marks the turning point in the stories, as certain unidentified ones (*tines*)[61] are reported as being inwardly aroused with disapproval (*aganaktountes pros eautous*) and asking why this ointment has been ruined (*ti ē apōleia autē tou myrou gegonen*), since it could have been sold for nearly a year's wages (more than 300 denarii) and given to people who are poor (*tois ptōchois*). So they were reproaching, or scolding, her (*enebrimōnto autē*, Mark 14:4–5).

At this point in the narrative, negative questions about Jesus may be rising in the reader's mind: the religious leaders are seeking to capture and kill him, he is in the house of an unclean leper, and some woman is pouring over him very expensive oil that could have been used to help the poor.

Jesus concludes the second story and changes the direction of the narrative as he pushes back with his understanding of the woman's actions:

> Let her alone! Why do you trouble her? She has worked a good work for me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish, you are able to do good for them, but you do not always have me. What she is capable of, she did; she anticipated to anoint my body unto burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the good news[62] is proclaimed in the whole world, what she did will be told in memory of her.[63] (Mark 14:6–9, my translation)

Jesus' elevation of this anonymous woman exemplifies Mark's theology, where the nameless are the followers of Jesus as they "come out of anonymity and fade back into it." Their wealth is gladly given in devotion to God, and they "do not allow conventional practices . . . to stand in the way of their faith and love."[64] However, the full measure of this woman is only seen against the stark relief of the outer story as it resumes in the next two verses.

Although the woman was anonymous in the inner story, the outer story begins again by specifically identifying "Judas Iscariot who was one of the Twelve" (Mark 14:10). The juxtaposition of these two characters is Mark's way of asking the reader to compare them, and, accordingly, to say more through an intercalation than could have been said in either story on its own.

The gap first raised in the outer story concerning how the religious leaders are going to arrange for Jesus' secret arrest to kill him, and resumed in the inner story as Jesus is anointed for his burial, is now answered in the resumption of the outer story as we are told that Judas, one of the Twelve,[65] is going[66] to betray Jesus. In other words, Judas is going to provide a way for the religious leaders to apprehend Jesus secretly[67] and then kill him (cf. 14:1–2):

> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests in order to hand him over to them. And those hearing rejoiced and promised to give him silver. And he sought[68] how he should conveniently[69] hand him over. (Mark 14:10–11, my translation)

Unlike the woman who shows her devotion to Jesus by anointing his head with expensive oil, Judas betrays his master. Unlike the woman who pours out perfume worth nearly 300 denarii, Judas receives a promise of an unspecified sum of money[70] to hand Jesus over.[71] Unlike those in Bethany who scorn the woman for the good work she has done, the chief priests rejoice over Judas's treachery. Unlike the woman who is praised by Jesus for taking what she had to perform a good work in preparation for his burial, Judas takes the knowledge he has and does a work of disloyalty.[72]

These contrasts between the nameless woman and the named member of the Twelve uniquely call out to the reader from the comparison of the two stories, leading to the inevitable conclusion that Judas is an example, *par excellence*, of a failed disciple, while the woman is an example of a true, faithful disciple.[73]

A summary of these two stories might be seen in the following table:

An intercalation: Mark 14:1–11

Outer story	Inner story
Death plot of the leaders and Judas	The anointing at Bethany
Leaders plot Jesus' death (gap: How?) Judas's action is a betrayal unto death	The woman's anointing is for Jesus' burial (gap: How?) Woman's action is a preparation for his death
Judas is named	Woman is unnamed
Judas betrays his master	Woman anoints his head with expensive oil, showing her devotion
Judas receives promise of unspecified sum to betray Jesus	Woman pours out perfume worth 300 denarii
Priests laugh at Judas's treachery	Some of the inner circle censure the woman
Judas demonstrates disloyalty	Jesus praises the woman's deed
Judas: failed discipleship	Woman: faithful discipleship

Once again, Mark's narrative structure brings a woman to the forefront—even over one of the Twelve.

Conclusion

Mark may never have known the meta-language of an "intercalation" to describe his combining of stories, but he skillfully used the narrative technique to aid the reader in placing the outer and

inner stories against one another with the result that their sum equaled more than their parts. Moreover, the three interactions we examined in this study uniquely highlighted the anonymous over the named, whether it was "whoever does the will of God" over Jesus' mother and brothers who are seeking to apprehend him; or the faith of a woman healed from suffering over Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue who needs to trust in Jesus in the face of his own suffering; or the woman who did what she could to anoint Jesus for his burial over against Judas, one of the Twelve, who did what he could to betray him.

While the first unit showed why a particular woman, Jesus' mother, may not have been a leader in Jesus' earthly ministry, the next two units showed not only how women are exemplary in their faith and devotion to Jesus, but also how that faith and devotion are instructive to a male religious leader and over against a man who was one of Jesus' inner circle. These three noncontroversial passages are but a few seeds from a great bushel that must be sown as a basis for a biblical theology of women against which the more difficult passages should then be read.

Notes

1. It must be granted that one could question the statement that there are "clearer" or "less disputed" passages because of the multitudinous challenges to interpreting Scripture. Nevertheless, there are some passages that pose greater interpretive issues than others. We refer here to these passages with fewer interpretive issues, since they are often used to form a foundation for a particular doctrine. "In the case of difficult or obscure passages, the interpreter should give precedence to biblical passages where the doctrine is clear." Jim Wilhoit and Leland Ryken, *Effective Bible Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 126. Under the category of "the analogy of scripture," Grant R. Osborne explains, "Milton Terry's dictum still stands: 'No single statement or obscure passage of one book can be allowed to set aside a doctrine which is clearly established by many passages' (1890: 578). I would strengthen this by adding that doctrines should not be built on a single passage but rather should summarize all that Scripture says on that topic." *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 28. Millard J. Erickson sets forth his method of theology in part under the subcategory of "unification of the biblical materials" as follows: "This means we are proceeding on the assumption that there are a unity and a consistency among these several books and authors. We will, then, emphasize the points of agreement among the Synoptic Gospels and interpret the rest in that light. We will treat any apparent discrepancies as differing and complementary interpretations rather than contradictions." *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 73. Erickson applies this method to the issue of perseverance of the saints by harmonizing Hebrews 6 with what he considers to be the clear teaching of John 10:27–30. *Christian Theology,* 1003–05. An example of Wayne Grudem's use of this approach may be found in his chapter on "perseverance of the saints" where, after discussing the emphasis of Heb 3:14, he states, "Attention to the context of Hebrews 3:14 will keep us from using this and other similar passages in a pastorally inappropriate way. We must remember that there are other evidences elsewhere in Scripture that give Christians assurance of salvation, so *we should not think that assurance that we belong to Christ is impossible until we die.*" *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 793 (emphasis original). This study suggests that there may be numerous, clearer passages that set forth points of agreement regarding women that must be used to interpret the more difficult passages of 1 Tim 2 and 1 Cor 11 and 14.

