

Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with an Issue of Blood in Mark 5:21-43 - Part 2

The Healing of the Woman (Mark 5:25-34)

In Part 1, we introduced these two intercalated healings, and looked at the first sub-section of our passage—the verses where Jairus comes to Jesus and begs Him to come and heal his daughter. The journey is interrupted by the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and Jesus' subsequent conversation with her, and it is this passage that I would like to look at in the present article. In terms of the overall A—B -A' chiastic structure of the passage, this is sub-section B.

Before we start, I would like to mention a couple of articles that I have found particularly helpful regarding our present studies of Mark 5:21-43. The first of these is *Women & Daughters: An Analysis of Mark 5:21-43* by Dan Claire which can be freely downloaded from the www.academia.edu website. The second is actually a Ph.D. thesis, *Women in Mark's Gospel* by Susan E. Miller. This can also be freely downloaded, from www.theses.gla.ac.uk/1427/ Another resource I have found helpful is a fairly short commentary on Mark: *The Victory According to Mark* by Mark Horne.

The particular passage I wish to look at in this article is Mark 5:25-34. It is 154 (= 21 x 7) words long. The Greek-English Interlinear of this passage, using as always the Received Text, together with the KJV is given on the next page.

Before looking at the entire passage, here are separate analyses of the upper and lower sections, namely Mark 5:25-29a and Mark 5:29b-34:

Analysis of The First Section - Mark 5:25-29a

The diagram for this analysis of this section is found on the next page but one.

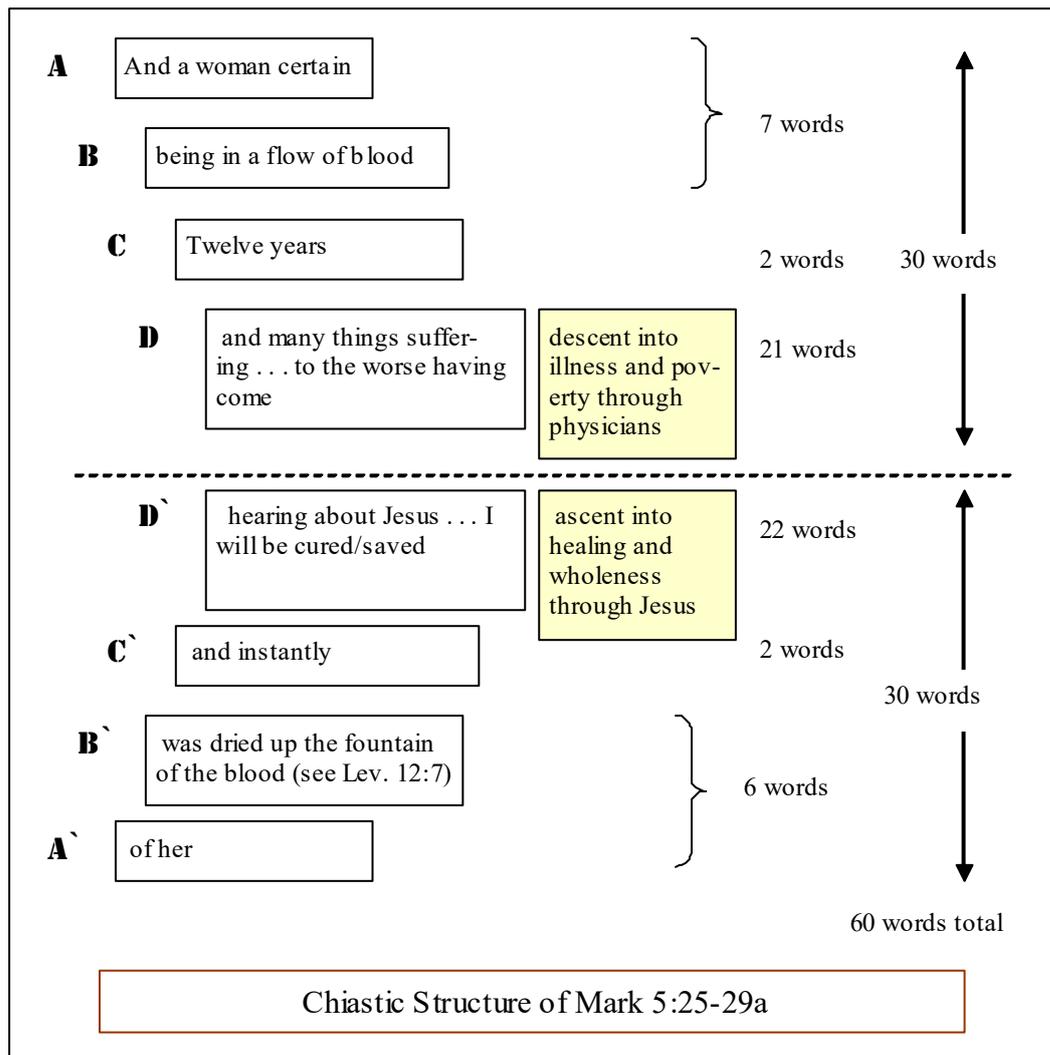
Notes.

