

The Pagan Origins Of Christian Holidays

For Pagans and Christians alike, *Jesus Through Pagan Eyes* offers a provocative portrait ofJesus—as a compassionate, life-affirming, nature-inspired spiritual teacher, freed from the limiting ideology of the Church. Rev. Mark Townsend sets the stage by exploring the historical evidence of who Jesus was as a human being before delving into the realm of metaphor and mythology, the notion of Christ, and the Church’s conception of Jesus as Christ. The heart of this unique book lies in the thoughtful and deeply moving collection of stories, essays, and interviews about Jesus from today’s most respected Pagan, Wiccan, and Druidic leaders. Contributors such as Maxine Sanders, Christopher Penczak, Janet Farrar, Diana Paxson, Philip Carr-Gomm, Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, John Michael Greer, Selena Fox, and Raven Grimassi explore the historical figure of Jesus in relation to Wiltchcraft, the tarot, goddess worship, and shamanism—while illustrating how this god of the Christian church blesses and inspires those who embrace non-traditional spiritual paths. Whether you envision Jesus as an ascended master, a human teacher, or a mythic god-man, this remarkable book will introduce you to a Jesus who fits fully with the Pagan imagination. Praise: “Townsend uses Jesus to initiate dialogue, and he does so in way that is accepting and inclusive of many understandings and interpretations of Jesus, his purpose, and his relevance (or irrelevance) in the religious practices of contemporary Pagans.”—Huffington Post “This work admirably promotes understanding between belief systems that have a sometimes uneasy relationship.”—Publishers Weekly

A groundbreaking new portrait of the apostle Paul, from one of today’s leading historians of antiquity Often seen as the author of timeless Christian theology, Paul himself heatedly maintained that he lived and worked in history’s closing hours. His letters propel his readers into two ancient worlds, one Jewish, one pagan. The first was incandescent with apocalyptic hopes, expecting God through his messiah to fulfill his ancient promises of redemption to Israel. The second teemed with ancient actors, not only human but also divine: angry superhuman forces, jealous demons, and hostile cosmic gods. Both worlds are Paul’s, and his convictions about the first shaped his actions in the second. Only by situating Paul within this charged social context of gods and humans, pagans and Jews, cities, synagogues, and competing Christ-following assemblies can we begin to understand his mission and message. This original and provocative book offers a dramatically new perspective on one of history’s seminal figures.

To the ordinary public, the connection between Paganism and Christianity still seems rather remote. Indeed the common notion is that Christianity was really a miraculous interposition into and dislocation of the old order of the world; and that the pagan gods (as in Milton’s Hymn on the Nativity) fled away in dismay before the sign of the Cross, and at the sound of the name of Jesus. Doubtless this was a view much encouraged by the early Church itself, if only to enhance its own authority and importance. Yet, as is well known to every student, this view of the originality of the Christian revelation is quite misleading and contrary to fact. The main Christian doctrines and festivals, besides a great mass of affiliated legend and ceremonial, are really quite directly derived from, and related to, preceding Nature worship; and it has only been by a good deal of deliberate mystification and falsification that this derivation has been kept out of sight.

The first comprehensive study of its kind, this fully illustrated book establishes Paganism as a persistent force in European history with a profound influence on modern thinking. From the serpent goddesses of ancient Crète to modern nature-worship and the restoration of the indigenous religions of eastern Europe, this wide-ranging book offers a rewarding new perspective of European history. In this definitive study, Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick draw together the fragmented sources of Europe’s native religions and establish the coherence and continuity of the Pagan world vision. Exploring Paganism as it developed from the ancient world through the Celtic and Germanic periods, the authors finally appraise modern Paganism and its apparent causes as well as addressing feminist spirituality, the heritage movement, nature-worship and ‘deep’ ecology This innovative and comprehensive history of European Paganism will provide a stimulating, reliable guide to this popular dimension of religious culture for the academic and the general reader alike.