2. "[I]ntercalation has gone by a number of names in scholarly debate over the Gospel of Mark, including interpolation, framing, bracketing, 'sandwiching,' and intercalation." Tom Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories: Narration, Definition, and Function," Andrews University Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 18 (Andrews University Press: 1993), 4. Shepherd provides eight characteristics that occur in each intercalation: "1. apart from initial focalization, the outer story is the temporal border of the inner story. 2. There is a unique pattern of focalization and defocalization of the two stories which includes incomplete defocalization of the outer story at the point where breakaway occurs to the inner story. This creates a 'gap' for the outer story across the inner story. 3. A new character or newly named character is noted at the reentry into the outer story. 4. Active character crossover does not occur between the two stories, except for Jesus. 5. Parallel actions are done by contrasting groups or contrasting actions are done by parallel groups in the two stories. 6. The outer story has an elliptical action which crosses the inner story and contrasts with the actions of the inner story. 7. The plots of the two stories interlink following a turn-return pattern. 8. An ellipsis of the outer story occurs across the inner story." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 327.

3. James R. Edwards is of the opinion that "*The middle story nearly always provides the key to the theological purpose* of the sandwich. The insertion interprets the flanking halves. To use the language of medicine, the transplanted organ enlivens the host material." "Markan Sandwiches: The Significance of Interpolations in Markan Narratives," *Novum Testamentum* 31, no. 3 (1989): 196.

4. Tom Shepherd, "The Narrative Function of Markan Intercalation," *New Testament Studies* 41 (1995), 522. F. Gerald Downing has sought out literary parallels among the Hellenistic and Roman histories, lives, theatrical comedies, and romances yielding only a few examples, none of which is completely analogous. F. Gerald Downing, "Markan Intercalation in Cultural Context," in *Narrativity in Biblical and Related Texts*, ed. G. J. Brooke and J.-D. Kaestli (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press 2000), 105–17. Edwards suggests examples from the Hebrew Scriptures in Hos 1–3 (Hosea-God-Gomer) and 2 Sam 11–12 (David-Nathan-Bathsheba), but notes a significant distinction when he states, "These stories differ from Mark's sandwiches in one important respect: their B-episodes are intentional commentaries on the flanking A-episodes, whereas in Mark the B-episode is (with exception of 4:1–20) always an independent narrative." "Markan Sandwiches," 201–03. Perhaps Mark is employing a technique observed in Gen 37, 38, and 39, where the Joseph story is interrupted by the story of Judah. Time extends in the inner story through Judah's "grandchildren" before the Joseph story picks up again from exactly the point where it terminated—as he was taken down to Egypt (cp. Gen 37:36 with Gen 39:1). Through this literary device, the writer in Genesis has created a dramatic irony for the reader, who compares Judah with Joseph and sees that "God's design for Joseph's prominence could not be set aside as easily as Judah thought. In his own family, and in spite of his own indifference to Tamar, Judah saw the strange outworking of the plan whereby the younger gained priority in the family. The next chapter of Genesis then presents Joseph alive, and prospering in Egypt." Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 612; see also Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16—50*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 363–65.

5. As David Rhoads and Donald Michie write, "The related stories illuminate and enrich each other, commenting on and clarifying the meaning, one of the other. This is sometimes done by comparison. . . . At other times, the framing provides commentary by contrast. . . . Details of these comparisons and contrasts highlight major themes of the gospel." *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1982), 51; see also Frank Kermode, who notes our tendency not to give intercalations interpretive attention: "We tend not to give them the kind of attention we would think appropriate to the interpolated sequences of an epyllion, whether Alexandrian or in the imitations

of Catullus or the Elizabethan erotic poets. There we see an invitation to interpret, here [Mark 14:53–72] the word 'homiletic' dismisses the case." *The Genesis of Secrecy on the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 114–15.

6. Shepherd, "Narrative Function," 523. Robert Fowler writes, "The intercalations exhibit a hermeneutical function for duality. The intercalated episodes are sharply opposed to each other, but at the same time they frequently contain so many verbal echoes of each other that the reader can scarcely fail to take up the implicit invitation to read the framed episode in the light of the frame episode and vice versa. The frame episode and the framed episode are thus placed on a par with each other, with neither having priority, either logically or chronologically. Intercalation is narrative sleight of hand, a crafty manipulation of the discourse level that creates the illusion that the two episodes are taking place simultaneously. In an intercalation neither episode has begun until both have begun, and neither is concluded until both are concluded." *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 143–44. Shepherd explains the new story outcome as a function of dramatic irony: "We see the two stories juxtaposed, intertwined, yet we realize that they are still separate enough to comment one on the other. The one story becomes the ironic contrast to the other informing the reader of a new plot, a new sense of direction in the Gospel." "Narrative Function," 539. Picking up on dramatic irony in intercalations, F. Gerald Downing writes, "There is then a dramatic irony evoked, for the author and the hearer obviously understand more than the protagonists can, unable as the latter are to share in comparing and contrasting the stories which both link and separate them." "Markan Intercalation in Cultural Context," 107. James Edwards argues that the literary technique has a theological purpose: "the sandwiches emphasize the major motifs of the Gospel, especially the meaning of faith, discipleship, bearing witness, and the dangers of apostasy." "Markan Sandwiches," 196.

