

## Christianity The Origins Of A Pagan Religion

For more than three decades, Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has pioneered new understandings of the Jewish background of early Christianity. Many have been fascinated by his unique monograph on Jesus, translated into several languages. Most of his scholarly articles in English, including some new contributions as well as many published in not easily accessible journals, have been collected in this one volume. A must for New Testament scholars, and students of early Judaism, it will also be welcomed by the many lay persons for whom Professor Flusser has provided illumination on the origins of Christian faith.

First published in 1976, Paul Johnson's exceptional study of Christianity has been loved and widely hailed for its intensive research, writing, and magnitude—"a tour de force, one of the most ambitious surveys of the history of Christianity ever attempted and perhaps the most radical" (New York Review of Books). In a highly readable companion to books on faith and history, the scholar and author Johnson has illuminated the Christian world and its fascinating history in a way that no other has. Johnson takes off in the year AD 49 with his namesake the apostle Paul. Thus beginning an ambitious quest to paint the centuries since the founding of a little-known 'Jesus Sect', A History of Christianity explores to a great degree the evolution of the Western world. With an unbiased and overall optimistic tone, Johnson traces the fantastic scope of the consequent sects of Christianity and the people who followed them. Information drawn from extensive and varied sources from around the world makes this history as credible as it is reliable. Invaluable understanding of the framework of modern Christianity—and its trials and tribulations throughout history—has never before been contained in such a captivating work.

This book explores the events, people, and writings surrounding the early Jesus movement. The essays are divided into four groups: the movement's formation, production of its early Gospels, description of the Jesus movement itself, and the Jewish mission and its literature.

Ten seminal essays on the Gospel of Thomas from a scholar whose work has been at the center of the Thomas debate for more than two decades.

An account of the beginnings of the Christian movement: a third of it on the Judaism of the first century, a third on Jesus, and a third on Paul and the development from messianic sect to Christian religion.

Christian Origins is an exploration of the historical course and nature of early Christian theology, which concentrates on setting it within particular traditions or sets of traditions. In the three sections of the volume, Reading Origen, Reading the Fourth Century and Christian Origins in the Western Traditions, the contributors reconsider classic themes and texts in the light of the existing traditions of interpretation. They offer critiques of early Christian ideas and texts and they consider the structure and origins of standard modern readings of these ideas and texts. The contributors employ a variety of methodological approaches to analyse the interplay between ancient philosophical traditions and the development of Christian thought and to redefine the parameters between the previously accepted divisions in the traditions of Christian theology and thought.

The relationship between the Christian and Muslim worlds has been a long and tortuous one. Over the course of the centuries the balance of power has swung in pendulum fashion at times the initiative seems to have lain with the Muslim community, with the Christian world simply being compelled to react to developments outside itself, while at other points the opposite has been true and Muslims have found themselves having to respond to Christian challenges in different forms. Today Christians and Muslims comprise the world's two largest religious communities. Although they can coexist fairly peacefully, at times they still engage in violent confrontation, such as in the recent conflicts in Bosnia and the Sudan. This book investigates the history of the relationships between Christians and Muslims over the centuries, from their initial encounters in the medieval period, when the Muslims were the dominant group, through to the modern period, when the balance of power seems to have been reversed. This much-needed overview of the Christian-Muslim encounter places the emphasis on the context within which perceptions and attitudes were worked out and provides a depth of historical insight to the complexities of current Christian-Muslim interactions on different continents."

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 groundbreaking 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.

"Tracing the astonishing transformation that the early Christian church underwent - from sporadic niches of Christian communities surviving in the wake of a horrific crucifixion to sanctioned alliance with the state - Charles Freeman shows how freedom of thought was curtailed by the development of the concept of faith. The imposition of 'correct belief' and an institutional framework that enforced orthodoxy were both consolidating and stifling. Uncovering the church's relationships with Judaism, Gnosticism, Greek philosophy and Greco-Roman society, Freeman offers dramatic new accounts of Paul, the resurrection, and the church fathers and emperors."--BOOK JACKET.