Holy Days

Revelations of Pagan Origins

The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus (Second Edition)

Unmasking the Pagan Christ

A History of Christian Conversion

Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion

The End of the Pagan City

The intent of this book is to merely present before you the compromise that has occurred between Christianity and paganism. Under the facade of Christianity the duplicitous ancient mystery religious system that began in Babylon continues. This religion is perpetuated through the most powerful religious institution in the world- the Roman Catholic Church. How is this possible? In a strategic effort to appeal to the pagans of Rome the Universal Church simply fused the pagan customs and festivals of sun worshippers with the rites of the one true faith. The Pagan Origins of Christian Holidays is an examination of the holidays that are observed by Christians today. This book reveals a piercing truth; Satan has deceived the whole world.

An examination of the sacred botany and the pagan origins and rituals of Christmas • Analyzes the symbolism of the many plants associated with Christmas • Reveals the shamanic rituals that are at the heart of the Christmas celebration The day on which many commemorate the birth of Christ has its origins in pagan rituals that center on tree worship, agriculture, magic, and social exchange. But Christmas is no ordinary folk observance. It is an evolving feast that over the centuries has absorbed elements from cultures all over the world—practices that give plants and plant spirits pride of place. In fact, the symbolic use of plants at Christmas effectively transforms the modern-day living room into a place of shamanic ritual. Christian Rätsch and Claudia Müller-Ebeling show how the ancient meaning of the botanical elements of Christmas provides a unique view of the religion that existed in Europe before the introduction of Christianity. The fir tree was originally revered as the sacred World Tree in northern Europe. When the church was unable to drive the tree cult out of people’ s consciousness, it incorporated the fir tree by dedicating it to the Christ child. Father Christmas in his red-and-white suit, who flies through the sky in a sleigh drawn by reindeer, has his mythological roots in the shamanic reindeer-herding tribes of arctic Europe and Siberia. These northern shamans used the hallucinogenic fly agaric mushroom, which is red and white, to make their soul flights to the other world. Apples, which figure heavily in Christmas baking, are symbols of the sun god Apollo, so they find a natural place at winter solstice celebrations of the return of the sun. In fact, the authors contend that the emphasis of Christmas on green plants and the promise of the return of life in the dead of winter is just an adaptation of the pagan winter solstice celebration.

The Hebrew Old Testament, which contains some of the world’s most ancient religious texts, was written from and repeatedly re-edited over the course of several centuries from about 1000 BCE. It reached its final form at the hands of editors who were monotheists. They believed that their god Yahweh was the only true God, and that he had been worshipped exclusively by their ancestors from the time of Abraham. They edited their sources to reflect this belief. However, we can strip away this veneer of later monotheism to view the ancient stories themselves. These bear witness to Israelite religion as practised before 600 BCE. Far from being monotheistic, this religion was a fascinating polytheistic paganism, close to the religion of the surrounding Canaanites. In this religion, Yahweh, far from being God as understood by modern western monotheism, was a distinctive tribal deity. This book will be of particular interest to the large numbers of western people who come from a broadly Christian or Jewish background but have left those faiths behind to explore paganism or New Age spirituality.

Have you ever wondered what a Christmas tree has to do with the birth of Christ, or, why children decorate eggs in commemoration of the Christ’s death? Well, the answer is a sobering one. Because of the compromise between pagans and the Catholic Church many Christian holidays are Christian in name only. In this book Elisha J. Israel traces the origins of this unholy compromise. Elisha J. Israel is the author of Into Egypt Again With Ships: A Message to the Forgotten Israelites (African Americans) and Killing Black Innocents: The Program to Control “African American” Reproduction (from Slavery’s End to the Present-Day Self-Inflicted Genocide).

The Pagan Origins of Christian Holidays

How to Observe, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force . . .