7. Shepherd, "Narrative Function," 523.

8. The number of intercalations in the Gospel of Mark is disputed. Shepherd sets forth a table in the appendix to his dissertation compiling a list of twenty intercalations identified by nineteen scholars. He works extensively with six passages that most scholars identify as intercalations. Among the six, the three examined in this paper are largely agreed upon. Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories" 388–92; see also Geert Van Oyen, "Intercalation and Irony in the Gospel of Mark" in *Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. Frans van Segbroeck and C. M. Tuckett, vol. 2 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1992), 949, 951.

9. As Leland Ryken states, "To begin, literature is experiential. This means that the subject matter of literature is human experience. The approach to human experience, moreover, is concrete rather than abstract. Literature does not, for example, discourse about virtue but instead shows a virtuous person acting. We might say that literature does not tell *about* characters and actions and concepts but *presents* characters in action." *The Literature of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 13. An example of narrative that was later made explicit in didactic literature is Abram's encounter with Melchizedek (cf. Gen 14:18–20 with Heb 7:1–10). The narrative in Genesis showed what the writer of Hebrews later told.

10. See S. Craig Glickman, "The Temptation Account in Matthew and Luke," Ph.D. diss., University of Basel (1983): 407–24; and *Knowing Christ: Life-Changing Glimpses of Our Lord* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1980), 49–60; see also Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1—9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994): 349, 360, 383.

11. As Adele Berlin has stated, "And we must look not only for *what* the text says, but also *how* it says it." *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, Bible and Literature Series, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 9 (Sheffield: Almond, 1983), 20.

12. In their discussion of "episodes in a series of three" in the Gospel of Mark, Rhoads and Michie note that "a threefold series is no mere repetition of similar events, but involves a progressive development. Each incident uncovers more about the characters or the conflicts, and the third episode fully reveals the dynamic of the entire series. . . . [W]hen the series unfolds, the reader then looks back from the perspective of the third scene and understands more clearly the issues involved in the first and second scenes." *Mark as Story*, 55.

13. "Only a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination. The Lord Jesus chose men (*ver*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The church recognizes itself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason, the ordination of women is not possible." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., par. 1577, http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm#.

14. Elaine Pagels, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003).

15. This brief discussion of Mary is not unaware of the differences that exist between a Protestant and Catholic view of Mary. See *Journeys of Faith: Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Anglicanism*; ed. Robert L. Plummer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 121–122, 239. Without attempting to address the significant theological differences, or even daring to propose a *via media*, this essay attempts to focus solely upon the scriptural witness to Mary, especially in the intercalation of Mark 3:20–35. I am not arguing that Mary "sinned" in any way, but that she wrestled with her imperfect, and growing, understanding of who Jesus was and what he was doing. She, like all of us, had to build her Christology one brick at a time, from the ground up. Accordingly, Catholicism's view of Mary need not turn this intercalation into a less clear, or disputed, passage.

16. "When Luke combines the idea of keeping the words in the heart with *symballein*, the idea may be that Mary has preserved in her heart the mysterious words and events that surrounded Jesus' birth (or his finding in the Temple) *trying to interpret them*. This would mean that Mary did not grasp immediately all that she had heard but listened willingly, letting the events sink into her memory and seeking to work out their meaning." Raymond Brown et al., ed., *Mary in the New Testament: A Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1978), 150–51. See also Joseph Fitzmeyer's discussion of the verb *synetērei* in the Septuagint of Gen 37:11 and Dan 4:28, where he concludes, "Both the Genesis and Daniel passages show a person puzzled by what he has heard, keeping the words in mind in an effort to fathom their meaning. This too would be the picture of Mary here." *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes,* Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 413. Darrell Bock also observes, "It is debated whether this term [*symballousa*] suggests that Mary did put the events completely together. In light of passages like Mark 3:20–35, it seems unlikely she figured them all out in these early days." *Luke, Volume 1:1:1—9:50*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 222–23.

17. In Mark 5:7, the demonized man from the tombs ran up to Jesus and cried in a great voice, saying, "*Ti emoi kai soi?*" Cf. Luke 8:28; see also Mark 1:24 (*legōn, ti ēmin kai soi, Iēsou Nazarēne? ēlthes apolesai ēmas?*) cf. Luke 4:34. This may be a Semitism from the Hebrew Scriptures; see Frederick W. Danker, Walter A. Bauer, William Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (hereafter BDAG; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. "ἐγώ." "When someone is asked to get involved in something which he feels is no business of his, he may use the phrase, meaning: 'That is your business; how am I involved?' Examples are 2 Kgs 3:13; Hos 14:8. . . . Thus, at least what Mary is asking for, or the

aspect under which she is speaking to Jesus, does not belong to Jesus' understanding of the work his Father has given him to do." Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament*, 191.

18. As Craig Keener states, "[T]he primary reason for the rebuff must be that his mother does not understand what this sign will cost Jesus: It starts him on the road to his hour, the cross. Thus John speaks of the 'beginning' of Jesus' signs (2:11), referring to the 'beginning' of a public ministry (6:64; 8:25; 15:27; 16:4) destined to culminate in his final 'hour.'" *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 506.

19. "In this passage Jesus' mother continues with the 'holy chutzpah' demonstrated in 2:3; in 2:5 she bids the servants to do whatever Jesus says, thus both recognizing Jesus' authority and demonstrating her expectation that he is going to do something to change the situation." Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 509.

20. There is an actual reference to a "house" where Jesus is located in Mark 3:20 (*kai erchetai eis oikon*). The term "house" will be played upon as a *Leitwort* (leading word) throughout the intercalation with reference to the "house divided" and the "house of the strong man" in the inner story (Mark 3:26–27), the physical house in the outer story, and Jesus' metaphorical "house" standing outside (his relatives). See Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 114, 135.

21. The Western witnesses (D, W, *it*) move the focus away from Jesus' family to the scribes and others (*peri autou oi grammateis kai oi loipoi*). However, when the outer story is picked up again in 3:31, it is clear that this cryptic phrase refers to Jesus' mother and brothers (*ē mētēr autou kai oi adelphoi autou*, cf. Matt 12:46; Luke 8:19). Bruce M. Metzger writes, "The original reading οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ [*oi par' autou*] ('his friends' or 'his relatives') apparently proved to be so embarrassing that D W *al* altered it to read, "When *the scribes and the others* had heard about him, they went out to seize him, for they said, 'He is beside himself.'" *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (New York, NY: American Bible Society, 1994), 70. See also Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), 86 ("It is likely that Mark intended οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ [*oi par' autou*] to be explained in verse 31 [*ē mētēr autou kai oi adelphoi autou*]"); Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament*, 55–57 ("The comparison of the two scenes makes it likely that for Mark the 'mother and brothers' of 3:31 who arrive [at the house in Capernaum] asking for Jesus are the same as the 'his own' of 3:21 who set out [from Nazareth] to seize him.")

22. "The phrases about Jesus' family are strong and definite: they set out to *take charge* (Greek *kratēsai*)—a verb used several times in Mark 6 and 14 with the meaning 'to arrest.' Furthermore the expression *people were saying* in its Greek form (*elegon*) could equally well include members of his family." C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday), 252.

23. "Paul uses the same verb in 2 Cor. 5:13, speaking of himself in contrast to his correspondents." Mann, *Mark*, 252. Citing Wisd Sol 5:1–5, William Lane notes, "The entire incident calls to mind passages in which the man of God is despised by family and contemporaries who mistake his zeal for God as 'madness.'" *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 139.

24. In Mark 3:32, "sisters" are included (*kai ai adelphai sou*) in A D Γ 700 *pm* it vg^{mss} sy^{hmg}, but this reading is disputed even though Jesus does add "sister" in 3:35 (*outos adelphos mou kai adelphē*). See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 70.

25. Discourse time appears to continue between the two stories. As Shepherd observes, "Story time thus continues straight through the intercalation. The spatial markers make this clear. In Mark 3:20 Jesus enters a house. The result of his active ministry is lack of time to eat. This report comes to his relatives who set out to seize him, with the cry, 'He's crazy!' The inner story begins at this point and the accusation of the scribes is met by Jesus *summoning* them. This spatial indicator illustrates that the time relationship has continued straight from 3:20 through this point in 3:23. The locale has not changed (the house), as is made clear later in the return to the outer story where the relatives of Jesus wait *outside* to talk to him (3:31). Thus, story time in the Mark 3 intercalation continues straight through both stories." "Narrative Function," 525–26; cf. Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 130–33.

26. Even though Lane does not acknowledge the actual structure of an intercalation, stating that this is a "self contained unit," he cannot help but hear the echo of the outer stories where Jesus states that a house divided cannot stand. He writes in a footnote, "Is there a reference here to the division in Jesus' own household, which is illustrated by Ch. 3:20f, 31–35?" *The Gospel According to Mark*, 143 n. 90.

27. Shepherd keenly observes, "Interesting parallels exist between these two diverse groups, the relatives of Jesus (his 'friends') and the scribes from Jerusalem (his enemies). Both groups bring charges against Jesus based upon some activity he has been doing. The judgment of each party makes some statement about Jesus' interior state. They contend that the activity he carries on reflects negatively on his character. Jesus, on the other hand, indicates the fallacy of each of these groups by means of authoritative statements. The two groups, who never meet, are nevertheless drawn together by the juxtaposition of the two stories and by the intertwining of the charges and rebuttals which link their individual stories. What is so interesting is that the two *opposite* groups, relatives (friends of Jesus) and scribes (enemies of Jesus), actually act in *similar* ways against Jesus and are countered by his authoritative word." "Narrative Function," 529; see also Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 121–22.

28. "A Chiasm is present in both the outer and inner stories in regards to the actors as speakers or action makers. In the outer story, the pattern is Jesus, crowd, relatives, relatives, crowd, Jesus. In the inner story, the pattern is scribes, Jesus, scribes. Thus Jesus as actor is at both ends of the intercalation and at the center." Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 125.

29. Shepherd writes, "Two themes which arise in this intercalation are Christology and discipleship. The challenge of Jesus' sanity and the accusation about the source of his power are challenges to the claim of Messiahship. The responses by Jesus are therefore a teaching on his Christological role. He is on the side of God. He has the Holy Spirit and his true family do the will of God. On the level of discipleship (presented from the standpoint of family relation), the true disciple cannot oppose the mission of Jesus even though the mission appears 'crazy' from a human viewpoint." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 129.

30. Jesus transforms the social understanding of family into a moral understanding. This transformation is fitting as the social accusation that he is crazy in 3:21 shifted to a moral accusation in 3:22 that he had Beelzebul. See Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 113–114 n. 1, 117.

31. Shepherd summarizes the dramatic irony in this intercalation as follows: "Jesus' family goes out to 'save' him and in the process ally themselves with his enemies. Jesus argues that a divided house cannot stand, yet his relatives are divided from him. However, they are not his true relatives." "Narrative Function," 539.

32. As a matter of fact, Mary has other children, according to John 7:1–10. Therefore, it is unlikely that the point of this narrative is "to report simply that after Jesus died his mother went to live in the home of a favorite disciple. To interpret John thus would be to misinterpret the way the evangelist uses symbols, as well as the significance he attributes to the beloved disciple. Moreover, all the other Johannine crucifixion episodes have clear symbolic and theological significance, and by analogy that should be true of 19:25–27 as well." Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament*, 201–02, n. 465; see also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Anchor Bible (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 923 (who sees Mary as Lady Zion and the new Eve). Keener appears to disagree, seeing Jesus as literally entrusting Mary to the believing community. *The Gospel of John*, 1144–45; likewise, Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John: The*

English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 811–12.

