

THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Civilization, Culture, Faith, and the Search for Peace

Union of Saints Historical Series
Volume I

D. Cowdrey

The Human Journey

Civilization, Culture, Faith, and the Search for Peace

First Edition

Union of Saints Historical Series

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Figure 2.1 – Early Civilizations Map

Source: World History Encyclopedia. *Map of the Cradles of Early Civilization & Society*. Image by Simeon Netchev. Used in accordance with the applicable license.

Figure 6.1 – Cultural Wandering

Original illustration created for *The Human Journey* by the author using AI-assisted digital illustration tools.

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First Edition • Printed in the United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

The First Civilizations

A Historical Overview of Early Human Civilization and the Development of Recorded History

Purpose

This document provides a historical overview of humanity's transition from prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies to the first civilizations. It summarizes current archaeological understanding of when humans appeared, how tribes and permanent settlements developed, and how the earliest civilizations emerged throughout the world.

Before Civilization

Modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) first appeared approximately 300,000 years ago in Africa. For most of human history, people lived in:

- Small family groups
- Clans
- Tribes
- Hunter-gatherer societies

Characteristics included:

- Seasonal migration
- Hunting and fishing
- Gathering wild plants
- Oral traditions
- Family-based leadership
- Spiritual beliefs connected to nature and ancestors
- Cooperation for survival

For roughly 95% of human history, there were no cities, kingdoms, or written languages.

Human Migration

Over tens of thousands of years, humans gradually spread throughout the world. Approximate timeline:

- 300,000 years ago – Earliest known Homo sapiens.
- 70,000–50,000 years ago – Major migrations out of Africa.
- 50,000 years ago – Humans established throughout much of Asia and Australia.
- 40,000 years ago – Europe widely inhabited.
- 15,000–20,000 years ago – Humans reached the Americas (based on current archaeological evidence).

The Agricultural Revolution

Approximately 12,000 years ago, some human societies began cultivating crops and domesticating animals. This transition allowed:

- Permanent villages
- Larger populations
- Food storage
- Specialized occupations
- Trade
- Social organization

Agriculture developed independently in several regions, including:

- Fertile Crescent
- China
- New Guinea
- Mesoamerica
- Andes
- Parts of Africa

The First Permanent Settlements

Early villages emerged before cities. Examples include:

- Jericho
- Çatalhöyük
- Ain Ghazal

These communities demonstrate that humans established permanent settlements long before the first kingdoms.

What Defines a Civilization?

Historians generally identify civilizations by several characteristics:

- Permanent cities
- Organized government
- Laws
- Monumental architecture
- Specialized labor
- Trade networks
- Social classes
- Record keeping
- Writing (in many, though not all, civilizations)

The World's First Civilizations

Sumer (Mesopotamia)

Approximate beginning: 3500–3100 BCE. Present-day location: Southern Iraq.

Often regarded as the earliest known urban civilization.

Achievements:

- First cities
- Cuneiform writing
- Irrigation systems
- Wheel (early evidence)
- Bronze working
- Organized government
- Temple complexes (ziggurats)

Major cities:

- Uruk
- Ur
- Eridu
- Lagash

Ancient Egypt

Approximate beginning: 3100 BCE. Present-day location: Egypt.

Traditionally unified under King Narmer (also known as Menes). Ancient Egypt remained a recognizable civilization for more than 3,000 years, making it one of the longest-lasting civilizations in history.

Achievements:

- Unified kingdom
- Hieroglyphic writing
- Monumental stone architecture
- Great Pyramids
- Centralized government
- Mathematics
- Astronomy
- Medicine
- 365-day civil calendar

Indus Valley Civilization

Approximate beginning: 3300 BCE; urban period 2600 BCE. Present-day location: Pakistan and northwestern India.

Achievements:

- Planned cities
- Sophisticated drainage systems
- Standardized bricks
- Long-distance trade
- Public baths
- Standardized weights and measures

Major cities:

- Mohenjo-daro
- Harappa

Its writing system remains undeciphered.

Ancient China

Approximate beginning: 2000–1600 BCE. Present-day location: Yellow River Valley.

Achievements:

- Bronze technology
- Early dynasties
- Oracle bone writing
- Organized government
- Irrigation
- Philosophy (developed later)

Other Early Civilizations

Norte Chico (Caral)

Present-day location: Peru. Approximate beginning: 3000 BCE. Known for:

- Monumental architecture
- Early urban planning

Minoan Civilization

Present-day location: Crete. Approximate beginning: 3000 BCE. Known for:

- Maritime trade
- Palace complexes
- Advanced art

Nubia (Kingdom of Kush)

Present-day location: Sudan. Approximate beginning: 2000 BCE. Known for:

- Trade
- Gold production
- Military power
- Later rule over Egypt during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty

Olmec Civilization

Present-day location: Mexico. Approximate beginning: 1500 BCE. Known for:

- Colossal stone heads
- Monumental architecture
- Influence on later Mesoamerican cultures

Why Ancient Egypt Is So Culturally Significant

Ancient Egypt occupies a unique place in world history because of its extraordinary continuity and preservation. Reasons include:

- More than 3,000 years of continuous civilization
- One of the earliest unified nation-states
- Monumental architecture still standing today
- Extensive written records
- Advanced engineering
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Astronomy
- Art
- Religious literature
- Exceptional archaeological preservation due to Egypt's dry climate

Major monuments include:

- Great Pyramid of Giza
- Great Sphinx
- Karnak Temple
- Luxor Temple
- Valley of the Kings

Early Writing Systems

Writing developed independently in several civilizations:

- Mesopotamia — Cuneiform
- Egypt — Hieroglyphs
- China — Oracle bone inscriptions
- Mesoamerica — Various writing systems developed later

Writing allowed civilizations to preserve:

- Laws
- Literature
- Religious texts
- Trade records
- Government administration

- Scientific knowledge

Calendars Before the Modern Era

Ancient Egypt

A 365-day civil calendar with 12 months of 30 days each and 5 festival days. Years were usually counted according to the reign of the current pharaoh rather than continuously. Example: “Year 8 of Ramses II.”

Mesopotamia

Lunisolar calendar.

Hebrew Calendar

Lunisolar calendar used for religious observances.

Greek Calendars

Each city-state maintained its own calendar.

Roman Calendar

In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar. This became the standard calendar throughout the Roman Empire.

The Modern Calendar

In 525 CE, the monk Dionysius Exiguus introduced the Anno Domini (AD) year-numbering system, intending to count years from the birth of Jesus. Modern historians generally estimate Jesus was actually born around 6–4 BCE, indicating that the calculation was likely off by several years. The Gregorian calendar, introduced in 1582, retained this numbering while refining the calendar’s leap-year rules. Today, the Gregorian calendar is the international civil standard.

Alternative Year Counts

Different cultures continue to use different calendar eras. Approximate equivalent to 2026 CE:

- Gregorian: 2026
- Hebrew: 5786–5787
- Islamic: 1448 AH

- Coptic: 1742

If one were to count continuously from the traditional unification of Ancient Egypt (c. 3100 BCE), today’s year would be approximately Year 5126. This is a modern historical reconstruction rather than an ancient Egyptian practice.

Human Timeline

Approximate Date	Event
300,000 years ago	Earliest known Homo sapiens
70,000 years ago	Major human migrations
20,000–15,000 years ago	Humans reach the Americas (current evidence)
12,000 years ago	Agriculture begins in multiple regions
10,000 years ago	Permanent villages become increasingly common
3500–3100 BCE	Sumerian civilization emerges
3100 BCE	Traditional unification of Ancient Egypt
3300–2600 BCE	Indus Valley civilization develops
2000–1600 BCE	Early Chinese states emerge
46 BCE	Julian calendar introduced
c. 6–4 BCE	Estimated birth of Jesus
525 CE	AD year-numbering system introduced
1582 CE	Gregorian calendar introduced
2026 CE	Present day

Conclusion

Human history extends back approximately 300,000 years, while the earliest civilizations emerged only within the last 5,000 to 6,000 years. Following the development of agriculture and permanent settlements around 12,000 years ago, independent civilizations arose in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, and later in other regions of the world. Among these, Sumer is generally recognized as the earliest known urban civilization, while Ancient Egypt became one of the longest-lasting and best-preserved civilizations in history. Together, these societies laid many of the foundations for government, writing, law, architecture, trade, science, and organized religion that influenced later cultures across the ancient world.

CHAPTER 2

Human Origins & Understanding Egypt & China

Humans Originated in Africa

▪Humans Originated in Africa The current scientific consensus, based on fossil and genetic evidence, is that anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) evolved in Africa approximately 300,000 years ago.

The broad timeline is

- ~300,000 years ago – Earliest known *Homo sapiens* in Africa.
- ~70,000–50,000 years ago – Some populations migrated out of Africa into Eurasia.
- ~50,000–15,000 years ago – Humans spread across Europe, Asia, Australia, and eventually the Americas. This is often called the Out of Africa model.
- Civilizations Did Not All Originate in Africa

After humans spread across the world, different populations independently developed agriculture and complex societies in different regions.

The earliest known civilizations include

Civilization Location Sumer Southwest Asia (modern Iraq) Ancient Egypt Northeast Africa Indus Valley Civilization Pakistan and northwestern India Ancient China East Asia These civilizations emerged after humans had already been living in those regions for tens of thousands of years.

Egypt's Place

Egypt is geographically in Africa, specifically the northeastern corner of the continent. Because of its location, Egypt interacted with:

- Nubia and other African societies to the south.
- The Levant to the northeast.
- Mesopotamia farther east.
- Mediterranean cultures to the north.

It was both an African civilization and an important participant in broader networks connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The Big Picture

A helpful way to think about it is

1. Modern humans originated in Africa.
2. Humans migrated throughout the world over tens of thousands of years.
3. Agriculture developed independently in several regions.
4. Civilizations emerged independently in multiple locations, including northeast

Africa (Egypt), Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, China, and later in the Americas. So, while humanity's evolutionary origins are in Africa, the archaeological evidence indicates that civilization developed in several different regions rather than spreading from a single civilization to the rest of the world. Ancient China and ancient Egypt were connected indirectly over time through networks of trade, migration, and the exchange of ideas across Eurasia.

