

### How does Mark use his storytelling skills to portray Jesus as a savior?

How to get a C for use of sources:

Once Jesus resurrects, we notice his divine side which was unique and no one else had. This divine state is the one who guarantees us that he is the passage to salvation. He is the only human that defeated death and was able to resurrect saving those that have faith in him. Mark 16:16-20 these passages mention how Jesus fulfilled his promises that he was going to be at the right hand of God...

Reading this, do you see the problem? Mark 16:16-20 is not part of the original Gospel, which ends with the women running from the tomb, afraid. Nobody sees the risen Jesus.

This is not just a minor error. Jesus has threatened the High Priest that he will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power. This student is using the resurrection appearances to demonstrate that Mark thinks Jesus is now at the right hand of God. But Mark does not describe any resurrection appearances of Jesus. The women are told that this will happen. Maybe Mark wants his readers to believe that they did happen, and that Jesus is at God's right hand. But maybe he wants his readers to believe that Jesus will, in the near future, come at the right hand of power and judge the High Priest. Maybe that is why he did not include a resurrection narrative. If you don't even know what is and what is not part of the primary source we are studying, you are not likely to understand that source well.

How to get a B- for use of sources:

Most Romans viewed religion as the means to achieve a better earthly life while Jews viewed it as the means by which a pleasant afterlife can be attained. (Ehrman 21)

The student is using information from the text-book to understand the context. The problem is that, on p.21, Ehrman says nothing about what the Jews believed in the time of Jesus about the afterlife. He contrasts the common belief amongst the Romans with what most religions teach today. To find out about Jewish beliefs, you must turn to the next chapter. There, on p. 40, he mentions that the Sadducees, an important Jewish sect, did not believe in an after-life. Admittedly, they were not the majority, but knowing what Ehrman says on p.40 would prevent this error about what he says on p.21.

I would say that most Jews thought that religion was important primarily as a way of enabling the nation to thrive and prosper. Some of them thought that God, who protected the nation, would eventually reward those who had given their lives to defend it on the last day. The ultimate national victory would be celebrated by martyrs. This idea is found in the Book of Daniel and the Books of the Maccabees. Although this means belief about an

afterlife is part of the religion, it is not that the religion is primarily concerned with a pleasant after-life.

How to get a B+ for use of sources:

However, after the emperor Nero started persecuting them, with the pinnacle of persecution being the Great Fire of Rome and torturing them, Roman people started feeling sympathy for Christians. According to the historian Tacitus, they were nailed to crosses and set aflame to use as night-time lamps, or mauled by dogs because animal hides were placed on them. He claims, "Even though they were clearly guilty and merited being made the most recent example of the consequences of crime, people began to pity these sufferers, because they were consumed not for the public good but on account of the fierceness of one man." (Tacitus)

Many of you referred to Nero's persecution of Christians, but only one backed this up with a quotation from Tacitus, our most important primary source. It actually isn't difficult to find a translation of Tacitus' work on-line, but that little bit of extra work makes the paper look much more polished. A higher grade would come from tracking down less well-known primary source material and demonstrating its relevance.

Compare this:

When Jesus feels anger, love, sadness, joy or pain people are supposed to identify with him, same as any other protagonist. When Jesus says he is the Son of Man, we are supposed to doubt him, and consider if he actually is. At Jesus' crucifixion, we are supposed to feel his anguish, and the guilt of those around him who realized what they had done.

With this:

Tyrion Lannister is a great character because he says things that are really amusing and does things that are really clever, and so we identify with him, and we laugh at his jokes.

Both of these are true, but they don't really tell us very much. What does Tyrion do that is clever, or say that is funny? There needs to be an example of one of his jokes to make the point.

Here is how to write about Mark's presentation of Jesus:

...he simply wakes up and with a sentence makes a storm vanish and then, irritated, asks his followers why they were even scared in the first place, it reminds us of typical situations when everybody is endangered but a hero defuses the situation without even being worried in the first place. The "hero" then drops a cocky one-liner, which is basically what Jesus did by asking his disciples why they were scared of drowning when they clearly did not understand that he was the Son of God.

This really tells us something about how Mark establishes Jesus' personality. Some heroes are more cocky than others. Tony Stark, for example, is cocky, as indeed is Tyrion Lannister. It is not just that they do heroic deeds, but the way they talk reinforces the sense that they know their own status. Jesus first rebukes the storm, and then rebukes the disciples for their fear, which is contrasted with his own effortless calm.