33. "[T]he new mother-son relationship proclaimed by Jesus in John 19:26–27 reflects the replacement of his natural family by a new family of disciples, the eschatological family we spoke of in reference to Mark 3:31–35. We saw that in Mark's view the physical family members were not among those whom Jesus pointed to as his eschatological family of disciples, i.e., those of whom he says, 'Behold my mother and my brothers!' . . . but at the foot of the cross Jesus gives his physical mother a spiritual role as mother of the disciple par excellence, and the disciple a role as her son. Thus there emerges a familial relationship in terms of discipleship." Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament*, 212–13, 218, 288. As R. V. G. Tasker states, "Beneath the cross Christian fellowship is born, a fellowship wholly different from all purely human fellowship based on natural kinship, mutual sympathy, or a common outlook upon human affairs. The great and distinctive characteristic of this new fellowship is that all who enjoy it are drawn to one another by the consciousness that they are all brothers for whom Christ died." *The Gospel According to St. John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 211.

34. There is some merit to an argument that the Twelve are portrayed throughout the Gospel of Mark negatively—as lacking understanding, hard in heart, and influenced by Herod and the Pharisees (see Mark 8:14–21). As a matter of fact, Peter's resistance to Jesus' impending suffering is rebuked as a temptation from Satan (Mark 8:31–33). Therefore, it might be argued that it does not follow that Mary may not have been given a leadership role in Jesus' earthly ministry because of her resistance to Jesus, when the Twelve do have a leadership role in spite of their resistance. However, a contextual reading of the narrative may shed light on this apparent quandary. First, the narrative regarding Mary and Jesus occurs in the early, Galilean portion of Mark's gospel where the disciples are not portrayed as resisting Jesus' ministry. Up to this point, only the demons (Mark 1:24, 34; 3:11–12), the religious leaders (Mark 2:6–7, 16, 24; 3:2–6), and the Herodians (Mark 3:6) are critical of Jesus (and perhaps the disciples of John in Mark 2:18, but this may be merely a question of clarification). Those who will make up the Twelve "immediately" follow after him (Mark 1:16–20; 2:14), and the multitudes enthusiastically seek him out (Mark 1:32–34, 37, 45; 2:1–4, 12, 13; 3:7–10). It is in this immediate context that Mark sets forth Mary and Jesus' brothers as resisting him, and their resistance is parallel with the resistance of the religious leaders. Although the narrator never explicitly states where the Twelve are in this intercalation, it may not be too much, in view of the broader context, and especially Jesus' calling of the Twelve in the immediately adjacent pericope (Mark 3:13–19), to suppose that they are in the house with the multitude whom Jesus is addressing, while Jesus' family and the religious leaders are outside the house. Therefore, in the narrative world of Mark, it appears that Mary and Jesus' brothers are distinct from the Twelve—especially at this point in the narrative. The only one of the Twelve who might be likened to them is Judas, who was foreshadowed in Mark 3:19 as the one who betrayed him, and then specifically aligned himself with the religious leaders against Jesus in Mark 14:10–11. (For more on Judas, see the discussion below on the intercalation in Mark 14:1–11.) By the end of Mark's gospel, everyone appears to have forsaken Jesus—even the women (Mark 16:1–8). The only one left as a witness to Jesus is the reader. See Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 295–99; Van Oyen, "Intercalation and Gospel Irony," 961. However, this synthetic reading of the gospel need not override the contextual distinctions set forth in the progression of the narrative where Jesus' mother and brothers are distinct from the disciples, and even the multitude, and more closely aligned with the religious leaders as they make accusations against Jesus. Therefore, Mary's resistance to Jesus may have been one reason why she was not given a leadership role with the Twelve.

35. Of course, Mary is also found in the upper room with the eleven apostles, the women, and Jesus' brothers in Acts 1:14. In placing her here, Luke is identifying her with the believing community as a disciple. As one author stated, emphasizing the unity in Luke's writings, "Mary's first response to the good news was: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.' The real import of Acts 1:14 is to remind the reader that she had not changed her mind." Brown et al., *Mary in the New Testament*, 177. One might wonder why Mary is not included among the leadership after the resurrection, since she is now included with the believing community, or why other women who were not resistant to Jesus' ministry were not included in leadership. These questions exceed the scope of this study, but if there was a cultural discomfort with women in leadership, it may not have entered the leaders' minds after Pentecost to place women in leadership or to raise it as an issue at the time. This may be similar to Paul's dealing with slavery in Ephesians and Colossians. He does not resist the Roman culture that prominently makes use of slaves, but does undo its ethical moorings by addressing the responsibility of masters to slaves, and by his discussion of Onesimus in Philemon.

36. Shepherd notes, "Story time continues across the entire intercalation. . . . When the woman's story ends, the story of Jairus picks up again, but not where it left off. The woman's story has 'consumed time' or taken time in the Jairus story, thus the two stories are temporally interlinked." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 140.

37. The name Jairus is absent from several Western witnesses (D *it*). See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 73–74, for arguments for the inclusion of the name where it is concluded: "[F]rom a text-critical point of view it is more probable that the name Jairus was accidently dropped during the transmission of part of the Western text (represented by one Greek manuscript and several Old Latin witnesses) than that it was added, at the same point in the narrative, in all the other textual groups." The name in Hebrew means "he who enlightens" (*yā'îr*); see BDAG, s.v. "᾽Ιάϊρος," 103.

38. The diminutive (*thygatrion*) is probably used as a term of affection or endearment. See Mark 7:25; BDAG, s.v. "θυγάτριον"; Mann, *Mark*, 284.

39. Rather than criticize the disciples, Shepherd sees the humor in the scene that results in our identification with the disciples: "It is really very funny that Jesus says, 'Who touched me?' Jesus is the comedian in this scene. The disciples come across as the typical 'straight man' in their response, 'You see the crowd pressing upon you and you say "Who touched me?"' We have to laugh at the disciples, because we know who did touch Jesus and that it was a very meaningful touch. The point is, that in a straight man we do not usually see someone we disparage, but rather in all too common depiction of real life that the comedian lampoons. Seeing from the angle of omniscience we catch a glimpse of the comical nature of our own lives. Thus, we might actually see identification with the disciples here via the comedy." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 148 n. 1. Even if one has questions about the strength of an analogy between Jesus and Jerry Lewis, there is dramatic irony taking place for the reader that magnifies the distance between the understanding of Jesus and his disciples. As Lane states, "Their impatience with the Lord reflects an awareness that their immediate mission was to assist a girl who was dying, and delay could be fatal. It also betrays that they had no understanding of what had taken place." *The Gospel According to Mark*, 193.