The Pagan Christ

Defending and Defining the Faith

The Triumph of Christianity

One Nation Under God

Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa

Do the terms ?pagan? and ?Christian, ? transition from paganism to Christianity? still hold as explanatory devices to apply to the political, religious and cultural transformation experienced Empire-wise? Revisiting ?pagans? and ?Christians? in Late Antiquity has been a fertile site of scholarship in recent years: the paradigm shift in the interpretation of the relations between ?pagans? and ?Christians? replaced the old ?conflict model? with a subtler, complex approach and triggered the upsurge of new explanatory models such as multiculturalism, cohabitation, cooperation, identity, or group cohesion. This collection of essays, inscribes itself into the revisionist discussion of pagan-Christian relations over a broad territory and time-span, the Roman Empire from the fourth to the eighth century. A set of papers argues that if ?paganism? had never been fully extirpated or denied by the multiethnic educated elite that managed the Roman Empire, ?Christianity? came to be presented by the same elite as providing a way for a wider group of people to combine true philosophy and right religion. The speed with which this happened is just as remarkable as the long persistence of paganism after the sea-change of the fourth century that made Christianity the official religion of the State. For a long time afterwards, ?pagans? and ?Christians? lived ?in between? polytheistic and monotheist traditions and disputed Classical and non-Classical legacies. ý

"A brilliant, readable, brilliant and enjoyable study."—Géza Vermès, Times Literary Supplement in this exciting book, Paula Fredriksen explains the variety of New Testament images of Jesus by exploring the ways that the new Christian communities interpreted his mission and message in light of the delay of the Kingdom he had preached. This edition includes an introduction reviews the most recent scholarship on Jesus and its implications for both history and theology. "Brilliant and lucidly written, full of original and fascinating insights."—Reginald H. Fuller, Journal of the American Academy of Religion "This is a first-rate work of a first-rate historian."—James D. Tabor, Journal of Religion "Fredriksen confronts her documents—principally the writings of the New Testament—as an archaeologist would an especially rich complex site. With great care she distinguishes the literary images from historical fact. As she does so, she explains the images of Jesus in terms of the strategies and purposes of the writers Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."—Thomas D'Evelyn, Christian Science Monitor

A New York Times Notable Book, winner of the Jerwood Award from the Royal Society of Literature, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and named a Book of the Year by the Telegraph, Spectator, Observer, and BBC History Magazine, this bold new history of the rise of Christianity shows how its radical followers helped to annihilate Greek and Roman civilizations. The Darkening Age is the largely unknown story of how a militant religion deliberately attacked and suppressed the teachings of the Classical world, ushering in centuries of unquestioning adherence to "one true faith." Despite the long-held notion that the early Christians were meek and mild, going to their martyrs' deaths singing hymns of love and praise, the truth, as Catherine Nixey reveals, is very different. Far from being meek and mild, they were violent, ruthless, and fundamentally intolerant. Unlike the polytheistic world, in which the addition of one new religion made no fundamental difference to the old ones, this new ideology stated not only that it was the way, the truth, and the light but that, by extension, every single other way was wrong and had to be destroyed. From the first century to the sixth, those who didn't fall into step with its beliefs were pursued in every possible way: social, legal, financial, and physical. Their altars were overturned and their temples demolished, their statues hacked to pieces, and their priests killed. It was an annihilation of a moralistic, vividly written, and utterly compelling, this is a remarkable debut from a brilliant young historian.

A provocative and authoritative history that charts the rise of Christianity from the point of view of traditional! religion from the religious scholar and critically acclaimed author of Augustine. Pagans explores the rise of Christianity from a surprising and unique viewpoint: that of the people who witnessed their ways of life destroyed by what seemed then a powerful religious cult. These "pagans" were actually pious Greeks, Romans, Syrians, and Gauls who observed the traditions of their ancestors. To these devoted polytheists, Christians who worshipped only one deity were immoral atheists who believed that a splash of water on the deathbed could erase a lifetime of sin. Religious scholar James J. O'Donnell takes us on a lively tour of the ancient Roman world through the fourth century CE, when Romans of every nationality, social class, and religious preference found their world suddenly constrained by rulers who preferred a strange new god. Some joined this new cult, while others denied its powers, erroneously believing it was little more than a passing fad. In Pagans, O'Donnell brings to life various pagan rites and essential features of Roman religion and life, offers fresh portraits of iconic historical figures, including Constantine, Julian, and Augustine, and explores important themes—Rome versus the east, civilization versus barbarism, plurality versus unity, rich versus poor, and tradition versus innovation—in this startling account.