A New York Times Notable Book of 2018 "Searingly passionate...Nixey writes up a storm. Each sentence is rich, textured, evocative, felt...[A] ballista-bolt of a book." —New York Times Book Review In Harran, the locals refused to

convert. They were dismembered, their limbs hung along the town's main street. In Alexandria, zealots pulled the elderly philosopher-mathematician Hypatia from her chariot and flayed her to death with shards of broken pottery. Not long before, their fellow Christians had invaded the city's greatest temple and razed it—smashing its world-famous statues and destroying all that was left of Alexandria's Great Library. Today, we refer to Christianity's conquest of the West as a "triumph." But this victory entailed an orgy of destruction in which Jesus's followers attacked and suppressed classical culture, helping to pitch Western civilization into a thousand-year-long decline. Just one percent of Latin literature would survive the purge; countless antiquities, artworks, and ancient traditions were lost forever. As Catherine Nixey reveals, evidence of early Christians' campaign of terror has been hiding in plain sight: in the palimpsests and shattered statues proudly displayed in churches and museums the world over. In *The Darkening Age*, Nixey resurrects this lost history, offering a wrenching account of the rise of Christianity and its terrible cost.

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 in Britain, 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.

Blanton Ward traces the current critical engagement of Agamben, Derrida and Zizek, among others, back to the 19th and early 20th century philosophers of early Christianity.

Historical events have long been the standard lens through which scholars have sought to understand the theology of Christianity in late antiquity. The lives of significant theological figures, the rejection of individuals and movements as heretical, and the Trinitarian and christological controversies—the defining theological events of the early church—have long provided the framework with which to understand the development of early Christian belief. In this groundbreaking work, esteemed historian of Christianity Justo González chooses to focus on the literature of early Christianity. Beginning with the epistolary writings of the earliest Christian writers of the second century CE, he moves through apologies, martyrologies, antiheretical polemics, biblical commentaries, sermons, all the way up through Augustine's invention of spiritual autobiography and beyond. Throughout he demonstrates how literary genre played a decisive role in the construction of theological meaning. Covering the earliest noncanonical Christian writings through the fifth century and later, this book will serve as an indispensable guide to students studying the theology of the early church.

Author Mark Noll presents the unfolding drama of American Christianity with accuracy and skill, from the first European settlements to ecumenism in the late 20th Century. This work has become a standard in the field of North American religious history.

Dig into the story of Christianity from its origins to today.

This superb volume provides the first genuinely global one-volume history of the rise and development of the Christian faith. An international team of specialists takes seriously the geographical diversity of the Christian story, discussing the impact of Christianity not only in the West but also in Latin America, Africa, India, the Orient and Australasia.

Recent research has made a strong case for the view that Early Christian communities, sociologically considered, functioned as voluntary religious associations. This is similar to the practice of many other cultic associations in the Greco-Roman world of the first century CE. Building upon this new approach, along with a critical interpretation of all available sources, this book discusses the social and religio-historical background of the weekly gatherings of Christians and presents a fresh reconstruction of how the weekly gatherings originated and developed in both form and content. The topics studied here include the origins of the observance of Sunday as the weekly Christian feast-day, the shape and meaning of the weekly gatherings of the Christian communities, and the rise of customs such as preaching, praying, singing, and the reading of texts in these meetings.

*The Historical Origin Of Christianity* by Walter Williams reveals what happened to ancient Egyptian ancestors and how the true origin of Christianity began.

When it comes to the history of the universe, many believe that science and faith are mutually exclusive. But in this revised version of *Origins*, physics professors Loren and Deborah Haarsma explore what God's Word and God's world teach us about creation, evolution, and intelligent design. Clearly explaining the science, the authors focus on areas where Christians agree. They also present the strengths and weaknesses of areas where Christians differ. *Origins* helps you develop a deeper understanding of the origins of the universe and sort out your own views on faith and science. Small group discussion questions follow each chapter. A companion website provides resources for further study.

This book, first published in 2002, offers an authoritative and accessible introduction to the New Testament and early Christian literature for all students of the Bible and anyone interested in the origins of Christianity. It is designed primarily for undergraduate courses in the New Testament, biblical studies and early Christianity. Delbert Burkett focuses on the New Testament, but also

looks at a wealth of non-biblical writing to examine the history, religion and literature of Christianity in the years from 30 CE to 150 CE. An appendix containing translations of primary texts allows instant access to the writings outside the canon. With this textbook and the Bible, the student should therefore have all the necessary basic texts. The book is organised systematically with questions for in-class discussion and written assignment, step-by-step reading guides on individual works, special box features, charts, maps and numerous illustrations designed to facilitate student use.

