

after another. In this questioning of the disciples, the grammatical form of the questions is by employing $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ which expects a positive answer. In what appears to be a quote or paraphrase of Jeremiah 5:21 and Ezequiel 12:2, Jesus asks the disciples, $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$; $\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\beta\alpha\iota\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$, and apparently they had seen and understood because they answered his questions. The significance of employing $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in asking questions would translate to, "you do understand, don't you?" So the grammatical structure in the questioning was to remind the disciples of what they had seen and heard.

There do not appear to be any parenthetical statements in this pericope, but it may be close to say that $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in verse 11 serves in a similar way. It would appear that Mark was letting the reader know what the purpose was of the Pharisees' coming to Jesus.

Mark's usage of the historical present is quite evident here. Four different times (and possibly five) a present indicative is used. In v. 12 $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, v. 17 $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, v. 19 $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, and v. 20 $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ are used to report what Jesus said and what the disciples answered. In v. 16, $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ is also used in describing what it was that the disciples argued about. What this means for translation's sake is that one must understand Mark's usage of present verbs to recount past events or dialogue. Nevertheless, the verbs can and should be translated with the English past, 'said'. Porter comments that Mark often uses $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ and a verb to shift pericopes, and often it is a historical present. ¹

In this pericope, Mark uses the aorist of $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in verse 11, $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$. The translation of this would simply be that the Pharisees began to argue or

¹ Porter, Stanley. *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. p. 301, 02.

discuss with Jesus. The aorist usage in the participle construction here is joined with the present infinitive .

In this pericope Mark does not use multiple participles within the same statement. In the first verse of this pericope there are several participles, but after that most sentences contain one participle. In verse 11 the three participles are , , and .

Mark's usage of direct speech versus indirect speech shows that he used direct speech, almost exclusively in this pericope. No speech is attributed to the Pharisees, only Mark indicates that they were asking for a sign. But Jesus' words are in direct discourse in verse 13. In verse 15 Jesus warns the disciples, again by direct discourse. In verse 16 the disciples are recorded as arguing with one another about the fact that they had no bread. This is more like a comment about their topic of discussion, that they had no bread. ² What Jesus says to them, knowing their discussion, is recorded as direct discourse in verses 17-20.

There are two primary grammatical constructions that beg for more attention, both negative. In verse 12 Jesus says to the Pharisees, μ μ , μ . What appears odd is that the Pharisees wanted a sign and Jesus said, "if [a sign] will be given this generation." Most translations render this as a negative, "a sign will not be given." Lane comments that this comes from a Semitic idiom for strong negation. ³ The parallel passage in Matthew 16 reads . As Mark's construction seems to be rougher Greek, it is quite possible his was the

² If one accepts the textual variant in NA 27ed. then this statement would be μ , and thus direct discourse.

³ Lane, William. *The Gospel of Mark*. p.276

original reading. Gundry's comment on this issue is brief but he says, "hebraistically idiomatic, archaic, and solemn form of the denial."⁴ Maybe the easiest way to understand it in English is to read it sarcastically, "as if to this generation a sign will be given!"

The second negative that irritates the basic Greek reader's eyes is in verse 14, μ . If brackets were put around the [μ] it might read easier. Gundry states, "the plural loaves allows for an exception in the follow-up: 'and except for one loaf they did not have [any loaves] with themselves in the boat.'"⁵ This also Gundry attributes to a Semitic construction.⁶ It almost appears at first sight to be a conditional statement, but the second half does not follow. In English it seems best to understand it that they did not take bread, except for one loaf.

⁴ Gundry, Robert H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*. p.403

⁵ Gundry. *Ibid.* p. 407

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 411