



This image is being used under the Fair Use Act, for the purposes of research and criticism. I was unable to find the original source for the image and believe it came from a printed book. It depicts the god Mithras wearing a Phrygian cap, tunic and 'trouser-suit.' Note that the animals represented: the bull, dog, scorpion and snake, are all heavenly constellations.

## Mithras, Precursor Of Jesus By Raymond Towers

Christian apologists will have us believe that the lore surrounding Jesus, and even Jesus himself, appeared divinely and mysteriously to benefit humankind. The Truth, however, is quite different. There are many questions that not even the founders of Christianity could answer. In a previous article, I discussed how everything in Christmas lore had pagan origins. This time, I will introduce you to Mithras, a sun god who traveled from India to Iran to Rome, and who, at the scheming of Rome, was re-invented into the Jesus that we know today. From his birth to his death, and including everything in between, Mithras was the precursor to Jesus.

Mithras, Precursor Of Jesus  
By Raymond Towers

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## **Introduction**

There is a great controversy regarding the Roman sun god Mithras and his links with the Christian sun god Jesus. I have covered a few sun god angles before, such as Hercules as Jesus, and Apollo as Jesus, but those deities are much easier to research and connect the dots with. As I began this intensive study into all things regarding Mithras, I soon became aware of the huge debate even among the scholars and experts on the subject. Western academics, Iranians and Indians all want first rights to claim their people created this god. This may not be far from the truth, as it seems that the original Indian Mitra went through multiple reinventions to the Persian Mithra and later the Roman Mithras. In a moment, we'll take a closer look at this controversy for ourselves.

When I undertake a study like this, I'll look at a number of different sources. I had several documentaries, discussions and books ready to go for this one. This proved to be too much and the disparity between ideas too great for me to get a good handle on them in a short span of time. Nabarz' book, for example, tallies up at 327 pages, and even the Wikipedia page on Mithras was 33 (Masonic!) pages long. In total, I bookmarked seven long articles or books and four videos that I wanted to go through.

Sometimes, when I do research on a topic, it is because I want to include it into a fiction project I'm working on. That is the case here, as I've created a medieval fantasy world where Mithras is the primary deity instead of Yahweh or Jesus. My needs are for a decent grasp on generalities regarding Mithras, and so I've decided to set aside the books for now and to concentrate on the information I've absorbed from the videos. I may go through the books at a later date to produce a more detailed or supplementary article, but for now I think I have enough information to incorporate into my story plots that will give readers a good idea of what Mithras is all about.

Originally, I had four videos slotted for later viewing, but one proved to be too random and made unfounded claims, so I tossed that last one out. After doing another search on Youtube, I found the Nabarz interview, giving me two pro-Western viewpoints, one neutral, and one pro-Persian point of view. In this article, I want to give an outline of who Mithras was based on these multiple expert opinions and research, his origins and his connections to the Christian god Jesus.

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## **Mitra Before Rome**

Mithras was known in both India and Persia, now modern day Iran. As Mitra, he is mentioned as a minor or major god in the Indian Vedas, depending on the scholar. There is a debate as to when the Vedas were first written. Bible apologists will say the Vedas came about in 900 BCE, when the stories found in the Old Testament were first heard in oral traditions. This implies that Indian and Jewish mythologies developed at the same time, or contemporaneously. However, other Western scholars trace the Vedas back to 1500 BCE, coinciding with the Aryan invasion of India. I have an Indian modern day Mithraist saying that from his research, Mithra was known to Iran and India in 2000 BCE. To make things even more complicated, some Vedas mention the melting of Ice Age glaciers, and that was way back in 11,000 or so BCE!

We can't really prove when Mitra / Mithra first emerged, past that it was much earlier than the advent of Jesus. We know that the Indian name of this deity was Mitra Varuna, and the Zoroastrian name was Mitra. From what Atabaki claims, and this is very possible thanks to the many waves of immigrants out of India, the Persian peoples were originally Aryans from the Indus Valley, so they may have simply carried their Indian god over when they moved and made a few changes as the years went by. Note that early Europeans are called Indo-Europeans, again alluding to an Aryan origin in India.

In Zoroastrianism, the creator god Ahura-Mazda created a son during a time before humanity existed. This cosmology dates back to 1300 BCE. In Persia / Iran, Mithra was a god of signing and fulfilling contracts. He is seen as a mediator and his name means friendship. The first recorded handshake comes from 1400 BCE, where we see artwork of Mithra shaking the right hand of a Hittite king as a sign of an arrangement or contract. Also, the sun was thought of as being the eye of Mithras, similar to the Egyptian Ra.

Sometime between 200 BCE and 100 CE, the mythology of Mithra spread west into the Mediterranean. Maybe merchants or soldiers brought it with them when they returned from the frontiers of the Roman Empire, or maybe it was the Roman hierarchy, or maybe it was even pirates. We simply don't know.

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### **Mithras In Rome**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE, we see an explosion of Mithraic temples in Western countries. Some say the Cult of Mithras first started in Greece, while others say it was in Rome. The Roman sect might have originated in Anatolia, Turkey. This was a widespread cult, but I have heard some researchers say it was localized and because it was so small Christianity quickly overshadowed it. I'm not buying that bag of bullshit. The list of countries and regions with Mithrae (temples to Mithras) is quite extensive to anyone with an unbiased point of view: Armenia, the Celtic lands, Great Britain, Greece, Germany, North Africa, Palestine, Rome / Italy and Spain. Over 100 temples have been excavated so far, including one or maybe several under the Vatican. The cult was prominent for about 200 years, before Christianity eclipsed it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century.

From the start, Mithraism was an exclusive cult. Only a very small percentage of men were part of it, including Roman upper hierarchy and military officers. The cult has been referred to as the Mysteries of Mithras or as a Mystery School. We do find secrecy among its wealthy, upper class members, including private rituals and a ranking system with multiple levels of initiation. Unfortunately, no written records exist. Most of what we know about this cult comes from the writings of rival Christians.

Mithrae were rectangular structures 10 to 20 meters long and 5 meters wide. They were built into the ground, so that a visitor would have to walk down steps as if they were entering the earth. This was a very unusual construction method for those 1<sup>st</sup> Century days. Plato wrote that the temples represented caves and metaphorically the entire world. Long, raised benches were found along the walls on the left and right, with an aisle leading up to a raised and centered altar at the back of the room. An estimated 20 to 40 worshipers could fit into a temple at one time. Most modern churches today are set up in a similar fashion, with benches to either side, an aisle down the middle, and a raised altar at the end.



Behind the altar, we always see a relief carving of Mithras slaying the bull. Mithras is dressed in Persian clothing, wearing a Phrygian cap, a cloak and a body / trouser-suit. This artwork also depicts esoteric astrological symbolism. The symbols include the bull (to represent the constellation of Taurus), the dog (Canis Major), the serpent (Serpens), a crab (Cancer) and a scorpion (Scorpio). The image as a whole appears to show the path of the sun as it enters and exits this world, and also the precession of the equinox spaced out to 1800 years. Mithras killing the bull inside of a cave (the world) could represent the end of the age of Taurus. The killing of the bull is called the Tauroctony. Over 700 artistic examples of the Tauroctony survive today.

Other artifacts also show esoteric, Mystery School leanings. Mithraic art shows the cave surrounded with images representing the twelve signs of the zodiac. Other art shows a figure holding up a torch, and another holding the torch down, reminiscent of the Masonic 'as above, so below' concept of duality. We also see solar and lunar chariots. Some carvings show Mithras holding a dagger and a torch, or a dagger and the world, while others show him holding a staff. (Not by coincidence, 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christian art depicts Jesus performing miracles and healing the sick with a wand or a staff.) A carving shows Mithras shooting an arrow at a rock and having water spring out of it, similar to Moses striking a rock with a staff to the same effect in Exodus 17:6.

In some versions, Mithras was born from a rock. The name of this rock is Petra Genetrix. Petra means rock, and it is close to Petros, or Peter, who is considered the rock of the Christian Church. Mithras is sometimes portrayed wearing a crown with seven sunrays on it, similar to the U.S. Statue of Liberty and the goddess Columbia.

A stone carving reads that the powerful primordial bull Mithras slays is the first begotten creature. Mithras must shed the bull's blood as a sacrifice to save humanity. He struggles with the bull and carries it on his back like a shepherd carries sheep, taking it into the cave. The cave may represent the Cosmic Egg or the universe. After the sacrifice, the blood and semen of the bull rejuvenate humanity. An actual bull was not slain in the Mithrae, as there is no evidence of that. However, bull meat or meat from other animals could have been prepared elsewhere and eaten inside the temple. Animal remains have been found, suggesting that feasting did take place there.

After the slaying of the bull, Mithras ascends to heaven and rejoins his father Ahura-Mazda. Through the Mysteries of Mithras, his followers are re-born and created anew.

We don't have written records of what went on inside the temples, but we do have a lot of artwork. Carvings show people reclining on the benches or couches, and eating from low tables. New members or initiates called Ravens served food. We see processions in the art, swords, blindfolds and initiates lying down on the ground. These rituals are very similar to what is seen in Freemasonry.

Initiates went through seven stages of initiation, ranging from the first level of Raven up to the seventh level of Father. The typical level was in the middle, the Lion. Passing from one level to the next required a member having to go through some kind of ordeal, again similar to Masonry or college or military hazing. The seven levels coincide with the seven rays on the crown of Mithras, the seven visible planetary bodies and / or the seven chakras. Here is the best breakdown of the various grades I could come up with, but I don't know where the Lion Leo fits in because it was not expressly stated in my research:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade - Mercury, Raven, resurrection / rebirth
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - Venus, male bride?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade - Mars, soldier
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade - Jupiter, lightning bolt, lion?
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade - Luna, crescent moon
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade - Sol, crown with 7 rays
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade - Saturn, Father

The name Mithras has a numerical value of 365 in Greek. This is the number of days in a solar year. In addition, we can speculate that Mithras had commandments, because Roman Emperor Julian referred to them in his writings, but we don't know exactly what they were. There is a hotly debated claim that Constantine worshiped Mithras after he allegedly converted to Christianity. I have heard that said about Constantine worshiping Apollo as well.

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## Christian Plagiarism

Atabaki put it best. The Sun (Jesus) is born of Virgo (the Virgin), with Orion (the Three Kings) standing by. Shepherds make the big announcement and celebrate with bread and wine. All of these are parallels to Mithras. Church fathers and apologists such as Justin, Origen and Tertullian acknowledged many of these parallels, but they blamed the Devil for them. The Devil is a crafty fellow, you know. Sure, some of you can deny one or two of these 'coincidences,' but this isn't just one or two of them. Have a look at the Big List of Christian Plagiarism from earlier Mithraism:

\* Mithras was born of a virgin on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>. (This is the Persian version. In Rome, we see Mithras being born from a rock or a Cosmic Egg. Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> is the Winter Solstice and when the festival of Saturnalia took place. The date represents, are you ready, the birth or rebirth of the Sun. See my article Have A Merry, Pagan Christmas for more information on the Winter Solstice and Saturnalia. According to 2 sources, the original birth date of Jesus was January 6<sup>th</sup>, but the Church of Rome later changed the date to what we now celebrate as Christmas.)

- \* Shepherds bearing gifts present at birth.
- \* He was attended by 12 figures.
- \* Good Shepherd
- \* Great Teacher
- \* Messiah
- \* Identified with the lamb and the lion.
- \* By worshiping Mithras, man can achieve salvation / immortality.
- \* Defender of Righteousness
- \* Forgiveness of Sins
- \* Performed Miracles
- \* Baptism
- \* Eucharist / Oblation / Holy Communion
- \* Holy Meal / Lord's Supper / Last Supper on Sunday
- \* Holy Water
- \* Made a sacrifice for world peace.
- \* Buried in a tomb for three days (unverified)
- \* Resurrection celebrated annually (unverified)
- \* Festival became Easter, with a Passover (unverified)
- \* Worshiped on Sundays
- \* Monotheism
- \* Fish symbol (unverified)
- \* Holy Cross (two sources, unverified)

Note: By unverified, I mean only one source is saying it, but I usually find that one source to be very accurate (and entertainingly cynical). In this case, that would be Michael Connor of Aeon Byte Gnostic Radio. The example of the Holy Cross I have not yet seen in the Mithras research, but both Atabaki and Connor say it is there.