The first book to give the full account of the lost gospel of Jesus' original followers, revealing him to be a Jewish Socrates who was mythologized into the New Testament Christ.

Presents a history of the Christian faith, from its beginning as a Jewish sect to the impact of twentieth-century issues such as birth control, Muslim fundamentalism, and Nazi racism

This book illuminates the origins of Roman Christian diplomacy through two case studies: Constantius II's imperial strategy in the Red Sea; and John Chrysostom's ecclesiastical strategy in Gothia and Sasanian Persia. Both men have enjoyed a strong narrative tradition: Constantius as a persecuting, theological fanatic, and Chrysostom as a stubborn, naïve reformer. Yet this tradition has often masked their remarkable innovations. As part of his strategy for conquest, Constantius was forced to focus on Alexandria, demonstrating a carefully orchestrated campaign along the principal eastern trade route. Meanwhile, whilst John Chrysostom's preaching and social reform have garnered extensive discussion, his late sermons and letters composed in exile reveal an ambitious program to establish church structures outside imperial state control. The book demonstrates that these two pioneers innovated a diplomacy that utilised Christianity as a tool for forging alliances with external peoples; a procedure that would later become central to Byzantine statecraft. It will appeal to all those interested in Early Christianity and late antique/medieval history.

There are many books on the market which purport to present the true origins of Christianity and the overwhelming majority of them assert, despite a dearth of evidence, that the religion began forty years before the destruction of the Jewish Temple and was the product of the teaching of one man -- Jesus. Following centuries of tradition, they place a Jewish sage at the centre of an epic drama set in the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius. It's a great story. But it never happened.

ChristianityThe First Three Thousand YearsPenguin

This New York Times bestseller "elegantly weaves evidence and insights . . . into a single, accessible historical narrative" (Bill Gates) and presents a captivating history of the universe -- from the Big Bang to dinosaurs to mass globalization and beyond. Most historians study the smallest slivers of time, emphasizing specific dates, individuals, and documents. But what would it look like to study the whole of history, from the big bang through the present day -- and even into the remote future? How would looking at the full span of time change the way we perceive the universe, the earth, and our very existence? These were the questions David Christian set out to answer when he created the field of "Big History," the most exciting new approach to understanding where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. In *Origin Story*, Christian takes readers on a wild ride through the entire 13.8 billion years we've come to know as "history." By focusing on defining events (thresholds), major trends, and profound questions about our origins, Christian exposes the hidden threads that tie everything together -- from the creation of the planet to the advent of agriculture, nuclear war, and beyond. With stunning insights into the origin of the universe, the beginning of life, the emergence of humans, and what the future might bring, *Origin Story* boldly reframes our place in the cosmos.

This volume presents the results of the Leiden project on the identity formation of the Syrian Orthodox Christians, which developed from a religious association into an ethnic community. A number of specialists react to the findings and discuss the cases of the East Syrians, Armenians, Copts, and Ethiopians.

Christianity has played a central role in world history, for better or worse, but beyond the story of Jesus, many people know little of this story. Geoffrey Blainey takes readers on a journey from the very beginnings of Christianity through to the current day.

The lack of serious and sustained investigation of the historical figure of James "the Just," brother of Jesus, is one of the curious oversights in modern critical study of Christian origins. "James the Just and Christian Origins" addresses this problem. The questions that surround this exceedingly important, yet largely ignored figure are several and complicated. Was he really the brother of Jesus? How influential was he in the early church? What was the nature of his relationship to the other apostles, especially to Paul? How did James understand Christianity's relationship to Judaism and to the people of Israel? Out of this grows a very important question: In its generative moment, was Christianity in fact as well as in its self-awareness, a species of Judaism? Contributors from several countries are currently engaged in collaborative study in James and early Jewish Christianity. "James the Just and Christian Origins" is the first of several planned volumes to be published.