A History of Pagan Europe

Pagans

Christianity: The Origins of a Pagan Religion

Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity

Jesus Through Pagan Eyes

A Fresh Look at Leadership, Authority, & Accountability;

Pagans and Christians in the Late Roman Empire

Christianity has played a central role in the history of Christianity. In this first in-depth and wide-ranging narrative history, David W. Kling examines the dynamic of individuals, families, and people groups who turn to the Christian faith. Global in reach, this book progresses from early Christian beginnings in the Roman world to Christianity’s expansion into Europe, the Americas, China, India, and Africa. Although conversion is often associated with a particular strand of modern Christianity (evangelical) and a particular type of experience (sudden, overwhelming), it is, when examined over two millennia, a phenomenon far more complex than any one-dimensional profile would suggest. No single, unitary paradigm defines conversion, and no easily demonstrable process accounts for why people convert to Christianity. Rather, a multiplicity of factors—historical, personal, social, geographical, theological, psychological, and cultural—shape the converting process. A History of Christian Conversion not only narrates the conversions of select individuals and peoples. It also engages current theories and models to explain conversion and examines recurring themes in the converting process: gender, agency, motivation, testimony, coercion, self-identity, “true” conversion, music, communication, the body, and divine presence. Accessible to scholars, students, and those with a general interest in conversion, Kling’s book is, to date, the most satisfying and comprehensive account of conversion in Christian history; this major work will become a standard must-read in conversion studies!--

Reveals how Christian mythology of the Middle Ages had more to do with paganism than the Bible • Identifies pagan deities that were incorporated into each of the saints • Shows how all the major holidays on the Christian calendar are modeled on long-standing pagan traditions This extensive study of the Christian mythology that animated medieval Europe shows that this mythology is primarily of pagan inspiration and that very little of it comes from the Bible. The fact that Christianity grafted itself onto earlier pagan worship was no mystery to the church fathers, Philippe Walter explains. Pagan elements were incorporated into the Christian faith on the advice of Pope Gregory the Great, who told Saint Augustine of Canterbury that rather than tear down the pagan temples in Britain, he should instead add the pagan rituals into the mix of Christian practices, thus providing an easy transition to the new religion. It was simply a matter of convincing the populace to slightly redirect their focus to include Jesus. In this highly documented work Walter shows which major calendar days of the Christian year are founded on pagan rituals and myths, including the high holidays of Easter and Christmas, a time when many pagans prepared for the coming of spirits who would leave gifts for those who honored their coming. Indeed, the identities of saints and pagan figures were so intermingled that some saints were even transformed into pagan incarnations. Mary Magdalene, for instance, became one of the Ladies of the Lake of Celtic legend. He also explores how the hagiographic accounts of the saints in the scriptures reveal the origin of these symbolic figures to be the deities worshipped in pagan Europe for centuries.

Have you ever wondered why we Christians do what we do for church every Sunday morning? Why do we “dress up” for church? Why does the pastor preach a sermon each week? Why do we have pews, steeples, and choirs? This ground-breaking book, now in affordable softcover, makes an unsettling proposal: most of what Christians do in present-day churches is rooted, not in the New Testament, but in pagan culture and rituals developed long after the death of the apostles. Coauthors Frank Viola and George Barna support their thesis with compelling historical evidence and extensive footnotes that document the origins of modern Christian church practices. In the process, the authors uncover the problems that emerge when the church functions more like a business organization than the living organism it was created to be. As you reconsider Christ’s revolutionary plan for his church—to be the head of a fully functioning body in which all believers play an active role—you’ll be challenged to decide whether you can ever do church the same way again.

Biblical theology and doctrines of Jehovah’s Witnesses .

Pagans and Christians in the City

How a Forbidden Religion Swept the World

The Pagan Belief That Shaped the Christian World

What Does the Bible Really Teach? .