40. Mark does not comment on this, but those aware of the purity laws in Leviticus, the implied reader, would have understood this implication. Regarding Lev 15:26–27, Baruch A. Levine notes, "This is the primary symptom: irregularity of blood discharges, which either persist beyond the regular menstrual period or are unconnected with it altogether. A woman who has discharges of blood not due to her menstruation bears the same impurity as a menstruating woman for as long as the discharges last." *Leviticus* ויקרא: *The Traditional Hebrew Text and the New JPS Translation Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication

Society, 1989), 98. Accordingly, in discussing the earlier passage in Lev 15:19, Levine states, "[a]nyone who has contact with a woman during her menstrual period is impure until evening," and, "whatever the woman sits on or lies on becomes impure, and whoever touches such objects becomes impure in turn." *Leviticus: The Traditional Hebrew Text*, 97. Lev 15:31 emphasizes that the uncleanness separated the person from God's sanctuary. As Allen P. Ross explains concerning a woman with a chronic discharge of blood, "Such infections are very personal. Naturally, a woman did not make this kind of condition known outside the home. In all probability, some may have feigned purity for the sake of participation in worship services or in society. But devout believers who walked in faith and good conscience before God realized that they could not go to the sanctuary until this chronic disorder cleared up and they had gone through the prescribed ritual." *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 309. Even though the synagogue was not the sanctuary, by attending, she would at least risk spreading her impurity to others; therefore, she probably did not go to synagogue.

41. Shepherd suggests that "If she had been married she was probably divorced since she could not have had sexual intercourse with her husband. Cf. Lev 15:25–7." "Narrative Function," 529 n. 21. More accurately, she could have sexual relations with her husband, but every encounter would render him impure for seven days. See Lev 15:24. Of course, Mark does not directly address any of this.

42. Perhaps she comes secretly because of her ritual impurity. As Edwards observes, "Whereas Jairus approaches Jesus face-to-face, she approaches Jesus unaware and from behind. . . . Despite her embarrassing condition she pushes through the crowd, even past the disciples, hoping only to touch the back of Jesus' garment." "Markan Sandwiches," 204.

43. Discussing the spatial borders of the intercalation, Shepherd observes, "Spatial borders for the outer story become progressively narrower and narrower (the seaside, the way, the house, the room). In the inner story all occurs "in the crowd" which could seem to suggest no change in spatial borders. However, the change in the woman's relation to Jesus, from secrecy to a confession at his feet, would suggest a change in spatial borders, one might say from 'behind Jesus' to 'in front of Jesus.' Accompanying this is a movement from the woman knowing the healing alone (except for Jesus) to the entire crowd knowing. So the spatial borders for the inner story ever expand." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 141.

44. Shepherd correctly observes, "The introduction of the woman is an extended anachrony (in this case an analepsis the placement of an event from the story time past within the discourse of the present), but her 'present' is with Jesus in the crowd." "Narrative Function," 526.

45. The Greek text suggests that Jesus may already know who touched his garment by the use of the feminine form of the interrogative, *tis*, twice in Mark 5:30–31, and the feminine article, *tēn*, followed by the feminine singular accusative aorist participle, *poiēsasan*, in 5:32 (*tis mou ēphato tōn imatiōn . . . kai legeis, tis mou ēphato? . . . kai pereiblepeto idein tēn touto poiēsasan* (emphasis added). As Shepherd observes, "When Jesus looked 'to see who it was that did this,' do we have Jesus' inner knowledge, or a slight intrusion of the narrator who has already revealed to the reader who it was in 5:25–9?" "Narrative Function," 534 n. 28. As in other parts of Scripture, when God asks questions, it is not to find out answers, but to reveal something to the characters (cf. Gen 3:9–13).

46. Jesus saw the woman's faith, not her ritual uncleanness. M. J. Selvidge, "Mark 5:25–34 and Leviticus 15:19–20: A Reaction to Restrictive Purity Regulations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103, no. 4 (1984): 619–23. Mann further explains her faith stating: "Faith (Greek *pistis*) in the New Testament is not a name for an inner experience, but describes primarily a committal of trust to God, which in its turn is made effective by God's response to that trust." *Mark*, 286.

47. Jairus is only identified by name once in this narrative (Mark 5:23). Every other reference to him is by his title, "ruler of the synagogue" (*archisynagōgos*, Mark 5:35, 36, 38), emphasizing his high social status.

48. In story time, the healing of the woman and the death of Jairus's daughter are simultaneous and show the impact of one story upon the other in this intercalation: "This bringing together of death and life is epitomized at the juncture of the two stories by the simultaneous benediction of peace (5:34) and the report of the child's death (5:35). Even as the woman's healing preceded this benediction, so the child's death preceded the report." Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 157–58.

49. The present imperative plus *mē* allows for the idea of cessation of activity in progress. As Daniel Wallace states, "Here the idea is frequently progressive and the prohibition is of the 'cessation of some act that is already in progress.' It has the idea, *Stop continuing.* μὴ φοβοῦ [*mē phobou*] is thus naturally used as the formula to quell someone's apprehensions." *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 724. Perhaps there is a correlation between the fear (*phobētheisa*, Mark 5:33) of the woman and the fear (*phobou*, Mark 5:36) of Jairus in the two stories. The woman may have been fearful to proclaim her previous unclean life publically when she told "all the truth," and now Jairus was fearful of his life without his daughter. It is almost as if the fear of the woman has transferred itself to Jairus, even though its content is distinct, so he must be told to stop being afraid. The faith of each in Jesus delivers them from their suffering lives. As Edwards states, "Jairus and the woman share only one thing in common: They both are victims of desperate circumstances, and apart from Jesus they have no hope." "Markan Sandwiches," 204.