1) This section is 60 words long, and it is divided into two sections each of 30 words. (I actually come across this structure "by accident" having mis-counted in my attempt to find the middle of the two sections A and B considered together!)

<p>with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27 when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29 And</p>	<p>ὄχλος πολὺς, καὶ συνέλιβον αὐτόν. 25 Καὶ γυνή ἥτις οὔσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος ἔτη δώδεκα, 26 καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν, καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ' ἑαυτῆς πάντα, καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα, 27 ἀκούσασα ἑπεὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὀπίσθεν, ἤψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ. 28 ἔλεγεν γάρ, Ὅτι ἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ ἄψωμαι. ἰσθησομαι. 29 Καὶ</p>	<p>And a ²crowd ²great, and pressed on him. And a ²woman ¹certain being with a flux of blood ²years ¹twelve, and much having suffered under many physicians, and having spent ²her ²means ²all, and in no way having benefited but rather ²to ⁴worse ¹having ²come, having heard concerning Jesus, having come in the crowd behind, touched his garment; for she said, If but his garments I shall touch, I shall be cured. And</p>
<p>εὐθέως ἔξηράνθη ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔγνω ἰσθησομένη τῷ σώματι ὅτι ἴσθηται ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγος. 30 καὶ εὐθέως ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἐπιγινούς ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐξ αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ἐξελοῦσαν, ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ, ἔλεγεν, Τίς μου ἤψατο τῶν ἱματίων; 31 Καὶ ἔλεγον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, Βλέπεις τὸν ὄχλον συνθλίβοντά σε, καὶ λέγεις, Τίς μου ἤψατο; 32 Καὶ περιεβλέπετο ἰδεῖν τὴν τοῦτο ποιήσασαν. 33 Ἡ δὲ γυνὴ φοβηθεῖσα καὶ τρέμουσα, εἰδούσα ὃ γέγονεν ἐπ' αὐτῇ, ἦλθεν καὶ προσέπεσεν αὐτῷ, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ πᾶσαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. 34 Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Ὁ γάταρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην, καὶ ἴσθη ὑγιὴς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου. 35 Ἐτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος, ἔρχονται ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχι-</p>	<p>straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she knew immediately that she was healed from the scourge. And immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who of me touched my clothes? 31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32 And he looked round about to see her who this had done. But the woman being frightened and trembling, knowing what had been done upon her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. 35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the</p>	

2) the structure is straightforward. The problem and its duration are described in A and B and C and the unsuccessful attempts to alleviate it in D. The instant cure of the problem is described in C', B' and A', and the means by which this was successfully accomplished is in D'.

3) there is actually one aspect in which I suggest that this little passage is not quite "complete": in D', the woman says that if she touches the hem of Jesus' garment, she will be cured/saved (the Greek verb for this is from sozo, and it has a sort of double meaning—the straightforward meaning of "cured", but also the deeper meaning of spiritual salvation. Now clearly the woman was immediately healed as described in verse 29a. However, Jesus only tells her that she has been saved (again using sozo) at the very end of the entire passage, in v. 34 when He says, "Daughter, your faith has