This brief and chronologically organized overview of the Christian religious tradition introduces students to the history of the Christian Church, describing the people, places, and ideas that have shaped Christianity. Written in a straightforward, accessible style, this text presents students with a survey of the scholarship of the discipline.

A "marvelous" (Economist) account of how the Christian Revolution forged the Western imagination. Crucifixion, the Romans believed, was the worst fate imaginable, a punishment reserved for slaves. How astonishing it was, then, that people should have come to believe that one particular victim of crucifixion—an obscure provincial by the name of Jesus—was to be worshipped as a god. *Dominion* explores the implications of this shocking conviction as they have reverberated throughout history. Today, the West remains utterly saturated by Christian assumptions. As Tom Holland demonstrates, our morals and ethics are not universal but are instead the fruits of a very distinctive civilization. Concepts such as secularism, liberalism, science, and homosexuality are deeply rooted in a Christian seedbed. From Babylon to the Beatles, Saint Michael to #MeToo, *Dominion* tells the story of how Christianity transformed the modern world.

The New York Times bestseller and definitive history of Christianity for our time—from the award-winning author of *The Reformation and Silence* A product of electrifying scholarship conveyed with commanding skill, Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Christianity* goes back to the origins of the Hebrew Bible and encompasses the globe. It captures the major turning points

in Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox history and fills in often neglected accounts of conversion and confrontation in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. MacCulloch introduces us to monks and crusaders, heretics and reformers, popes and abolitionists, and discover Christianity's essential role in shaping human history and the intimate lives of men and women. And he uncovers the roots of the faith that galvanized America, charting the surprising beliefs of the founding fathers, the rise of the Evangelical movement and of Pentecostalism, and the recent crises within the Catholic Church. Bursting with original insights and a great pleasure to read, this monumental religious history will not soon be surpassed. The 4,000-year quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In the colonial and antebellum South, black and white evangelicals frequently prayed, sang, and worshipped together. Even though white evangelicals claimed spiritual fellowship with those of African descent, they nonetheless emerged as the most effective defenders of race-based slavery. As Charles Irons persuasively argues, white evangelicals' ideas about slavery grew directly out of their interactions with black evangelicals. Set in Virginia, the largest slaveholding state and the hearth of the southern evangelical movement, this book draws from church records, denominational newspapers, slave narratives, and private letters and diaries to illuminate the dynamic relationship between whites and blacks within the evangelical fold. Irons reveals that when whites theorized about their moral responsibilities toward slaves, they thought first of their relationships with bondmen in their own churches. Thus, African American evangelicals inadvertently shaped the nature of the proslavery argument. When they chose which churches to join, used the procedures set up for church discipline, rejected colonization, or built quasi-independent congregations, for example, black churchgoers spurred their white coreligionists to further develop the religious defense of slavery.

Illustrations and essays provide a chronological look at the changing concepts of Christianity

“Jenkins is one of America’s top religious scholars.” —Forbes magazine *The Lost History of Christianity* by Philip Jenkins offers a revolutionary view of the history of the Christian church. Subtitled “The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died,” it explores the extinction of the earliest, most influential Christian churches of China, India, and the Middle East, which held the closest historical links to Jesus and were the dominant expression of Christianity throughout its first millennium. The remarkable true story of the demise of the institution that shaped both Asia and Christianity as we know them today, *The Lost History of Christianity* is a controversial and important work of religious scholarship that sounds a warning that must be heeded.

Christianity is in crisis in the West. The Inklings friend of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, analysed why. He developed an account of our spiritual predicament that is radical and illuminating. Barfield realized that the human experience of life shifts fundamentally over periods of cultural time. Our perception of nature, the cosmos and the divine changes dramatically across history. Mark Vernon uses this startling insight to tell the inner story of 3000 years of Christianity, beginning from the earliest Biblical times. Drawing, too, on the latest scholarship and spiritual questions of our day, he presents a gripping account of how Christianity constellated a new perception of what it is to be human. For 1500 years, this sense of things informed many lives, though it fell into crisis with the Reformation, scientific revolution and Enlightenment. But the story does not stop there. Barfield realised that there is meaning in the disenchantment and alienation experienced by many people today. It is part of a process that is remaking our sense of participation in the life of nature, the cosmos and the divine. It's a new stage in the evolution of human consciousness.

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