Between Pagan and Christian

A Sourcebook

Solar Myths and Christian Festivals: The Pagan Origins of Christian Beliefs

This book focuses primarily on the end of the pagan religious tradition and the dismantling of its material form in North Africa (modern Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) from the 4th to the 6th centuries AD. Leone considers how urban communities changed, why some traditions were lost and some others continued, and whether these carried the same value and meaning upon doing so. Addressing two main issues, mainly from an archaeological perspective, the volume explores the change in religious habits and practices, and the consequent recycling and reuse of pagan monuments and materials, and investigates to what extent these physical processes were driven by religious motivations and contrasts, or were merely stimulated by economic issues.

Pagan Origins of the Christ MythEcho Point•ORM

Public reaction to the church, and its influence on the lives of early Christian women.

In this book A.D. Lee charts the rise to dominance of Christianity in the Roman empire. Using translated texts he explains the fortunes of both Pagans and Christians from the upheavals of the 3rd Century to the increasingly tumultuous times of the 5th and 6th centuries. The book also examines important themes in Late Antiquity such as the growth of monasticism, the emerging power of bishops and the development of pilgrimage, and looks at the fate of other significant religious groups including the Jews, Zoroastrians and Manichaeans.

The Origin of Satan

From Jesus to Christ

Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth

The Old Ones in the Old Book

Christian Mythology

Pagan Rome and the Early Christians

The Pagan Roots of Christian Doctrines

After more than 52 weeks on the Toronto Star’s bestseller list and 43 weeks on The Globe and Mail’s bestseller list, Tom Harpur’s groundbreaking book, The Pagan Christ, is now available in paperback. This new edition includes the twenty-page discussion guide, with more than 100 questions, to help facilitate a deeper, chapter-by-chapter analysis and more profound understanding of the findings and arguments found in the book. Subjects for discussion include: the ancient Egyptian roots of Christianity, the real meaning of the Bible, the key to whether Jesus really existed, the re-mythologizing of Christianity, the meaning of the Christ within all of us and the need to understand myth and allegory. With a new introduction by Tom Harpur, this paperback edition sheds further light on what has become one of the most talked about books of the new millennium.

Who and what was pagan depended on the outlook of the observer, as Christopher Jones shows in this fresh and penetrating analysis. Treating paganism as a historical construct rather than a fixed entity, Between Christian and Pagan uncovers the fluid ideas, rituals, and beliefs that Christians and pagans shared in Late Antiquity.

The provocative and authoritative history of the origins of Christian America in the New Deal era We're often told that the United States is, was, and always has been a Christian nation. But in One Nation Under God, historian Kevin M. Kruse reveals that the belief that America is fundamentally and formally Christian originated in the 1930s. To fight the "slavery" of FDR's New Deal, businessmen enlisted religious activists in a campaign for "freedom under God" that culminated in the election of their ally Dwight Eisenhower in 1952. The new president revolutionized the role of religion in American politics. He inaugurated new traditions like the National Prayer Breakfast, as Congress added the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance and made "In God We Trust" the country's first official motto. Church membership soon soared to an all-time high of 69 percent. Americans across the religious and political spectrum agreed that their country was "one nation under God." Provocative and authoritative, One Nation Under God reveals how an unholy alliance of money, religion, and politics created a false origin story that continues to define and divide American politics to this day.

First published in 1869, this remarkable early work of comparative mythology intended for the general public takes great pains to remind the reader that there is no danger of suddenly finding oneself transformed into a Buddhist or a "Mahometan" merely by allowing one's eyes to alight upon symbols of a non-Protestant faith. It also feels the need to introduce the reader to the idea of religious "arcana," that some concepts were once deemed fit only for select and secret ears, and then proceeds to cheerfully reveal some of those secrets, such as the phallicism of church steeples and spires.With the assistance of numerous charming illustrations, Inman introduces his 19th-century readers to the metaphorical links between Christianity and the civilizations of the ancient world-India, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, and others-from shared abstract figures of stars and crosses to nature symbology (fish, trees) to particular arrangements of the human figures in religious portraits that cross cultures. But it is the author's enchanting handholding that makes this work so appealing today: it speaks to a new enthusiasm among the public for an approach to religion-and religion as mythology-that is rational, logical, and beginning to approach the modern.British doctor and mythologist (1820-1876) is also the author of Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names as well as several books on hygiene.

