

The Gospel of Mark

a quick re-cap



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The Gospel of Mark a quick re-cap

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- ▶ By 70CE the hostility of the Jews towards Roman rule had come to a head and they revolted against Rome.



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- ▶ The Roman army put Jerusalem under siege and then destroyed it, including the Temple.
- ▶ Scholars believe the gospel of Mark, the first gospel, was written around this time.
- ▶ Mark's gospel describes scenes from the siege.

No. 82



No. 83

- ▶ Where did the destruction of Jerusalem leave the Christian communities who were now gathering in "house churches" throughout the Empire ?
- ▶ What was their attitude towards Rome and its Hellenistic culture?



In the 60's the Christians in Rome had already endured terrible persecution by the Emperor Nero.

In 64 CE there was a fire in Rome that ravaged the city.

People blamed Nero for this. Nero blamed the Christians.

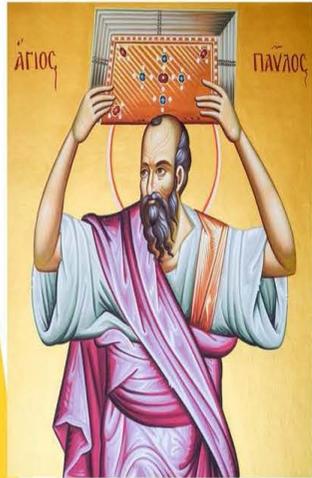
At the time some people described Christianity as a Jewish sect.

No. 84



Nero

No. 85



- ▶ But on the contrary, the Christians were not hostile towards Rome and its Hellenistic culture
- ▶ The first theologian, Paul of the 50's CE showed how Hellenism was incorporated into the message of Jesus.
- ▶ Paul said he would focus on preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews) while Peter would preach to the Jews.

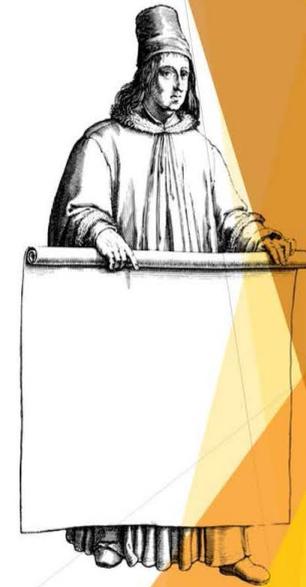
No. 87

▶ The paragraph pairs of Section A shows what **authority** is based upon (cf. Judaism and Law).

▶ Section B shows what is needed for a **sense of direction** (cf. Hellenism and its stress on Order)

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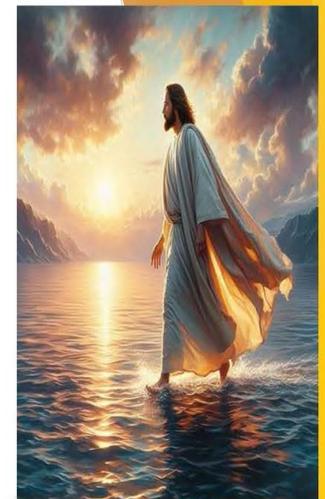


- ▶ A sociological analysis of Mark's gospel (cf. *Five Pivotal Texts* available in www.realitysearch.com.au) shows how Mark sets out his gospel text in four sections.

No. 88

Section C is about the personhood of Jesus. There are **no** paragraph patterns here. By implication, Section C shows how the **person of Jesus** and his followers maintain a balance between the two.

Section D, also structured into paragraph pairs, is about making a **response to Jesus**.



No. 89

How would such a structure show that Mark **was aware** that a dialectical tension between **Judaism and Hellenism**

connects to a cosmic dialectic between **time and place?**

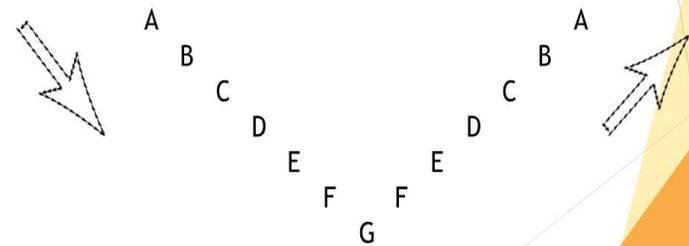


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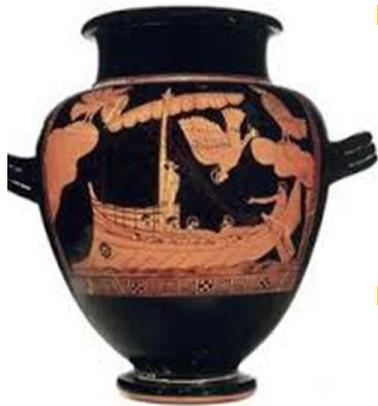
No. 90

- ▶ Mark used a concentric circle structure for his Sections A and B.
- ▶ The paragraph “hooks” he used are the names of **places**.

- ▶ Thus the first and last paragraphs are about “home”
- ▶ The third and third last “hooks” are about the “sea”.
- ▶ The fifth and fifth last “hooks” are about a “house” etc.



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Boat on a Greek urn

- ▶ Also, the way in which Jesus goes from place to place in these first Sections, echoes the adventures of Homer’s hero Ulysses who also went from place to place.
- ▶ Homer’s stories about Ulysses were the most popular stories in Greek literature.

The point here, is that Mark structures about half of his gospel around the sense of **“place”**

He sees **“place”** as key to an **undergirding structure of Christianity**

