

**Examining the Da Vinci Code and the Bible**  
**Historicity of Christianity: “Is Christianity a Copy Cat Religion?”**

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**I. Review from last week:**

- Contention: The bible was written by man and has undergone countless revisions and additions; we have never had a definitive version of the book.
- Response: Inspired by God, recorded by man.
  - Scriptural Evidence
    - II Tim 3:16-17, II Pet 1:20-21
  - Historical Evidence
    - Dead Sea Scrolls, dating of gospels, number of manuscripts

**Table Talk** – “Where do our faith and religious practices come from?”

**II. Dan Brown’s claims about the origins of Christianity:**

- Christianity incorporates pagan symbols
- Jesus is a remake of other gods, namely Mithras and Osiris
- Nothing in Christianity is original

**Don’t forget:** “The best way to undermine the Christian faith is to demystify the works of God, discredit the divinity of Christ and uproot the Word of God.” Dr. Jeffrey Neihaus, Gordon-Conwell Professor.

**III. Pagan gods and their relationship to Christianity**

- Use of pagan symbols – what the Bible says:
  - Exo. 30:3, 23 & 23:13, 24; Deut 5:7 & 6:14; I Ki 14:9; II Ki 22:17
  - Acts 15:20; I Cor 5:9-13; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 22:15
- Isis, Osiris, & Seth
  - “He was always depicted as a mummy, a dead king.” Jonathan Z. Smith: Kingship and the gods: a study of ancient Near Eastern religion as the integration of society & nature: 289.
- Cybele & Attis
  - No resurrection: hair growth and finger movement
- Mithras
  - Earlier origin, but underwent changes around 100 A.D. and copied Christian beliefs

**IV. What makes Christianity original?** Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the Savior-God unique to Christianity or were the New Testament writers copycats of other pagan and mystery religions?

- Jesus died to pay the price for sin

- Heb 7:27, Heb 9:26-28, I Cor 15:14
- Jesus' death *actually happened*
  - Historian evidence: Josephus, Tacitus

"We know more about the life of Jesus than just about any other figure in the ancient world. His birth, life and death are revealed in much more detail than most ancient figures whose existence is taken for granted by historians." Josh McDowell & Don Stewart: Answers To Tough Questions, 43.

- The New Testament records are reliable
  - Biblical writings correspond w/ historical events
- Christianity is an *exclusivist* faith
  - Proof: the ENTIRE BIBLE!
  - Forbidden from worshiping other gods: Ex. 20:3-5; 34:14; Deut. 6:13-14 & 8:19-20
  - Only ONE God: Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4; Isa. 43:10-11; 44:6-8; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21-22; 46:9; 2 Sam. 7:22; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 86:10; Isa. 37:16, 20; 43:10-11; Jer. 10:10; 1 Tim. 1:17; James 2:19; Jude 25
  - No other gods existed before Yahweh, nor will there be any others: Isa. 43:10; 44:6,8; 45:5-6, 14, 21

Amid the prevailing syncretism of the Greco-Roman world, the religion of Paul, with the religion of Israel, stands absolutely alone." Greshem Machen: The Origin of Paul's Religion, p. 9

## V. Who copied who?

- Due to the late dating of the vast majority of extant documentation for these other pagan religions, there is no way possible that they could have influenced the writing of the New Testament!
- Frankly, if anyone copied anyone, it was these pagan religions who copied Christianity.
  - See: *Julian the Apostate, Roman emperor 361-363 A.D.*

"It must not be uncritically assumed that the Mysteries always influenced Christianity, for it is not only possible but probable that in certain cases, the influence moved in the opposite direction." Bruce M. Metzger: Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian.

*Next Week*

**Holy Grail:** *"Jesus, Myth, Man and/or God"*