Relative Locations

Europe | Mediterranean Sea | Egypt — Levant — Mesopotamia —
Persia — Indus Valley — Central Asia — China

Approximate modern distances

- Egypt to Mesopotamia: 500–900 miles (800–1,450 km) depending on the route.
- Egypt to the Indus Valley: about 2,500 miles (4,000 km).
- Egypt to northern China: roughly 4,500–5,000 miles (7,200–8,000 km).

So Egypt and China were far apart, with several major civilizations lying between them.

The “Bridge” Between Civilizations

Rather than Egypt and China interacting directly in their earliest periods, there was a chain of

neighboring civilizations

1. Egypt
2. Canaan and the Levant

3. Mesopotamia
4. Persia (later empires)
5. Indus Valley
6. Central Asia
7. China

Ideas, goods, and technologies could move gradually across these regions over generations.

Did Egypt and China Know About Each Other?

Early Period (before about 1000 BCE)

There is no strong evidence of direct contact between ancient Egypt and early Chinese states during their earliest civilizations. Both developed largely independently.

Later Period (after about 200 BCE)

Direct and indirect contacts became more plausible through the Silk Road.

Goods that moved across Eurasia included

- Silk
- Glass
- Spices
- Precious stones
- Metals
- Horses
- Ivory

Many items passed through multiple intermediaries before reaching their final destinations.

Similarities Between Egypt and China

Although they developed independently, they shared several characteristics common to early

river-valley civilizations

Ancient Egypt	Ancient China	Nile River	Yellow River (Huang He)
Centralized kingship	Centralized kingship	Agricultural economy	Agricultural

economy Writing system Writing system Monumental architecture Monumental architecture Calendar Calendar Bureaucracy Bureaucracy Religious rituals Religious rituals Ancestor traditions (especially in funerary practice) Ancestor veneration These similarities are generally understood by historians as examples of parallel development—societies facing similar challenges often arrived at similar solutions independently.

Where Do the Connections Overlap?

The strongest overlaps occurred through intermediary civilizations.

Mesopotamia

Often regarded as a crossroads linking Egypt with lands farther east through trade and diplomacy.

Persia

The Achaemenid Empire connected regions from Egypt to the Indus Valley under one imperial administration, facilitating movement of people and goods.

Silk Road

Beginning around the 2nd century BCE, the Silk Road linked East Asia with Central Asia, the Near East, and the Mediterranean. While merchants rarely traveled the entire route, networks of exchange allowed products and ideas to spread across continents.

Timeline

Date Development c. 3500 BCE Sumer emerges in Mesopotamia c. 3300–3100 BCE Egypt unifies c. 3300 BCE Indus Valley civilization develops c. 2000–1600 BCE Early Chinese states emerge c. 550 BCE Persian Empire links Egypt and lands eastward c. 200 BCE Silk Road networks begin expanding 1st century CE onward Increased exchange between East Asia and the Mediterranean

The Big Picture

Ancient Egypt and ancient China were not neighboring civilizations, and there is little evidence that they had direct contact during the earliest phases of their histories. Instead, they developed as independent centers of civilization in different river valleys. Over time, expanding trade routes and empires created indirect connections across Eurasia. Goods, technologies, and ideas could travel

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from one civilization to another through a succession of intermediaries, illustrating how the ancient world became increasingly interconnected even across vast distances.



Early civilizations across Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and China.

CHAPTER 3

Egypt's Connection to Greece

Egypt and Greece have a long and complex history of cultural, political, and economic ties spanning from antiquity to the modern era.

Ancient and Hellenistic Periods

Contacts between Egypt and Greece date back to at least the 7th century BC, with Greeks serving as mercenaries, traders, and settlers. Under the Saite Dynasty, Greek communities flourished in the Nile Delta, notably at Naucratis, a major trading settlement with Greek temples and inscriptions. By the 6th century BC, figures such as Pythagoras reportedly studied in Egypt, absorbing ideas in mathematics and cosmology. The relationship deepened under the Ptolemies, when Alexandria—founded by Alexander the Great—became a cosmopolitan hub blending Greek and Egyptian cultures.

Cultural Exchange

Egyptian influence on Greek thought included religious ideas, geometry, and cosmology, while the Greeks contributed philosophy, science, and political institutions. Egyptian gods were often interpreted through Greek frameworks, and Greek art and architecture influenced Egyptian cities such as Alexandria.

Modern Greek Community in Egypt

The Egyptian Greeks (or Egyptians) were one of the largest foreign communities in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, with tens of thousands living there during the early 20th century. They established churches, schools, and cultural institutions. However, following the 1952 revolution and subsequent nationalization policies, most emigrated to countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. Today, a small community remains in Alexandria and Cairo.

Modern Relations

Diplomatic ties began in 1830 following Greece's independence, and relations remain cordial, with cooperation in trade, tourism, energy, and culture. Greece is among Egypt's leading foreign investors, and Egypt is Greece's sixth-largest trading partner.

Legacy

From Pythagoras' travels to Alexandria's great libraries, and from Greek Orthodox churches to a shared Mediterranean heritage, Egypt and Greece have shaped one another's civilizations for millennia. Even today, Greek influence persists in Egyptian cities, cuisine, and cultural traditions.

CHAPTER 4

Egypt's Connection to Greece, Italy, France, and the Celts



Spread of Latin, law, engineering, Christianity, and Roman institutions | ▼ Kingdom of France | ▼ Acadia & New France (French settlers in North America, including the Acadians)

How They Connect

- Egypt and Greece: Shared centuries of trade, scholarship, and cultural exchange.

During the Ptolemaic period, Egypt was ruled by a Greek dynasty, and Alexandria became one of the ancient world's leading centers of learning.

- Greece and Italy: Southern Italy (Magna Graecia) was extensively colonized by Greek

settlers. Greek philosophy, science, art, and political ideas profoundly influenced Roman civilization.

- Italy and the Celts: As the Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire expanded,

they conquered many Celtic territories, especially Gaul. Roman and Celtic traditions blended to form Gallo-Roman culture.

- France: Modern France emerged from Roman Gaul. Its language developed primarily

from Latin, while many regional customs, place names, and aspects of identity preserved Celtic influences.

- Acadians: The Acadians descended largely from French settlers who established

communities in Acadia during the 1600s. Through France, they inherited cultural influences shaped by Roman, Celtic, and Christian traditions, while also developing a distinct Acadian identity in North America.

Important Historical Note

These connections represent the transmission of ideas, trade, conquest, migration, language, and culture across the Mediterranean and Europe over thousands of years. They illustrate how civilizations influenced one another and contributed to the development of later societies.

CHAPTER 5

Ma'at, Animals, Diet in Ancient Egypt & American Religious Movements

A Historical Overview

What Was Ma'at?

Ma'at was one of the central principles of ancient Egyptian civilization. It represented far more than a goddess; it embodied the ideal order of creation and the ethical foundation by which both the gods and humanity were expected to live. Ma'at encompassed:

- Truth
- Justice
- Balance
- Harmony
- Order
- Righteousness
- Integrity
- Reciprocity
- Responsibility
- Compassion
- Moderation
- Stewardship
- Respect for life
- Wisdom
- Self-control
- Peace

Ancient Egyptians believed that maintaining Ma'at preserved the proper relationship between humanity, nature, the gods, and the cosmos.

The Principles of Ma'at

Although no ancient Egyptian text presents a single numbered list of the "Principles of Ma'at," scholars reconstruct its teachings from wisdom literature, temple inscriptions, royal texts, and the Book of the Dead. These principles include:

1. Speak truth.
2. Practice justice.
3. Preserve order.
4. Maintain balance.
5. Live in harmony.
6. Act righteously.
7. Demonstrate integrity.
8. Treat others fairly.
9. Fulfill one's responsibilities.
10. Show compassion.
11. Practice moderation.
12. Care for creation.
13. Respect life.
14. Seek wisdom.
15. Exercise self-control.
16. Promote peace.

The 42 Negative Confessions

One of the best-known expressions of Ma'at appears in the Book of the Dead, where the deceased declares innocence before divine judges. Examples include:

- I have not stolen.
- I have not murdered unlawfully.
- I have not lied.
- I have not committed fraud.
- I have not caused suffering.
- I have not deprived another of food.
- I have not acted violently without cause.
- I have not spoken falsely.
- I have not corrupted justice.
- I have not acted against Ma'at.

The wording varies among surviving manuscripts and modern translations, but the central emphasis remains ethical conduct and living in accordance with truth and justice.

The Weighing of the Heart

After death, the heart was believed to be weighed against the Feather of Ma'at. If the heart remained light—having lived truthfully and justly—the individual could enter the blessed afterlife. If the heart was heavy with wrongdoing, it was consumed by Ammit, symbolizing the end of that person's existence.

Did Ma'at Include Animals?

Yes.

Animals were unquestionably part of the ordered world governed by Ma'at. This included:

- Humans
- Domestic animals
- Wildlife
- Agriculture
- The Nile
- The natural environment
- The heavens
- Society
- The gods

Maintaining Ma'at meant preserving harmony throughout creation. Many animals were considered sacred because they represented or were associated with particular deities. Examples include:

- Cats — Bastet
- Falcons — Horus
- Ibises — Thoth
- Crocodiles — Sobek
- Bulls — Apis
- Jackals — Anubis

Many temples protected these sacred animals, and harming them could constitute a serious religious offense.

Did Ma'at Teach Vegetarianism?

No surviving ancient Egyptian text explicitly teaches that followers of Ma'at were required to be vegetarian. Modern interpretations sometimes associate Ma'at with vegetarianism because of its emphasis on harmony, compassion, and balance. However, the historical evidence does not demonstrate that vegetarianism was a religious requirement. Instead, Ma'at emphasized living ethically within the proper order of creation.

Did Ancient Egyptians Eat Meat?

Yes.

Archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates that ancient Egyptians consumed:

- Beef
- Goat
- Sheep
- Duck
- Goose
- Pigeon
- Quail
- Fish

Animal sacrifice also formed part of temple life, with the meat frequently consumed afterward by priests or distributed within the community.

How Often Was Meat Consumed?

Ordinary Egyptians

Most people primarily ate:

- Bread
- Beer
- Lentils
- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Onions
- Garlic

- Lettuce
- Cucumbers
- Dates
- Figs

Fish was relatively common along the Nile. Red meat was generally reserved for:

- Festivals
- Religious celebrations
- Wealthier households
- Special occasions

Because livestock required substantial resources, meat was considerably less common than plant-based foods for most Egyptians.

Wealthy Egyptians

The elite had greater access to:

- Beef
- Lamb
- Goat
- Duck
- Goose
- Imported foods
- Wine
- Olive oil

Their meals still contained large quantities of bread, fruits, vegetables, herbs, and legumes.

Cleopatra's Court

As Queen of Egypt (51–30 BCE), Cleopatra belonged to the royal household and therefore had access to abundant meat, fish, poultry, fruits, vegetables, and imported delicacies. However, no surviving ancient source records Cleopatra's personal dietary preferences.

Ancient Egyptian Texts Relating to Animals

No surviving Egyptian text contains a universal command stating: "Do not hurt animals." Instead, the evidence comes from several different works.

The Book of the Dead

Contains the 42 Negative Confessions. These include statements about avoiding evil, violence, fraud, and causing suffering, but they do not contain a universal prohibition against killing animals.

Instruction of Ptahhotep

One of Egypt's oldest wisdom texts. Teaches:

- Justice
- Kindness
- Moderation
- Self-control
- Respect
- Good leadership

Its focus is human ethical conduct rather than dietary rules.

Instruction for King Merikare

Advises rulers to:

- Govern justly.
- Protect the people.
- Maintain Ma'at.
- Avoid unnecessary violence.

Temple Inscriptions

Many temples protected animals considered sacred to particular deities. These protections were religious in nature and specific to those animals or sanctuaries.

Greek Observers

Greek writers such as Herodotus described Egyptian reverence for sacred animals and observed that harming certain animals could be severely punished. These accounts provide valuable historical observations but do not establish a universal Egyptian commandment against harming animals.

Historical Conclusion

Based on the currently available archaeological, textual, and historical evidence:

- Ma'at represented truth, justice, balance, harmony, and the proper order of creation.
- Animals formed an important part of that ordered creation.
- Many animals were regarded as sacred because of their association with particular deities.
- Ancient Egyptians respected and protected certain sacred animals and valued harmony with the natural world.
- There is no surviving evidence that Ma'at required universal vegetarianism.
- Ancient Egyptians—including the royal household—consumed meat, fish, and poultry, though the frequency varied greatly according to wealth, status, occupation, and circumstance.
- For most Egyptians, plant-based foods formed the foundation of the daily diet, with meat being a comparatively less frequent component, especially among the general population. Overall, Ma'at can be understood as a comprehensive ethical philosophy centered on truth, justice, balance, harmony, stewardship, and the preservation of the proper order of creation.

Meat Consumption At “Festivals”

Person Likely Festival Participation Farmer Several local festivals each year (perhaps 5–15 major observances depending on location and work obligations) Town resident More frequent participation in local temple festivals Temple workers Many festivals throughout the year as part of their duties Priests Regular participation according to temple schedules Royal court Participation in major state festivals and court ceremonies

Later Understandings and Re-Writing Festival Worship (1800s Banning)

The Development of Jehovah's Witnesses' Teachings on Holidays and Festivals

Origins of the Movement

The religious movement that eventually became known as Jehovah's Witnesses originated in the late nineteenth century through the work of Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916). Russell organized Bible study groups during the 1870s and founded what became known as the Bible Student movement. In 1879 he began publishing *Zion's Watch Tower*, and he served as the first president of the Watch Tower Society. Following Russell's death in 1916, Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1869–1942) became president of the Watch Tower Society. Under Rutherford's leadership, the organization underwent significant theological, organizational, and administrative changes. In 1931, Rutherford adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses for the organization.

Charles Taze Russell

Russell authored numerous publications, including:

- Studies in the Scriptures
- Articles published in *Zion's Watch Tower*

Although Russell rejected many traditional Christian doctrines, the early Bible Students continued to observe some holidays. Historical evidence indicates that early Bible Students:

- Celebrated Christmas.
- Exchanged gifts on some occasions.
- Gathered for holiday observances.

The movement during Russell's lifetime was therefore less restrictive regarding holidays than it later became.

Joseph F. Rutherford

Following Russell's death, Rutherford introduced substantial changes. During the 1920s and 1930s, the organization progressively abandoned many traditional celebrations. Teachings introduced or firmly established during Rutherford's presidency included discouraging or prohibiting participation in:

- Christmas
- Easter
- Birthdays
- National holidays
- Patriotic ceremonies

- Flag salutes
- Other celebrations viewed as having pagan or non-biblical origins

Rutherford argued that Christians should avoid celebrations not specifically authorized in Scripture or those believed to have pagan historical roots. Many of these policies remain in effect within Jehovah's Witnesses today.

Holidays Not Observed

Jehovah's Witnesses generally do not celebrate:

- Christmas
- Easter
- Halloween
- Birthdays
- Valentine's Day
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Independence Day
- Memorial Day
- National patriotic holidays
- Religious festivals not specifically commanded in Scripture

The organization teaches that these celebrations either:

- Have pagan historical origins;
- Promote unscriptural traditions; or
- Conflict with Christian neutrality.

The Memorial of Christ's Death

Jehovah's Witnesses observe one annual religious event:

The Memorial of Christ's Death

(also called the Lord's Evening Meal) Held annually on the date corresponding to Nisan 14 of the Jewish calendar, it commemorates Jesus Christ's sacrificial death. Jehovah's Witnesses regard this as the only annual observance specifically commanded by Jesus.

Who Introduced These Policies?

Historically, the policies developed over time.

Charles Taze Russell

- Founded the Bible Student movement.
- Rejected many traditional doctrines.
- Continued observing some holidays, including Christmas.

Joseph F. Rutherford

- Reorganized the movement.
- Adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Introduced or firmly established organizational teachings against celebrating most holidays and festivals.
- Strengthened the movement's emphasis on separation from worldly customs and political neutrality.

Modern Leadership

Today, Jehovah's Witness literature is produced under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Publications are issued anonymously rather than under individual authors' names. The Governing Body continues the organizational teachings established during the movement's early twentieth-century development.

Historical Timeline

1870s

- Charles Taze Russell organizes Bible study groups.

1879

- Zion's Watch Tower begins publication.

1884

- Watch Tower Society incorporated.

1916

- Death of Charles Taze Russell.

1917

- Joseph F. Rutherford becomes president.

1920s

- Organization increasingly discourages Christmas and other holidays.
Late 1920s
- Christmas celebration discontinued.

1931

- Organization officially adopts the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

1930s

- Organizational teachings against birthdays, patriotic observances, and many holidays
become firmly established.

Historical Conclusion

From a historical perspective:

- Charles Taze Russell founded the Bible Student movement that preceded Jehovah's Witnesses.
- Early Bible Students under Russell still observed some traditional holidays, including Christmas.
- Joseph F. Rutherford substantially reorganized the movement and introduced or firmly established many of the organizational teachings that distinguish Jehovah's Witnesses today.
- The movement's current practice of not celebrating most holidays and festivals

developed during Rutherford's leadership in the 1920s and 1930s.

- Jehovah's Witnesses understand these practices as based on their interpretation of the

Bible and as expressions of religious conviction. Other Christian traditions interpret the biblical texts differently and continue to observe many of these holidays. Accordingly, historians generally conclude that the modern organizational policies regarding holidays and festivals were developed and implemented during the leadership of Charles Taze Russell's successors, most notably Joseph F. Rutherford, even though the organization itself teaches that these policies are derived from biblical principles rather than from the authority of any individual leader.

Religious Development in North America and the United States (1400s–Present)

A Historical Timeline

Purpose

This document provides a historical overview of major religious traditions that influenced North America and the United States, beginning prior to European settlement and continuing through the nineteenth century, when numerous new American religious movements emerged.

Before European Colonization (Before 1492)

Prior to European arrival, North America was home to hundreds of Indigenous nations with diverse religious traditions. Common characteristics included:

- Belief in a Creator or Great Spirit (terminology varied by nation).
- Sacred relationship with nature.
- Oral traditions.
- Ancestor reverence.
- Seasonal ceremonies.
- Community-centered spirituality.
- Stewardship of the land.
- Respect for animals and creation.

Examples include:

- Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)
- Wabanaki Confederacy
- Anishinaabe
- Cherokee
- Lakota
- Hopi
- Navajo (Diné)
- Pueblo peoples
- Inuit
- Numerous other Indigenous nations

1400s

Indigenous Religions Continue

Throughout the fifteenth century, Indigenous spiritual traditions remained the dominant religious systems across North America. European Christianity had not yet become established on the continent. Late 1400s

Catholic Christianity Arrives

1492 marked Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas under the Spanish Crown. Spanish exploration brought:

- Roman Catholic missionaries.
- Franciscan missionaries.
- Dominican missionaries.
- Later Jesuit missionaries.

Catholicism became the first organized European Christian tradition established in parts of the Americas.

1500s

Spanish Catholic Missions

Catholic missions spread through:

- Florida
- New Mexico

- Texas
- California
- Mexico
- Caribbean

Missionaries sought to:

- Evangelize Indigenous peoples.
- Establish churches.
- Build missions.
- Introduce European education.
- Translate religious texts into Indigenous languages.

French Catholic Influence

French explorers and missionaries expanded throughout:

- Acadia
- Quebec
- Great Lakes
- St. Lawrence River
- Mississippi Valley

Major missionary orders included:

- Jesuits
- Récollets
- Sulpicians

French colonial life often intertwined Catholicism with local Indigenous alliances.

1600s

English Protestant Colonies

English settlers established colonies with various Protestant traditions.

Puritans

Massachusetts Bay Colony Emphasized:

- Scripture
- Moral discipline

- Covenant theology
- Congregational churches

Pilgrims (Separatists)

Plymouth Colony Believed in separating from the Church of England while maintaining Protestant Christianity.

Anglicans

Church of England became established in colonies such as:

- Virginia
- Maryland (initially mixed)
- Carolinas

Quakers

Founded by: George Fox (England) Pennsylvania became a center for:

- Religious liberty
- Pacifism
- Equality
- Simplicity

Baptists

Expanded throughout the colonies emphasizing:

- Believer's baptism.
- Religious liberty.
- Local church governance.

1700s

First Great Awakening

Major revival movement emphasizing:

- Personal conversion.
- Evangelism.
- Individual relationship with God.

