

2. Get the Big Picture

Introduction

A crime has been committed. As *Chief Criminal Investigator*, your mind races with a multitude of questions. But as you approach the crime scene, you stop, look around, and do what you know must always be done first in order to solve the crime. *You get the big picture!* You observe everything carefully to make sure nothing is missed in your upcoming investigation, and that all items are accounted for and observed where they lie in relation to each other, *in order that your future investigation and conclusions can be supported by the evidence!*

Studying the Bible is very similar to investigating a crime scene. *The first step in Bible Study is to get the big picture;* to see the forest before the trees! We must observe the passage in its *entirety* in order to better understand the individual parts!

Structural Diagrams

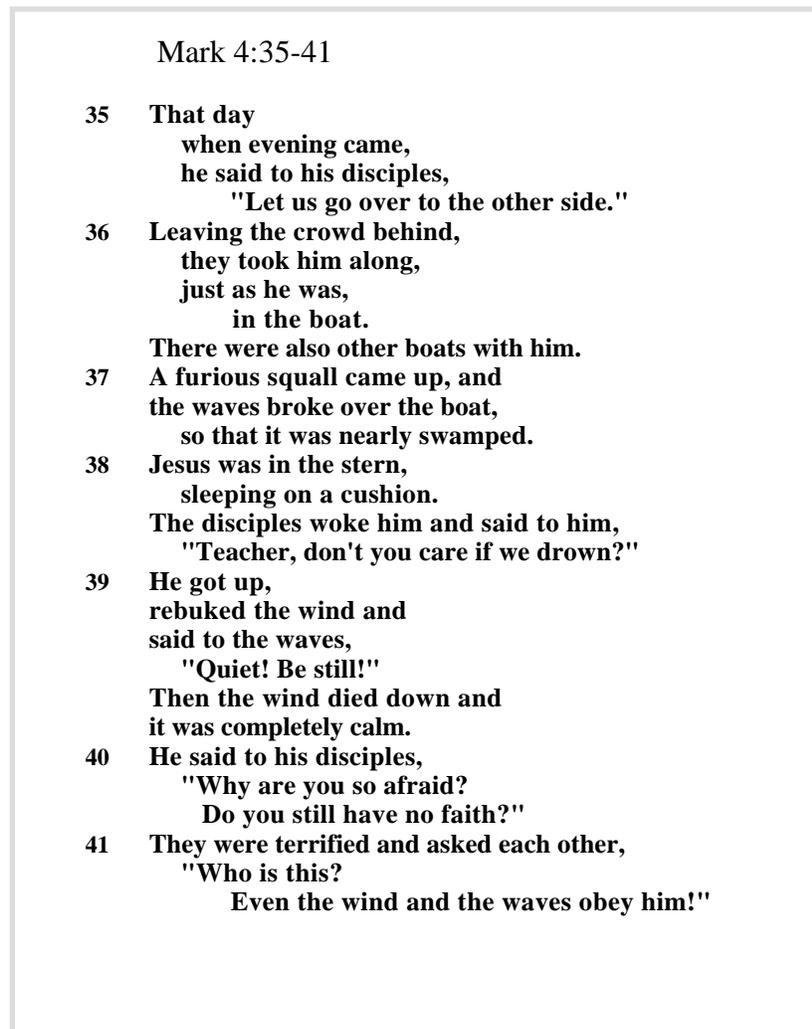
One of the best ways to see a Scripture passage in its entirety is to arrange it in a *Structural Diagram*. This allows the student to *see* all the individual parts, and how they *relate* to one another. Follow the principles below when developing a *Structural Diagram*:

- 1. Read the Scripture passage as many times as necessary to understand what it is saying.**
- 2. Separate the passage into *Significant Clauses* which may range from a single word to an entire phrase.**
- 3. Arrange the Clauses by *indenting subordinate ones under primary ones* in order to create a *visual picture* showing how the thoughts relates to each other.**

It is important to note that *there is no perfect Structural Diagram*. You do not need to be an expert in grammar to develop an outline of a Scripture passage. It is simply a matter of *identifying Significant Clauses* and *arranging* them in a way that *visually shows how they relate to one another*. The resulting outline allows you to see *the relationship of the various words and phrases* that make up the Scripture passage, and forms an organized structure on which to do further Observation and, later, Interpretation.

Observe the following Structural Diagram of Mark 4:35-41.

Structural Diagram of Mark 4:35-41



The Structural Diagram is a visual tool that allows us to *see* the relationship of the various words and phrase in a passage. Notice how it helps your eyes focus on each *Clause* more than if the passage was written out normally. Also notice that punctuation marks often indicate the beginning and end of a new Segment. Try to indent *Clauses* of equal emphasis to the same extent. And remember: *There are no perfect Structural Diagrams*. It is simply your way of being able to see the *Big Picture* and how each individual part fits together in the whole.

Now it's your turn! On the next page, create a Structural Diagram of Mark 8:22-30. Use your own Bible for this exercise.

Mark 8:22-30