The Mysteries of Mithras

Who Is Your Covering?

Was the "Original Jesus" a Pagan God?

Bridging Neopagan Perspectives with a Progressive Vision of Christ

The Jesus Mysteries

New Evidence, New Approaches (4th-8th centuries)

How Corporate America Invented Christian America

This "fresh, blunt, and highly persuasive account of how the West was won—for Jesus" (Newsweek) is now available in paperback. Stark's provocative report challenges conventional wisdom and finds that Christianity's astounding dominance of the Western world arose from its offer of a better, more secure way of life. "Compelling reading" (Library Journal) that is sure to "generate spirited argument" (Publishers Weekly), this account of Christianity's remarkable growth within the Roman Empire is the subject of much fanfare. "Anyone who has puzzled over Christianity's rise to dominance...must read it," says Yale University's Wayne A. Meeks, for the Rise of Christianity makes a compelling case for startling conclusions. Combining his expertise in historical evidence, and his insight into contemporary religion's appeal, Stark finds that early Christianity attracted the privileged rather than the poor, that most early converts were women or marginalized Jews—and ultimately "that Christianity was a success because it proved those who joined it with a more appealing, more assuring, happier, and perhaps longer life" (Andrew M. Greeley, University of Chicago).

A classic resource that connects the cardinal doctrines of Christianity to their origins in the ancient civilizations that preceded the religion. In Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth, John G. Jackson sources the pagan origins of Christian doctrine with particular focus on the creation and atonement myths. Rooted in historical facts, Jackson's claims are steeped in research and demonstrate how Christianity synthesizes the rituals, beliefs, and characteristics of savior gods from ancient Egyptian, Greek, Aztec, and Hindu origins. Initially published in 1941, this concise introduction remains an insightful contribution to comparative religion studies.

Rabbi or Messiah? Prophet or the Son of God? People have debated the identity of Jesus of Nazareth since the first century. But what if there was no Jesus? What if there was no Mary or Joseph, no twelve apostles? What if the story of Jesus was no more than a myth to convey spiritual truth? These claims have been around for hundreds of years and have become more prominent with well-known religion columnist Tom Harpur's recent book, The Pagan Christ. Harpur claims that Jesus was not a historical figure, but was one version of an ancient myth that can be traced from ancient Egyptian religion to the Roman mystery cults. Stanley Porter and Stephen Bedard tackle this radical claim by looking at the roots of the "pagan Christ idea," examining the supposed pagan parallels and presenting the evidence for the historical Jesus. The authors demonstrate that the suggestion of pagan origins for the Gospel story is not based on historical or textual evidence, but rather on a desire to create a universalistic spirituality revolving around a "Cosmic Christ" within each person. A fair examination of both the mythological and biblical texts reveal that the traditional understandings of an actual historical figure known as Jesus of Nazareth appearing two thousand years ago is indeed the only logical conclusion. Stanley E. Porter is President and Dean, and Professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Porter has M.A. degrees from Claremont Graduate School and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and the Ph.D. from the University of Sheffield. He has written widely on issues of concern in study of the New Testament, such as Jesus, Paul, the book of Acts, and John. He has a passion for education in the church, and preaches and teaches regularly. Stephen J. Bedard is the pastor of Woodford Baptist Church and First Baptist Church, Meaford, Ontario, Canada. He holds the M.Div. and M.Th. degrees from McMaster Divinity College, and is actively engaged in further graduate study. Bedard is an advocate of informed preaching and teaching, and is devoted to the ministry of the local church.

Essays examine the origin of major Christian doctrines not found in the Bible.