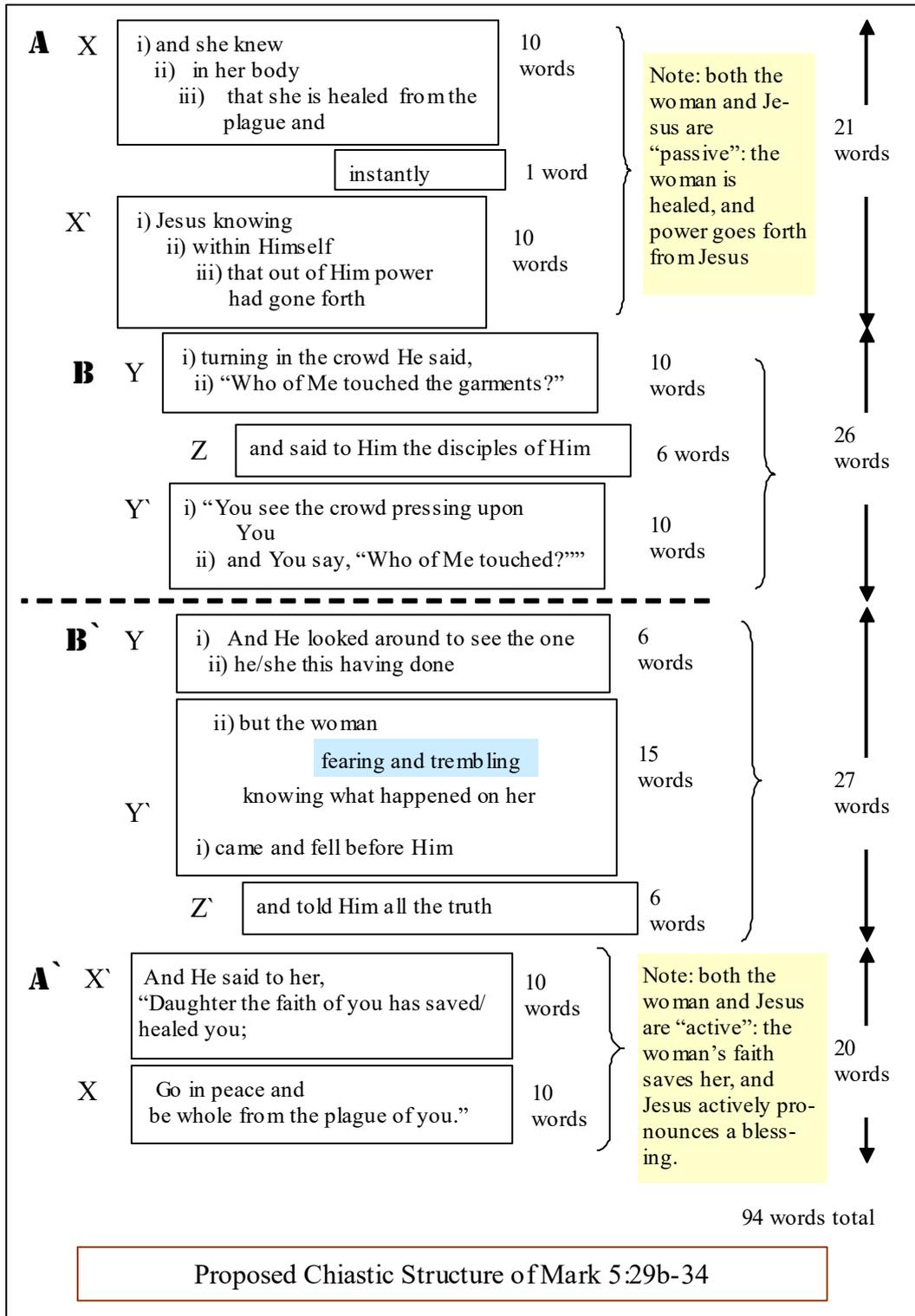
saved you”. We are thus intended to expect “more” (provided we are amazingly astute listeners/hearers!!) later in the narrative—i.e. in verses 29b-34.

Analysis of The Second Section - Mark 5:29b-34

The analysis is presented on the next page.

Notes:

- 1) The passage is 94 words long, and the analysis given shows a chiasmic structure, with two equal halves of 47 words each.
- 2) Looking first at A and A', we note that both are divided into two equal sections, labelled X and X', although there is a slight difference of one



word (the word “instantly”) which is interposed between the X and X' of subsection A. As indicated in the diagram, there is a “passive” aspect to A, but an “active” aspect in A'. Also in A, both Jesus and the woman “know” something “internally”; in A', Jesus' pronouncement and blessing are

spoken openly (externally).

