

Hellenism

(a Culture based upon Greek Philosophy)

Set 04 of 12 slide sets

Michelle Nailon CSB

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Melbourne 2024

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Is the World View of Hellenism (cf Greek Philosophy) Heavily based on a sense of the universe and the sense of space and place?

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Consider Hellenism as compared with Judaism

- ▶ According to Google the meaning of Hellenism is:

a body of humanistic and classical ideals “associated with ancient Greece and including reason, the pursuit of knowledge and the arts, moderation, civic responsibility, and bodily development.”



- ▶ Note there is an **absence** here **of the sense of history** that defines Judaism

HELLENISM (and its reliance on the sense of place)

- ▶ Does the tension between Judaism and Hellenism have a **cosmic** dynamic?

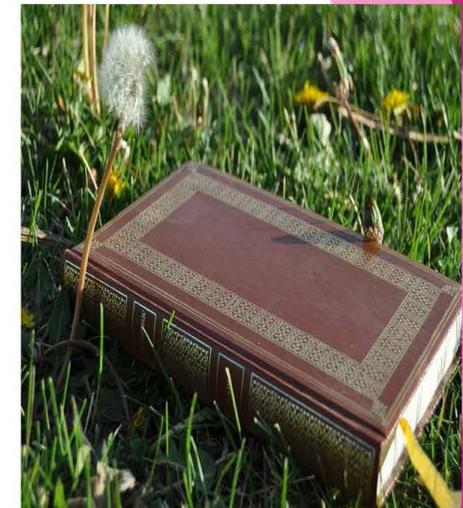
▶ Judaism is about:
Law, history, covenant,
morality, relationship, time.

▶ Hellenism is about:
Order, rationalism, maths,
idealism, the urban, place.

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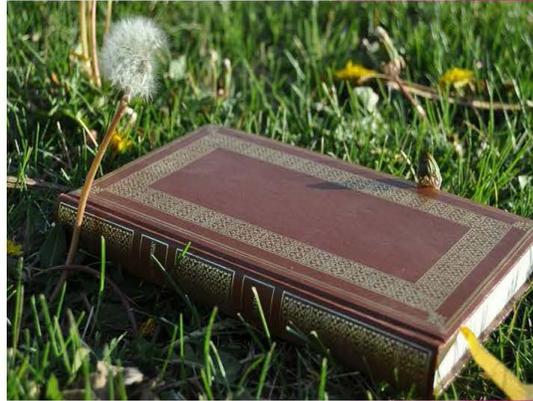
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- ▶ Greek philosophy is heavily based upon Plato’s *Republic*.
- ▶ Plato gives a graphic description of this “Republic” and modern workplaces are very parallel to his description. However, the actual Republic is **an ideal**.



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- ▶ In reality, in its full description, Plato's Republic does not exist and never did or could exist.
- ▶ Google describes it as a "psychological allegory"



What other distinctive features of Hellenism are there?

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- ▶ The Greek deities **inter-married** and sometimes married humans.
- ▶ In contrast, in Judaism, there was only the one God and there was no female deity.



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- ▶ Greek religion described a **pantheon of deities**.
- ▶ This was in stark contrast to the monotheistic religion of the Jews who had an historical covenant with the one God.



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- ▶ Greek gods were **not known for being moral**.
- ▶ Some were **disorganized** and contradictory.
- ▶ The Greeks created gods **in the image of humans**.
- ▶ Greeks could **add gods** to their pantheon.

This approach has enabled governments with a base of Greek philosophy to absorb (and rule over) a **vast array of differing peoples and cultures**

e.g. in the urban context

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▶ In the *Timaeus* Plato describes the creation of the world as work done by a **divine Craftsman**, who has done this by reference to a model – a system of rational principles which are to be embodied in materials, to produce a unified result.

▶ By contrast, the Jewish psalms reflect the belief that people can have a **personal relationship with God** who takes an on-going and active role in the universe.

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▶ The Greek emphasis on mathematics, architecture and sculpture reflects their focus upon **ORDER**

▶ By contrast the emphasis in Judaism is on the moral **LAW**

▶ **The genius of Judaism** was to perceive that the ultimate cause of the universe is the one God who is both **loving and moral**.

The genius of Hellenism was to perceive that the ultimate base of the universe is **ordered**.



▶ The moral law is understood in terms of **time**

The order of the universe is expressed in **place**

Were the Gospel Writers aware of the time & place dialectic between the World View of Judaism and the World View of Greek Philosophy?

One can wonder to what extent were the gospel writers aware that the dialectical tension between the societies of Judaism and Hellenism is an expression of the cosmic tension that exists between time and place



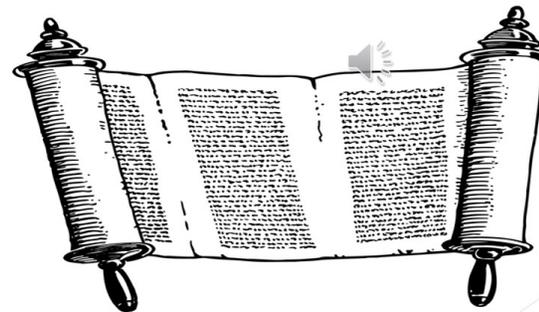
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The Gospel of Mark a quick re-cap



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