50. Edwards writes, "It is as though Mark were asking his readers, 'Is there any hope for Jairus now?' And his answer—coming from the mouth of Jesus—is a resounding 'Yes.' If Jairus does 'Not fear, but believe' (v 36). But what kind of belief must Jairus have in a situation in which all human hopes are exhausted? The answer is given in Jesus' command to believe (*pisteuein*, v 36): Jairus must have the kind of faith (*pistis*, v 34) the woman had!" "Markan Sandwiches," 204. He concludes, "The woman's faith forms the center of the sandwich and is the key to its interpretation. Though her Mark shows how faith in Jesus can transform fear and despair into hope and salvation. It is a powerful lesson for Jairus, as well as for Mark's readers." "Markan Sandwiches," 205.

51. Tom Shepherd argues that correlation between major characters "is perhaps the most important method the Evangelist uses to invite the reader to compare the two stories." "Narrative Function," 529. He insists that the linkages between Jairus and the woman, and the woman and Jairus's daughter, "force the reader to compare the various characters. Although they do not enter one another's story, they themselves serve as links between the accounts. On the whole Jairus is the contrast to the woman, while the little girl is parallel to the woman." "Narrative Function," 530.

52. The term for Jairus's daughter is actually a diminutive. All but one of the words used for Jairus's daughter are diminutives: "little daughter," "daughter," "little child," "Talitha," (diminutive of the Hebrew for "lamb"), and "little girl." As Shepherd observes, "It is not until almost the end of the story that we learn her true age. The use of the diminutives illustrates how much she was loved, not her age." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 150.

53. As Frank Kermode observes, "Yet in matters of this kind there is really no such thing as nonsignificant coincidence, and we are entitled to consider that this coincidence signifies a narrative relation of some kind between the woman and the girl." *The Genesis of Secrecy on the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 132. However, the significance of the correlation is not always obvious or agreed upon. Kermode argues for sexual innuendo. *The Genesis of Secrecy*, 132–33. Mary Ann Tolbert writes, "In the case of the twelve-year-old child and the woman with a twelve-year illness, it is very tempting to note that the only use of twelve prior to their appearance is related to the disciples, the Twelve. That those twelve turn out to be rocky ground, while these two healed ones demonstrate the fruitfulness of faith raises the possibility of seeing this use of twelve as a subtle clue to the identity

of Jesus' true family." *Sowing the Gospel*, 168 n. 58. Edwards also suggests that "Twelve, moreover, may signify Israel to Mark's readers, indeed, Israel coming to faith in Jesus." "Markan Sandwiches," 204–05 n. 34.

54. Setting forth arguments that Jairus's daughter actually died, Shepherd uncovers another parallel between the outer and inner stories: "The ironic character in which Jesus' remark in 5:39 ['Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.'] is parallel to the ironic question in the inner story 'Who touched me?' (5:30) suggests that Jesus' central statements in the inner and outer story carry a truth beyond their surface expression." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 156 n. 6, para. 4.

55. Kermode states, "The text seems to be continually interested in providing instance of a generalized opposition between clean and unclean, and we ought not to dispose of this fact by some historical discourse about Jewish Law. The woman, in the present instance, is ritually unclean so long as her hemorrhage continues; but she is at once, by an exercise of power, *dunamis*, relieved of this disability. The girl, dead or supposed dead, is also unclean, or supposed unclean; she is restored by an exercise of power which is, in antithetical contrast, explicit and willed." *The Genesis of Secrecy*, 133.

56. Shepherd identifies the dramatic irony in this intercalation as follows: "A little girl dies before the healer arrives because a woman 'snatches' a healing incognito. The healer takes a long time looking for who got healed. But the tragedy ends in joy when he little girl is raised. Openness goes to silence (Jairus), secrets become public knowledge (the woman)." "Narrative Function," 539. Elsewhere, he also states, "Jairus' spaces move from openness to "closedness," the woman's spaces move from closedness to openness." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 141.

57. The two stories have contrasting moral backgrounds: "In the outer story, the moral background centers on the issues of deceit, killing, betrayal. In the inner story, the moral background has to do with stewardship, the proper handling of resources (is it a waste or is it good to anoint Jesus?). While the woman shows care and concern for Jesus, Judas betrays him into the hands of his enemies." Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 243.

58. A question arises as to whether "in secret" and "not in the feast" are temporal or spatial descriptions. Shepherd argues for spatial with the following support: "Do the rulers intend to wait until after the Passover season to arrest Jesus, or do they not want to seize him in a public place? The latter is probably the correct interpretation since the γάρ [*gar*] of 14:2 indicates that the statement of 14:2 is a reason for some gap opened in 14:1. In 14:1 the plot of the rulers is presented, their desire to kill Jesus. This is nothing new, hence not a surprising or some other item which needs explanation. However, what does need explanation is the phrase "craftily" (ἐν δόλῳ [*en dolō*]). It is easy to see that 14:2 explains this point. The rulers fear defeat of their plan, and they hence want to accomplish it away from people. This is the intent of 'not in the feast,' whether it is a temporal or spatial in nature. Spatially it would refer to a 'feast crowd,' while temporally it would refer to a time when many people would be present, 'feast time.' Either way, the emphasis is on the spatial aspects, where there are many people." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 244–45.

59. Mann correctly observes, "The Greek verb translated *were looking* (ezētoun) [ἐζήτουν] is an imperfect tense, and implies a scheme which had been in train for some time." *Mark*, 553.

60. Shepherd sets forth the threefold pattern of actions in the inner story for each participant: "The woman comes, breaks the flask, and anoints Jesus. The 'some' are indignant, complain, and censure her. Jesus then enters into a threefold speech, defense of the woman, himself contrasted with the poor, and the teaching on the woman's memorial. In each of these three parts of Jesus' speech there is a threefold pattern as well. In defending the woman he says, 'leave her alone,' 'why are you troubling her?' and 'she has done a good work for me.' In comparing himself with the poor he says, 'you always have the poor with you,' 'you can do good to them any time,' and 'you will not always have me.' In presenting the woman's memorial he says, 'she has done what she could,' 'she has anointed my body for burial,' and 'wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the world, also what she has done will be told for a memorial to her.'" "Markan Sandwich Stories," 250.

