# Section 3 - Meaning Through Structure
## Introductory Video Transcript

Welcome to the third section of our course on Jesus in Mark's gospel. Our goal is to come to know Jesus—his life, his mission—so that we can grow in relationship with him. In the previous section we did a verse-by-verse study, sometimes even a word-by-word study, of Mark chapter 1. I would love to continue doing this for the rest of the gospel, but we just don't have time for it. But don't worry, Bible reading is lifetime project. You can't learn everything in one course.

Now, I would like to show you another way in which we read and study the gospel. As you look at this image, as you look at the text, can you notice anything unusual? Other than it is written in Ancient Greek and with a strange alphabet. Did you notice that the text only uses uppercase letters? There are no lowercase letters. Neither are there any punctuation marks. There are no periods, no comma, no exclamation points. There aren't even space between the words.

This type of writing is called uncial script and it was common back then. Can you see how the text is basically just one long string of letters. Reading something like this can be very challenging. For example, since there are no spaces between the words it can be difficult to recognize the words. Did the author write one long word or two shorter words, written the same way but with a different meaning? We just don't know. This is one reason why there are so many differences in our Bible translations.

Today, when we write, we use both uppercase and lowercase letters. In fact, it is considered bad manners to send someone a message in all caps. IT'S LIKE SHOUTING AT THEM! We also separate our words with spaces and use punctuation which serves to indicate the logical and grammatical structure of a sentence. Punctuation also can highlight an important idea and sets the rhythm of the text. Authors also use other means to communicate their message. Today we separate our text into chapters and sections. We emphasize important words and ideas through underlining, italics, bold, even highlighting with colors.

We express emotions through emojis. That's something that is quite new. And we can also represent our data using charts, tables, and bullet point lists. All of these things are pretty standard today. But none of them were available to ancient authors. This doesn't mean that they weren't good communicators, it just means that they communicated in a different way. All they had at hand were their words that they wanted to write down. So, what they did is that they would communicate their message not only through the words but through the way they structured their words. That is why I have called this section "Meaning Through Structures".

We will look at the structures Mark used in his gospel to communicate his message. As you study the material that I have prepared for you, please keep one thing in mind. What we say about Mark's structures is, in a certain way, hypothetical. The only person who knows for sure what structures are

found in the gospel is Mark. Unfortunately, he has been dead for 2000 years and didn't leave us any written instructions on how to find his structures. Scholars read and study the text to look for the structures. Some of them are pretty obvious and all scholars agree about them. But others are more obscure and there is disagreement. Just keep this in mind as you study this theme.

I have divided this section into three parts. In the first, we will look at Mark's basic structure; that is, the introduction, main body, and ending of the gospel. In the second learning unit, we will look at other structures he uses and that he overlays over this basic structure. Mark's gospel actually has layers of structures. And in the third learning unit, we will look at a special structure attributed to Mark. It is called the Markan sandwich.

Well, I hope you enjoy this section. It is one of my favorites. As someone who studied mathematics and worked as a software developer, I lover structures. Good luck and may God bless you!