3) In A, X is about the woman, but X' is about Jesus. But in A', both X and X' are about Jesus and the woman since it is Jesus who speaks, but His words, both the pronouncement and the blessing, concern the woman. There is thus a “development” as we go from A to A'.

4) The two “X’s” (in A and A') correspond since they are both about healing from the plague. If we follow up this cue, then, if the two X's equally correspond, we would conclude that not only did the healing take place instantly as power went forth from Jesus in A, but it was the woman's saving faith which “drew the power” from Jesus. Such, according to this analysis, is the power of faith!

5) An interesting aspect of A' is that Jesus specifically prefixes his pronouncement about the woman's saving faith with the word “daughter” (about which more later!) and He prefixes the blessing, “Be whole from the plague of you” with the words, “Go in peace”. Should we then see this wonderful lady as a living New Testament embodiment of “Daughter Jerusalem” in the Old Testament—since Jerusalem means “possession of peace” or “city of peace”? In his excellent article, referred to earlier, Dan Claire points out that peace is the “promised state of those who dwell in the eschatological Kingdom of God”, and he gives the following bible references: Is. 54:10, 13; 55:12; 60:17; 66:12; Jer. 30:10; 33:6, 9; 46:27; Ezek. 37:26; Nah. 1:15; Zech. 9:10. The command to “go” suggests that Jesus wants her, like the Gadarene Demoniac, to work out her faith in her own community. The word also corresponds to the fact that she “came” earlier (Mark 5:27 and/or v. 33).

6) B and B' both basically match by word count—again with a difference of one word. Both B and B' individually exhibit a chiasmic aspect in terms of word count, (though that is different in each case: (10-6-10) in B and (6-15-6) in B'. The structure of B and B' by “theme” however is a combination of panel (parallel) and chiasmic elements (Y,Z,Y') and (Y,Y',Z') in the present analysis.

7) In B and B', Mark emphasises the difference between the disciples and the woman. There are quite a lot of contrasts here. However, B and B' together are basically, initially anyway, “about” the action of touching Jesus' person/garments and the identity of the person who did this. So, in B(Y), the question is, “Who touched My garments?”, in B(Y') it is, “Who touched Me?” and in B'(Y) Jesus looks around to see *who* has *done this*. B'(Y') continues this theme, but from the woman's point of view: in B'(Y'),

we have the woman identifying herself, and we have a reference to *her* experience of the contact between herself and Jesus, i.e. “knowing what happened on her”.

8) In B, there is an emphasis on the crowd, but in B', the emphasis is on the woman. Likewise in B, the emphasis is on the disciples' response to Jesus, but in B', the emphasis is on the woman's response to Jesus. In all four sub-sections of B and B', a movement is described: in B(Y) and B'(Y) there is a movement by Jesus—turning around and looking around. In B(Y') and B'(Y') there is a movement by the crowd (pressing on Jesus) and by the woman (coming and falling at Jesus' feet).

9) Although I have presented B and B' as having a primarily panel (parallel) structure, as opposed to a chiasmic structure, there are chiasmic elements since in B(Y'), the disciples claim that Jesus is seeing the crowd, whereas in B'(Y') (the chiasmically corresponding sub-section), Jesus is looking to see just one person. Also, B(Y) and B'(Y') chiasmically correspond in the same sort of way as B(Y') and B'(Y') correspond in the panel analysis.

10) Although it is not really so clear in English as in Greek, Jesus' question in B(Y) refers to a “singular” person, in contrast to the “plurality” of the crowd. The disciples do not understand how Jesus can be referring to a singular person, and so they think the question is incongruous, and so, in B(Y'), they basically reflect the question back to Jesus, whilst pointing out the apparent singular/plural incongruity. We note that their understanding is based on what can be seen (as noted above), and in this, they are not entirely wrong, since Jesus, in B'(Y), in a sense, follows their lead, and adds to his initial “verbal” enquiry by “looking to see” who touched Him. In the event, the woman responds appropriately to both modalities since, in B'(Y') she identifies herself by a gesture (falling before Him) thus responding to Jesus' “looking to see” and in B'(Z') by her verbal response to Jesus' question by “telling Him all the truth”.

