

Notes on Mark 3:22-35

An **inclusio** is a literary device where the writer states a theme or idea at both the beginning and end of a story. It's intended to introduce and conclude a main point. Everything in-between is to be read with the **inclusio** theme in mind. When you think of **inclusio**, think bookends.

(vv.20-21) **Jesus' family** is on its way to seize Him; they think He's crazy (demon possessed)

(vv.22-28) **Religious officials** try to discredit Him, saying he relies on Beelzebul for the supernatural things He does (possessed by the demon prince, Beelzebul). His name means, "Lord of the High House," referring to the chief Canaanite god, "Baal the Prince." To the Jew, that name could only refer to Solomon in his Temple, so they renamed him, "Beelzebub" or "Lord of the Flies" from his reputation as the creator and controller of flies at the Philistine city of Ekron. So, they imply:

- Jesus relied on the **Lord of the Flies** (Beelzebub) who could thus control the spread of disease, to heal disease
- Jesus relied on the **Prince of Devils, or Demons** (or so the Pharisees came to call him; see, Mt. 12:24), to cast out demons

In fact, according to the fictitious but widely circulated as true apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, Jesus gave Beelzebul dominion over hell to thank him for rescuing Adam and other pre-Christian unbaptized "saints in prison" and bringing them to heaven over Satan's objections. Recruited by Lucifer to fight at his side against Michael, Beelzebub used to appear as a fly and tempt humans with pride, from a legend that he visited a plague of flies on the harvest at Canaan. At that time Satan outranked him. But, by the 16th century demonologist Johan Wierus ranked Beelzebub over Satan, the leading representative of all demons or fallen gods. Milton ranked him next in line to Satan in his epic poem, "Paradise Lost" (www.occultopedia.com).

(vv.31-35) **Jesus' family** finally arrives to take Him away. Jesus leaves them cooling their heels at the door, while He dissociates himself from them and redefines what is a "family." His first blood relations are those who do the will of God and He adopts, or takes them in as his closest relatives. At the same time, His biological family members who oppose God's will, become: 9, 10e outsiders.

Mark inserts the story of Beelzebub to make it clear that any attempt to derail Him from His mission is Satanic, as evil as anything Satan might do. This sin is evil enough to separate whoever commits it from Jesus and God, and to dissolve family relationships. Jesus warned:

"Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. 'I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Your enemies will be right in your own household! 'If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine.