



# AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

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## Well, what about the many uncanny similarities between Mithras and Jesus?

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Consider the following excerpt from a powerful new book that offers many practical and coherent insights — *Cold Case Christianity*, by J. Warner Wallace:

**“Claim:** Mithras was buried in a tomb and after three days rose again, and Mithras was celebrated each year at the time of His resurrection (later to become Easter).”

**“Truth:** There is nothing in the Mithraic tradition indicating he ever even died, let alone resurrected. Tertullian did write about Mithraic believers reenacting resurrection scenes, but he wrote about this occurring well after New Testament times. Christianity could not, therefore, have borrowed from Mithraic traditions, but the opposite could certainly be true.”

So while it’s true that there are numerous remarkable similarities between Jesus and Mithras, these similarities have been *invented and embellished in more recent years*. The veracity of the stories of Mithras melted away like a snowball in July when you actually research the historical information on Mithraism. Try it yourself sometime! Early historical documentation for the story of Mithras rising from the dead just isn’t there. Other Mithras-myths date back to the second and third centuries and often copycat the Christian story — which explains why early church fathers such as Tertullian and Justin Martyr so emphatically denounced Mithraism.

Dr. Norman L. Geisler in the *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, ©1999 Baker Books: “All the allegations of Christian dependence on Gnostic or mystery religions have been rejected by the scholars in biblical and classical studies. The historic character of Christianity and the early date of the New Testament documents did not allow enough time for mythological developments. And there is a complete lack of *early* historical evidence to support such ideas.”

**So you’re saying that allegations about Christianity being based on ancient myths is an old charge that’s been answered a long time ago?**

Exactly. Scholar Ron Nash puts it this way: “The tide of scholarly opinion has turned dramatically against attempts to make early Christianity dependent on the so-called dying and rising gods of Hellenistic paganism.” (*The Gospel and the Greeks* (Richardson, TX: Probe Books, 1992).

Dr. Nash continues: “Which mystery gods actually experienced a resurrection from the dead? Certainly no early texts refer to any resurrection of Attis. Nor is the case for a resurrection of Osiris any stronger. One can speak of a ‘resurrection’ in the stories of Osiris, Attis, and Adonis only in the most extended of senses. For example, after Isis gathered together the pieces of Osiris’s dismembered body, Osiris became ‘Lord of the Underworld.’ This is a poor substitute for a resurrection like that of Jesus Christ. And, no claim can be made that Mithras was a dying and rising god. The tide of scholarly opinion has turned dramatically against attempts to make early Christianity dependent on the so-called dying and rising gods of Hellenistic paganism. Any unbiased examination of the evidence shows that such claims must be rejected.”



**But if all of this is true, why have such charges been leveled for so long, and why are they still being cited in many circles today?**

Rice Broocks in *Man Myth Messiah*: “. . . part of the motivation for connecting Christianity to pagan myths comes from the denial of the supernatural resulting from the rise of skepticism during the Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries . . . However, the primary reason many make such a fantastic claim about Jesus being a mythical being is to dismiss the claims that He makes as Lord of the universe and the ultimate moral authority to whom we are all accountable.”

**ANOTHER GREAT RESOURCE!**  
*The Case for the Real Jesus*, Lee Strobel

# Is Christianity Just a Mosaic of Recycled Ancient Myths?

by Daryl E. Witmer

There are so many similarities between Christianity and pagan folklore accounts of gods and figures such as Osiris, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, and Mithras. Isn’t Christianity just a composite of some of these old recycled myths?

It’s actually quite likely the exact opposite. Many of those ancient myths were probably borrowed and developed from Christian sources.

Rice Broocks (*Man Myth Messiah*): “Ironically, the copying was not early Christians borrowing from ancient Egyptian, Greek, or Persian stories, but the other way around. The enormous success and growth of early Christianity provoked proponents of mystery religions to retell their story with Christian imagery and themes.”

In his 2009 bestseller, *The Da Vinci Code*, author Dan Brown advanced the idea that nothing about Christianity is really original; that the entire Christian tradition actually resulted from the fusing of pagan symbols, dates, and rituals. Through his characters, Brown described Christianity as a hybrid religion sourced in the story of a god by the name of Mithras who predated Christ. Is that possible?

No. Based on all currently available and demonstrably reliable, historical, biblical, and theological evidence, it’s not possible. The *Da Vinci Code* may have been riveting and entertaining, but it’s always been fiction.

**More Evidence in Defense and Confirmation of the Christian Faith**