11) In the diagram, I've highlighted the words fearing and trembling (in light blue). These are clearly significant words since they are actually the middle words of the entire passage, Mark 5:21-43. The response of the woman of “fearing and trembling” is sometimes slightly disparaged by commentators - for example, suggesting that this shows that the woman's faith is somewhat faltering. (C. D. Marshall highlights the woman's struggle between faith and fear.) Now there are, of course, several reasons why the woman would, in this dramatic and very public situation, experience fear accompanied by trembling, and no doubt these are basically true.

However, Mark does not specifically refer to any of them. I think that we should perhaps see this fear in a positive light—namely as part of an appropriate “biblical” response to the Lord. Thus, the woman fears and trembles, and falls at the Lord’s feet in response to His words and His look. She therefore fulfils the lovely words in Is. 66:2:

“And says Yahweh, ‘But on this one will I look and on the one who is poor and contrite of a spirit and who trembles at My word”.

12) However, we also note that the woman is “proactive” in her identification as the one whom Jesus is seeking. In B` (Y), Jesus looks to see the one who touched Him, but does or says nothing more at that point. B` (Y`) however starts with the Greek equivalent of the word “but”. Thus, it is she who resolves the impasse by actively “self-identifying” as the one whom Jesus seeks. Some translators use the word “and” rather than “but” at this point, and so perhaps miss an important “dynamic” aspect of the relationship between Jesus and the woman. In Luke’s account of the event, the woman sees that “she (or it?) was not hidden (Luke 8:47). All the translators assume that the expression *ouk elathen* here means “she was not hid”, but I suggest that a better translation would be that “it” (i.e. the woman’s touch) was not hid”. To me this grammatically equally possible translation makes better sense since Jesus had at this point not identified the woman, only that *someone* had touched Him—so she was still “hid” at this point! The touch however, was not hidden since Jesus had declared it. An advantage of this translation is that it gives “full strength” to the “but” in Mark’s account since the woman takes the initiative in identifying herself.

There are a number of points of view regarding how much Jesus, in His humanity, actually knew regarding the woman prior to her self-identification. It may be that Jesus knew who she was, either before or after His “turning in the crowd” or His “looking around to see”. At any rate, His turning suggests that He knew that the touch had come for behind Him, (though it would be possible to infer this since presumably Jesus would have seen the action if it were in front of Him.) The accounts in all three Synoptic Gospels do not seem to require that Jesus knew who had been healed until the woman identified herself, but equally, they do not deny that He knew all along who she was, but allow for the possibility that, as J. Gill expresses it,

“Christ did not point her out, though he knew her; or call her by her name, though he could have done it, and have ordered her to come to him, and account for her conduct: he had said enough to work upon her, and engage her to come; who came of herself, and with the greatest reverence to his person,

and sense of her own unworthiness, threw herself at his feet, and gave him a relation of the whole matter, with the utmost truth and, exactness; what had been her case, what was her faith, and what she had done, and what a cure she had received; and which she acknowledged with the greatest thankfulness."

13) There is a small "Z" section in each of the B's. These sections both refer to speech. However, this is another contrast between the disciples and the woman. The disciples (in B(Y)) sort of "tell" Jesus what He is seeing (namely the crowd), but although this is technically true, Jesus is nevertheless looking for one particular person, so they have failed to state what (or who) Jesus is *really* looking for, and basically just repeat Jesus' question. By contrast, in Z', the woman tells Jesus all the *truth*—namely what has happened to her (as described in B'(Y)). (There is a slight mis-match in my analysis here because Z doesn't state what was said by the disciples, but Z' also summarises what the woman actually said i.e. "all the truth".) I would value help here! (Perhaps the mis-match occurs in connection with the fact that B' contains a response to both Jesus' words and actions, whereas, B contains just a response to Jesus words. B' therefore has to contain within itself both types of response, and so represents both a "matching" as well as a "development" of B—as is commonly found in the second half of chiasms. I clearly need more insight in analysing this section!)

Well, so far, we have looked at the structures of verses 25-29a and 29b-34 separately. I hope next to see if it might be possible to consider the entire passage, verses 25-34, as a single structural unit. However, I think that the present article is long enough, so will leave this ambitious project for the next article in the series.