An Evangelical Response to the Cosmic Christ Idea

Recovering the Lost Light

The Christian Destruction of the Classical World

Paul

Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism

The Darkening Age

The Mysteries of Mithras presents a revival of this ancient Roman mystery religion, popular from the late second century B.C. Payam Nabarz reveals the history and tenets of Mithraism, its connections to Christianity, Islam, and Freemasonry, and the modern neo-pagan practice of Mithraism today. Included are seven of its initiatory rituals.

"Christian apologetics in the patristic era should be understood broadly as a defense of Christian beliefs and practices against non-Christian beliefs, practices, and policies (religious, social, and political) that were either antithetical to Christian beliefs and practices or openly hostile to Christianity. The advantage of this conceptualization of apologetics is that it enables readers to follow the discussion of Christian responses to Hellenistic culture beyond the context of persecution associated with the pre-Constantinian period which tends to be where many scholarly projects on apologetics end. The reader is also invited to see the links in the intellectual trajectory from early second-century apologetics through the early fifth century, prompting deeper reflection about the process of Christian self-definition in late antiquity. This book offers a presentation of Christian apologetic literature from the second century to the fifth century, taking each writer within the intellectual context of the day. The book argues that most apologies were not directed at a pagan readership. In most cases, ancient apologetics had a double object: to instruct the Christian and persuade weak Christians or non-Christians who were sympathetic to Christian claims. Taken cumulatively, it finds, apologetic literature was integral to the formation of the Christian identity in the Roman world. Christian beliefs Christian Hellenistic culture pre-Constantinian period Christian self-definition Christian apologetic literature Christian identity"--

Reveals how Christian mythology has more to do with long-standing pagan traditions than the Bible • Explains how the church fathers knowingly incorporated pagan elements into the Christian faith to ease the transition to the new religion • Identifies pagan deities that were incorporated into each of the saints • Shows how all the major holidays in the Christian calendar are modeled on pagan rituals and myths, including Easter and Christmas In this extensive study of the Christian mythology that animated Europe in the Middle Ages, author Philippe Walter reveals how these stories and the holiday traditions connected with them are based on long-standing pagan rituals and myths and have very little connection to the Bible. The author explains how the church fathers knowingly incorporated pagan elements into the Christian faith to ease the transition to the new religion. Rather than tear down the pagan temples, Pope Gregory the Great advised Saint Augustine of Canterbury to add the pagan rituals into the mix of Christian practices and transform the pagan temples into churches. Instead of religious conversion, it was simply a matter of convincing the populace to include Jesus in their current religious practices. Providing extensive documentation, Walter shows which major calendar days of the Christian year are founded on pagan rituals and myths, including the high holidays of Easter and Christmas. Examining hagiographic accounts of the saints, he reveals the origin of these symbolic figures in the deities worshipped in pagan Europe for centuries. He also explores how the identities of saints and pagan figures became so intermingled that some saints were transformed into pagan incarnations, such as Mary Magdalene’ s conversion into one of the Celtic Ladies of the Lake. In revealing the pagan roots of many Christian figures, stories, and rituals, Walter provides a new understanding of the evolution of religious belief.

What are the origins of some of our holidays? Why are eggs decorated on Easter? Why are there wreaths on doors during Christmas? What is the real reason for decorated trees in living rooms around the world? Through a Christian prospective this book will examine popular holidays that have a significant religious meaning. Digging through layers of history, this book will uncover the pagan origins that make up any of our holiday traditions.

The End of Traditional Religion and the Rise of Christianity

Their Origin and Meaning

The Pagans' Apostle

Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

An Introduction to Early Christian Apologetic Literature

Culture Wars from the Tiber to the Potomac

Pagan Christianity?