61. In the textual witnesses of W and *f* 13, these nameless people are identified as the disciples (*tōn mathētōn*), as well as in D and Θ (*oi de mathētai autou*). This may well reflect an understanding borrowed from Matt 26:8. More particularly, John 12:8 identifies Judas as the one who rebuked the woman, who is identified as Mary (John 12:3). However, as Shepherd notes, the exclusion of Judas from the inner story and the woman from the outer story is one way in which the narrator holds the two stories apart. "Narrative Function," 523–24. Nevertheless, when the outer story resumes, there is a hint that Judas was with Jesus in the inner story when it states that Judas "went off" or "went away" (*apēlthen*) to the chief priests (Mark 14:10). "Narrative Function," 527.

62. Shepherd insightfully observes, "These gaps [concerning the death of Jesus] interconnect the stories so that there is a modification of the plot. Whereas the leaders' and Judas' story portends a tragic end to the ministry of Jesus, the inner story pulls aside the curtain and illustrates that the death of Jesus will be Good News. Even the plot to betray and kill Jesus is used in the service of the Gospel." "Narrative Function," 537.

63. Jesus sets forth three prolepses: (1) "you will not always have me" (14:7), (2) "She has anointed my body beforehand for burial" (14:8), and (3) "Wherever the Gospel is preached in all the world what she has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (14:9). Shepherd comments, "Each of these prolepses is spoken by Jesus and each succeeding one has a further reach than the previous one. . . . All of the anachronies together have the influence of laying tremendous stress upon the significance of the woman's action. This repetitive reinterpretation of her act of devotion is what makes possible the dramatic comparison with the outer story." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 258–59.

64. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel*, 225–26.

65. The Greek text includes the definite article, "the one of the twelve" (*o eis tōn dōdeka*, Mark 14:10). Wallace identifies the article as fitting within the "well-known" category. *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 233. Mann suggests that this use of the article emphasizes Judas among the Twelve: "Mark may be using the definite article here for emphasis: 'That one, the only one, of the Twelve' who proved treacherous." *Mark*, 560.

66. The verb in 14:10 is the clue that this portion of the outer story is subsequent to the inner story: "It is stated that Judas 'went away' to the high priests. This implies subsequent time to the previous event where Judas was present. Although Jesus is the only character to appear in both stories, nevertheless, in 14:10 we are told that Judas 'went away,' obviously from the previous meeting place, which is Bethany. The reference in 14:10, in fact, goes out of the way to designate Judas as one of the Twelve. Hence, we can conclude that 14:10 occurs after the events of 14:3–9." Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 242–43.

67. Shepherd rightly states, "Thus Judas is not an agent who shifts the plan of the rulers temporally. He does not somehow lead them to carry out their plot during the feast when they did not actually plan to do so. Rather, he is the conduit through which they accomplish their goal in a secretive way." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 245 n. 1.

68. The outer story contains an inclusio: Just as the religious leaders sought (*ezētoun*) how they could seize Jesus (14:1), now Judas seeks (*ezētei*) how he should hand him over (14:11).

69. Shepherd observes that "In previous intercalations we have a noted return of the outer story to the inner story's point at the close of the outer story. But in the present story, the ending is about Judas the betrayer, and nothing "good" can be said of his deed. However, an ironic twist is present, for Judas seeks to betray Jesus *conveniently* (εὐκαίρως [*eukairōs*] 14:11). In the outer story alone, this just adds to his perfidy, as though he enjoys or *plots well* how to hand over the Messiah. But the ironic twist is the way in which the εὐ-word stands in such close relation

with so many 'good' words in the inner story, words which convey high ideals and holy concepts in the inner story (καλός [*kalos*], 14:6; εὖ [*eu*], 14:7, and εὐαγγέλιον [*euangelion*], 14:9). Thus the well-laid perfidious plot against Jesus becomes forever part of the *Good News*. The evil is turned back to good, even though the betrayer never shares in its goodness. Thus, in a way, there is a return to the point of the inner story." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 156–57.

70. The theme of money contributes toward dramatized irony between the two stories. "Jesus is highly valued in the inner story, but not even worthy of the specification of a betrayal price in the outer story. This irony centers on the Christological question and is closely connected with the discipleship theme. What value will the disciple place upon Jesus." Shepherd, "Markan Sandwich Stories," 263.

71. Shepherd notes, "Whereas Judas places a low valuation upon Jesus (he is not worth even a *set sum* of money), the woman, representative of true discipleship, pours out upon her Lord the costly nard, worth more than 300 denarii. . . . The contrast between the actions of the two characters could hardly be greater." "Narrative Function," 537. Likewise, after discussing the concurrent responsibility to the poor and to those who are loved, Tolbert states, "But whatever the moral choices involved in using money for various loving ends, giving money to purchase betrayal and accepting money to deliver up your teacher to his enemies is clearly evil. The contrast between the generosity of the anonymous woman and the deal of Judas ('who was one of the twelve') with the chief priests to exchange Jesus for money (14:10–11) dramatizes starkly the different production of good earth and rocky ground." *Sowing the Gospel*, 274. Finally, Shepherd comments, "The plots of the two stories are interlinked. The two stories, although apparently of contrasting types, are actually similar. They are both stories of valuation. Money is mentioned in both stories and Jesus is the center of the 'money actions.' In the inner story, it is a case of giving (δίδωμι [*didōmi*], 14:5), while in the outer story, it is a case of betrayal (παραδίδωμι [*paradidōmi*], 14:10–11)." "Markan Sandwich Stories," 255.

72. Shepherd identifies the dramatic irony in this intercalation as follows: "The nefarious plot becomes Good News. The disciple, one of the Twelve, does not value his Master aright, but a nameless woman prepares his body for burial by an expensive gift of love." "Narrative Function," 540. Ironically, just as what the woman did will be remembered, so, too, what Judas did will be a lasting remembrance.

73. Similarly, Edwards states, "Is not Mark saying that in Jesus' 'hour' (14:35) there can be only one of two responses to him, that of the woman or that of Judas? Mark places the woman in the middle as the ideal." "Markan Sandwiches," 209.