The biggest differences from Christianity are that Mithraism was male dominated. Well, whoop-de-do! Have a look at Judaism or Islam, peeps. Also, Christians made it a point to help widows, orphans and the poor, but we don't know if the same was true for Mithraists because the Catholics went and destroyed all their writings. Lastly, the Mithras cult accepted other gods as secondary, while Christians refused to believe in any other gods.

While we're on the subject of lists, here are a couple more of them.

Sun gods born on December 25<sup>th</sup>:

- \* Adonis, Phoenicia - 200 BCE
- \* Attus (unverified)
- \* Buddha, Nepal - 563 BCE
- \* Dionysus, Greece - 500 BCE
- \* Jesus, Israel - 0 CE
- \* Heracles, Greece - 800 BCE
- \* Hermes, Rome - 200 BCE
- \* Horus, Egypt - 3000 BCE
- \* Krishna, India - 3200 BCE
- \* Mithra, Persia - 1200 BCE
- \* Nimrod, Babylon - era not specified (mortal that claimed he was god)
- \* Quetzalcoatl (unverified)
- \* Osiris (unverified)
- \* Tammuz, Babylon - 400 BCE
- \* Zarathustra (Zoroaster), Asia - 800 BCE

(Note that not every historical source agrees on these dates. This makes it easy for Christian apologists to 'debunk' everything about the pagan origins of Christianity and to claim their religion sprang up out of nothing. In Iran, for example, Zarathustra's birthday is March 25 or 26, but his day of death is December 25 or 26.)

Madonna and Child, or Mother of God and God motifs:

- \* Aphrodite and Adonis (Greece)
- \* Ashtoreth / Astarte and Molech / Baal (Canaan)
- \* Mary and Jesus (Christianity)
- \* Isis and Horus (Egypt)
- \* Semiramus and Tammuz (Babylon)

(I dispute the Ashtoreth / Molech connection based on other research I've done. People will look at one particular statue of a winged goddess, for example, and claim the statue is Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and now Canaanite, and that it represents the goddess Inanna, Ashtoreth or Astarte, which had similar but also differing mythologies.

The Greek version is convoluted because there are multiple versions of Adonis' birth. In one, Aphrodite tricked King Cynirus into impregnating his daughter Myrrha, who went on to give birth to Adonis. Other versions have Aphrodite and Adonis as lovers, where Ares kills Adonis, and Adonis is resurrected and spends up to six months of a year in the underworld.

The Babylonian, Christian and Egyptian connections are obvious because the historical artwork and statues are so similar.)

## **Conclusion**

I don't know, but to me it looks like the apologists don't have much here to make a counterclaim. The best they can do is nitpick at the details such as the virgin / rock / Cosmic Egg birth, while ignoring that different countries had evolved or adapted versions from the same original Mitra. The rest of this is pretty cut and dry, and that's without even bringing up Apollo, Hercules, Ra, Osiris and Horus.

Of course there are going to be regional differences, just like we have dialect and cultural differences in different parts of the U.S. Compare a Texas drawl to a Joysey accent, for example. The same thing happens with religions, as shown by the estimated 10,000 separate Christian sects presently in this country alone. Jesus was the new black for his era, while Mithras went back some 1300 to 1500 years before anybody even thought of Jesus.

I said this in a previous post; you can't take the body of Mithras, put a new face on it and call it an entirely new god. I understand Jesus as a spirit entity or thought-form through my metaphysical dealings, but as far as religion and politics go, I have to say that, thanks to Rome, Jesus was an inside job.

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## **Sources**

(Youtube videos)

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**About The Author** - Raymond Towers is an author of fantasy, horror and science fiction that strays away from the mainstream, plus a little in the way of true paranormal and other genres. He has written and independently published a good number of titles, most of them full-length novels and collections, with several more on the way. The author has been a lifelong resident of warm and sunny southern California, a location that pops up frequently in his writing. At the moment, the author is looking for ways to reach new readers all over the world, in addition to pursuing his great love of writing and taking it to the next level.

**Author website** (and more!):

Send me an e-mail at:

[RaymondTowers777@yahoo.com](mailto:RaymondTowers777@yahoo.com)

Verum Et Inventa truth blog:

<https://verumetinventa.wordpress.com/>

Raymond Towers Dot Com

<http://www.raymondtowers.com/>

Raymond Towers on Smashwords

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/raymondtowers>

Raymond Towers writing blog

<https://raymondmtowers.wordpress.com/>