The "marvelous" (Reza Aslan, bestselling author of Zealot), New York Times bestselling story of how Christianity became the dominant religion in the West. How did a religion whose first believers were twenty or so illiterate day laborers in a remote part of the empire become the official religion of Rome, converting some thirty million people in just four centuries? In The Triumph of Christianity, early Christian historian Bart D. Ehrman weaves the rigorously-researched answer to this question "into a vivid, nuanced, and enormously readable narrative" (Elaine Pagels, National Book Award-winning author of The Gnostic Gospels), showing how a handful of charismatic characters used a brilliant social strategy and an irresistible message to win over hearts and minds one at a time. This "humane, thoughtful and intelligent" book (The New York Times Book Review) opens the way we think about the single most important cultural transformation our world has ever seen—one that revolutionized art, music, literature, philosophy, ethics, economics, and law.

Traditionalist Christians who oppose same-sex marriage and other cultural developments in the United States wonder why they are being forced to bracket their beliefs in order to participate in public life. This situation is not new, says Steven D. Smith: Christians two thousand years ago faced very similar challenges. Picking up poet T. S. Eliot's World War II-era thesis that the future of the West would be determined by a contest between Christianity and "modern paganism," Smith argues in this book that today's culture wars can be seen as a reprise of the basic antagonism that pitted pagans against Christians in the Roman Empire. Smith's Pagans and Christians in the City looks at that historical conflict and explores how the same competing ideas continue to clash today. All of us, Smith shows, have much to learn by observing how patterns from ancient history are reemerging in today's most controversial issues.

Essays examine the origin of major Christian doctrines not found in the Bible. "This astonishing book completely undermines the traditional history of Christianity that has been perpetuated for centuries by the Church and presents overwhelming evidence that the Jesus of the New Testament is a mythical figure. "Whether you conclude that this book is the most alarming heresy of the millennium or the mother of all revelations, The Jesus Mysteries deserves to be read." —Fort Worth Star-Telegram Far from being eyewitness accounts, as is traditionally held, the Gospels are actually Jewish adaptations of ancient Pagan myths of the dying and resurrecting godman Osiris-Dionysus. The supernatural story of Jesus is not the history of a miraculous Messiah but a carefully crafted spiritual allegory designed to guide initiates on a journey of mystical discovery. A little more than a century ago, most people believed that the strange story of Adam and Eve was history; today it is understood to be a myth. Within a few decades, authors Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy argue, we will likewise be amazed that the fabulous story of God incarnate—who was born of a virgin, who turned water into wine, and who rose from the dead—could have been interpreted as anything but a profound parable.

The Power of the Hysterical Woman

Pagan Roots of The Hebrew Old Testament

The Plants, Spirits, and Rituals at the Origins of Yuletide

Pagan & Christian Creeds

The Rise of Christianity

Pagan Christmas

The Historic and Pagan Origins of Modern Day Holiday Celebrations

A provocative argument for a mystical, rather than historical, understanding of Jesus, leading to a radical rebirth of Christianity in our time. For forty years, scholar and religious commentator Tom Harpur has challenged church orthodoxy and guided thousands of readers on subjects as controversial as the true nature of Christ and life after death. Now, in his most radical and groundbreaking work, Harpur digs deep into the origins of Christianity. Long before the advent of Jesus Christ, the Egyptians and other peoples believed in the coming of a messiah, a virgin birth, a madonna and her child, and the incarnation of the spirit in flesh. While the early Christian church accepted these ancient truths as the very basis of Christianity, it disavowed their origins. What had begun as a universal belief system built on myth and allegory was transformed, by the third and fourth centuries A.D., into a ritualistic institution based on a literal interpretation of myths and symbols. But, as Tom Harpur argues in *The Pagan Christ*, "to take the Gospels literally as history or biography is to utterly miss their inner spiritual meaning." At a time of religious extremism, Tom Harpur reveals the virtue of a cosmic faith based on ancient truths that the modern church has renounced. His message is clear: Our blind faith in literalism is killing Christianity. Only with a return to an inclusive religion where Christ lives within each of us will we gain a true understanding of who we are and who we are intended to become. *The Pagan Christ* is a book of rare insight and power that will reilluminate the Bible and change the way we think about religion.

A study of the role of the devil in biblical and modern times theorizes that dissident social groups that resisted Christianity, such as pagans and Jews, were typically portrayed as demons and therefore established as threats. Reprint. 60,000 first printing.