

How Gospel of Mark Stories are Placed in Relation to One Another Enhances and Expands Their Meaning

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Intercalation:¹ Mark places one self-contained story within another and they enhance and expand interpretation of one another.					
A1: 11:1-11	B1: 11:12-14	A1': 11:15-19			
		A2: 11:15-19	B2: 11:20-25	A2': 11:27-12:12	
A3: 11:1-19			B3: 11:20-25	A3': 11:27-12:12	

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<p>A1: Mark 11:1-11</p> <p>Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem</p> <p>When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵ some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹¹ Then he</p>	<p>B1: 11:12-14</p> <p>Jesus Curses the Fig Tree</p> <p>¹² On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³ Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴ He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.</p> <p>Search for figs symbolizing a search for righteous Israelites [Micah 7:1-2] and a barren or withered tree depicts national failure as a manifestation of divine judgment [Jeremiah 8:12-13]. The Temple has not borne fruit - a commentary on the Temple's corruption.</p> <p>Jesus inspected the Temple late in the day and he inspects the tree for fruit: nothing found in either place.</p>	<p>A1': 11:15-19</p> <p>Jesus Cleanses the Temple</p> <p>¹⁵ Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; ¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone to carry anything [or a sacred vessel] through the temple. ¹⁷ He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." ¹⁸ And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.</p> <p>Commerce itself for animals was normal, but may have been more recent within the walls of the Temple, as animals could be purchased in nearby markets. Jesus doesn't dispel the animals but only the use</p>
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¹ Scott G. Brown (2002). *Mark 11:1-12:12: A Triple Intercalation?* *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 64, pp. 78-89

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<p><u>entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late,</u> he went out to Bethany with the twelve.</p> <p>Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11 both anticipate the Temple as a place where anyone keeping Yahweh's Covenant may freely worship, e.g. eunuchs, outcasts of Israel.</p> <p>Jeremiah warned that Solomon's Temple was no more immune to destruction than Shiloh's had been.</p> <p>Jesus warns that a great Temple is no assurance of God's protection if their unrighteous deeds cause Him to remove His Presence from the place.</p>	<p>²⁰ In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²² Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.</p> <p>In both the fig tree story and the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus exerts power to inhibit a 'natural' process. His explicit prohibition is to the money changers, while interfering with animal sacrifices. Both seem radical and excessively aggressive. There is a deeper meaning that ties the two stories together.</p>	<p>of the Temple as a thoroughfare - which cluttered the area in which Gentiles were allowed to pray in the Temple: He says it is a house of prayer <u>for all the nations.</u></p>
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<p>A2: 11:15-19</p> <p>Jesus Cleanses the Temple</p> <p>¹⁵ Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; ¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone to carry anything [or a sacred vessel] through the temple. ¹⁷ He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." ¹⁸ And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. ¹⁹ And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.</p> <p>Messiah is coming to reap fruit from the vines. In response to and by what authority does Jesus act? He tells a parable in which the owner sends servants and then his 'beloved son' [see 1:11 & 9:3] to the errant tenants to retrieve harvest/ fruit [righteousness in Israel], God is sending in the Messiah to the tenants [priests, scribes, elders] who own and run the Temple/vineyard [house of Israel/ Covenant relationship]</p>	<p>B2: 11:20-25</p> <p>The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree</p> <p>²⁰ In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²² Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³ Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. ²⁴ So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.</p> <p>²⁵ "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."</p> <p>Jeremiah 8:13 ~ there are no grapes on the vine nor figs on the tree. Micah 7:1 ~ no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave. Isaiah 5: For the vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel, men of Judah are his pleasant planting, He looked for justice but, behold, bloodshed; for righteousness but, behold, a cry!</p>	<p>A2': 11:27-12:12</p> <p>Jesus' Authority Is Questioned</p> <p>²⁷ Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him ²⁸ and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" ²⁹ Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." ³¹ They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ³² But shall we say, 'Of human origin?'"—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. ³³ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."</p> <p>The Parable of the Wicked Tenants</p> <p>¹² Then he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ² When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ And again he sent another slave to</p>
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The 2 A stories provide a rationale and symbolic meaning for the destruction in B. Presence of commerce in the courtyard is attributed to self-interest by religious leaders who act as though the Covenant exists for their benefit. They will control Gentiles' access or kill any prophet calling them on their unrighteousness. Their effort to control their monopoly results in their loss of everything.

The stories represent the antagonism between Jesus and the religious authorities.

them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. ⁵ Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. ⁶ He had still one other, **a beloved son. Finally** he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ But those tenants said to one another, 'This is **the heir**; come, let us kill him, and **the inheritance** will be ours.' ⁸ So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ What then will the **owner of the vineyard do? He will come** and destroy the tenants and **give the vineyard to others.** ¹⁰ Have you not read this scripture:

'The **stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;**^[e]

¹¹ this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?"

¹² When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away

<p>A3: 11:1-19</p> <p>Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem</p> <p>When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵ some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹¹ Then <u>he entered Jerusalem</u> and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.</p>	<p>B3: 11:20-25</p> <p>The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree</p> <p>²⁰ In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹ Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²² Jesus answered them, "Have ^[b] faith in God. ²³ Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. ²⁴ So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received ^[c] it, and it will be yours.</p> <p>²⁵ "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."</p> <p>Mark 11:1-11 reflects Jesus' enactment in the allegory of 12:1-12: He, God's Son, the Messiah, goes to the Temple searching for righteous people, the fruit of God's Covenant with his people.</p> <p>This enriches the symbolism in cursing the barren tree and clearing the Temple. The nature of the conflict between Jesus and religious authorities is seen. Why did</p>	<p>A3': 11:27-12:12</p> <p>Jesus' Authority Is Questioned</p> <p>²⁷ Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him ²⁸ and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" ²⁹ Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." ³¹ They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ³² But shall we say, 'Of human origin?'"—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. ³³ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."</p> <p>The Parable of the Wicked Tenants</p> <p>¹² Then he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ² When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-</p>
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