Important figures included:

- Jonathan Edwards
- George Whitefield

Methodism

Founded by: John Wesley (England) Methodism spread rapidly throughout America during the late eighteenth century.

Religious Freedom

The American Revolution encouraged:

- Freedom of conscience.
- Separation of church and state.
- Constitutional protection of religious liberty.

The First Amendment (1791) prohibited Congress from establishing a national religion while protecting the free exercise of religion.

1800s

Second Great Awakening

A period of widespread revival beginning around 1790 and continuing through much of the nineteenth century. Characteristics included:

- Camp meetings.
- Revival preaching.
- Religious reform.
- Expansion westward.
- New denominations.
- Mission societies.
- Bible societies.
- Temperance movements.
- Abolitionist activism.

New American Religious Movements

1830

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Founder: Joseph Smith Jr. Origin: New York Distinctives:

- Book of Mormon.
- Restorationism.
- Continuing revelation.
- Modern prophets.

1848

Spiritualism

Associated with: Fox Sisters Beliefs included:

- Communication with spirits.
- Mediumship.
- Afterlife investigation.

1863

Seventh-day Adventist Church

Key leaders:

- Ellen G. White
- James White
- Joseph Bates

Distinctives:

- Saturday Sabbath.
- Health reform.
- Second Coming emphasis.

1870s

Bible Student Movement

Founder:

Charles Taze Russell

Pennsylvania Later developed into Jehovah's Witnesses.

1879

Christian Science

Founder: Mary Baker Eddy Massachusetts Focus:

- Spiritual healing.
- Prayer.
- Biblical interpretation.

1880s

New Thought

Influenced by: Phineas Quimby Emphasized:

- Mind-body relationship.
- Positive spiritual thinking.
- Healing.

1889

Unity

Founders: Charles Fillmore Myrtle Fillmore Missouri

Jehovah's Witnesses

Charles Taze Russell

Organized Bible study groups. Published: Zion's Watch Tower Early Bible Students still observed some holidays, including Christmas. Joseph Franklin Rutherford Introduced major organizational reforms. The movement gradually rejected:

- Christmas
- Easter
- Birthdays
- Patriotic ceremonies
- National holidays

1931: The organization officially adopted the name: Jehovah's Witnesses.

Twentieth Century

Major growth occurred among:

- Pentecostal churches
- Assemblies of God
- Church of God movements
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Latter-day Saints
- Seventh-day Adventists
- Evangelical churches
- Independent Bible churches
- Nondenominational churches

Immigration also contributed to substantial growth of:

- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Eastern Orthodox Christianity

Twenty-First Century

The United States has become one of the world's most religiously diverse nations. Major religious traditions now include:

Christianity

- Roman Catholic
- Orthodox
- Anglican / Episcopal
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Baptist
- Presbyterian
- Reformed
- Pentecostal
- Evangelical
- Nondenominational
- Latter-day Saints
- Seventh-day Adventists

- Jehovah's Witnesses

Non-Christian Traditions

- Judaism
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Jainism
- Bahá'í Faith
- Indigenous religions
- Unitarian Universalism
- Various New Religious Movements

Historical Summary Timeline

Century Major Developments Before

1400s

Indigenous religions throughout North America

1400s

Indigenous traditions remain dominant Late 1400s Spanish Catholic exploration begins

1500s

Catholic missions expand in Spanish territories

1600s

French Catholicism, English Protestantism, Quakers, Baptists

1700s

First Great Awakening, Methodism, religious liberty, U.S. Constitution Early 1800s Second Great Awakening 1830 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized 1848 Spiritualism begins 1863 Seventh-day Adventist Church organized

1870s

Bible Student movement founded

1879

Christian Science founded

1889

Unity founded

1931

Jehovah's Witnesses officially named

1900s

Pentecostalism, Evangelicalism, and global religious diversity expand

2000s

United States becomes increasingly religiously pluralistic

Conclusion

From the fifteenth century through the present, the religious history of North America reflects a progression from the longstanding spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples to the arrival of European Christianity, followed by Protestant diversification, revival movements, constitutional protections for religious freedom, and the emergence of numerous new religious organizations during the nineteenth century. While some traditions trace their origins to ancient faiths extending back millennia, several influential American religious movements — including the Latter-day Saint movement, Seventh-day Adventists, Christian Science, and the Bible Student movement that later became Jehovah's Witnesses — were organized during the nineteenth century and continue to shape the religious landscape today.

CHAPTER 6

Cultural Wandering

The Human Religious and Cultural Migration Story

“Cultural wandering” describes the human tendency to explore, encounter new ideas, and sometimes adopt or leave behind cultural and religious traditions. Throughout history, individuals and communities have wandered through migration, trade, conquest, marriage, education, and personal conviction, forming the cultures and belief systems that exist today.

Rather than remaining fixed, cultures have continually influenced one another while also preserving unique traditions. Cultural wandering reflects this ongoing human journey of discovery, adaptation, and identity across generations.



THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Volume II

Faith, Civilization, Heritage, and the Search for Peace

SECOND EDITION

D. Cowdrey

Union of Saints Historical Series

The Human Journey, Volume II

Second Edition

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The Human Journey
Volume II: Faith, Civilization, Heritage, and the Search for Peace
Second Edition

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Printed in the United States of America

Chapter 7 — Foundational Principles

Foundational Principles

Freedom • Truth • Peace • Faith

English, Acadian French, and Ancient Greek

Shared Foundation

ENGLISH

Freedom • Truth • Peace • Faith

ACADIAN FRENCH

Liberté • Vérité • Paix • Foi

ANCIENT GREEK

Ἐλευθερία • Ἀλήθεια • Εἰρήνη • Πίστις

Ancient Greek

Ἐλευθερία	Eleuthería	Freedom
Ἀλήθεια	Alétheia	Truth
Εἰρήνη	Eirēnē	Peace
Πίστις	Pístis	Faith

Chapter 8 — Union of Saints Historical Teaching

UNION OF SAINTS

Historical Teaching

Topic	Union of Saints Historical Teaching
Ancient Civilizations	Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, Israel, and neighboring civilizations exchanged ideas through trade, diplomacy, migration, scholarship, and conquest, creating a highly interconnected ancient world.
Arcadia (Greece)	Arcadia was an ancient region of Greece long associated with pastoral life, simplicity, harmony with nature, and classical philosophy and literature. Its cultural legacy influenced later European art, literature, and ideals.
A(r)cadia (Canada & Northeastern North America)	Acadia developed as a distinct French-speaking society in northeastern North America, blending French, Indigenous, and local traditions into a unique cultural identity.
Cleopatra VII	Cleopatra VII was primarily of Macedonian Greek ancestry, ruled as Queen and Pharaoh of Egypt, and embraced Egyptian religious traditions while governing a Greek-speaking dynasty.
Ma'at	Ma'at represented truth, justice, balance, harmony, and cosmic order. Egyptian pharaohs were expected to uphold Ma'at through righteous governance and stewardship.
Isis (Aset)	Cleopatra identified herself with Isis (Aset), reflecting the continued

	importance of traditional Egyptian religion during the Ptolemaic period.
Greek & Egyptian Traditions	During Cleopatra's reign, Greek language and philosophy coexisted alongside traditional Egyptian religion and royal ceremonies centered upon Ma'at.
Mesopotamian Traditions	Ishtar was the Akkadian form of the earlier Sumerian goddess Inanna, illustrating the continuity and evolution of religious traditions within Mesopotamia.
Biblical Traditions	The rise of Judaism and Christianity transformed the religious landscape of the ancient Near East. Students examine how biblical traditions preserved, reinterpreted, and replaced earlier religious and cultural understandings over time.
Christian Expansion	The spread of Christianity throughout Europe influenced which religious traditions, institutions, and cultural practices were preserved, transformed, or abandoned.
Catholic, Orthodox & Monastic Scholarship	Monastic communities preserved many ancient manuscripts and classical works while religious priorities also influenced which texts remained central to education and worship.
Protestant Reformation	The Reformation reshaped biblical interpretation, literacy, education, church authority, and approaches to religious history.
Islamic Civilization	Islamic civilization preserved and expanded many works of Greek, Persian, and other traditions through translation and scholarship while also reshaping the religious landscape of regions under Islamic rule.

Colonial & Imperial Eras	Throughout history, empires and colonial governments often reshaped languages, religions, education, and cultural memory, affecting how communities preserved or transmitted their identities.
Acadian Deportation & Cultural Survival	The 1755–1764 deportation of the Acadians dispersed thousands of people and had lasting effects on Acadian language, culture, families, and historical memory. The preservation and recovery of Acadian heritage remain important areas of historical study.
Cultural Preservation & Cultural Suppression	Throughout history, wars, conquest, religious change, assimilation policies, forced migration, discrimination, and political conflict have contributed both to the preservation of some traditions and the decline or loss of others. Students examine documented examples using historical evidence.
Modern Information & Propaganda	Governments, political movements, educational systems, media, and digital platforms influence how history is remembered and communicated. Students learn to evaluate sources critically and distinguish primary evidence from opinion, propaganda, or misinformation.
Historical Preservation & Suppression	Religious institutions, governments, political movements, and empires have all played roles in preserving, interpreting, revising, or sometimes suppressing aspects of historical memory. Each case should be evaluated individually using historical evidence rather than broad generalizations.
Archaeology & New Discoveries	Archaeological discoveries, inscriptions, manuscripts, and advances in historical research

	continue to refine our understanding of the ancient world.
Union of Saints Perspective	The Union of Saints encourages continual historical inquiry, comparison of primary sources, archaeology, linguistics, religious texts, and scholarly research while recognizing that historical understanding evolves as new evidence becomes available.

Chapter 9 — Baal, Tanit, Mari, and the Ram Symbol

UNION OF SAINTS TEACHINGS AND LEARNINGS

Baal, Tanit, Mari, and the Ram Symbol

Understanding Cultural Blending Across Ancient Civilizations

Introduction

Throughout human history, cultures have exchanged ideas, symbols, stories, and religious traditions. As peoples migrated, traded, intermarried, and interacted across continents, their beliefs often influenced one another. This process, known as cultural blending or syncretism, can make it difficult to determine where one tradition ends and another begins.

One symbol that appears repeatedly across ancient civilizations is the ram. The ram is found in the religious imagery of the Near East, North Africa, Europe, and the Mediterranean. Likewise, powerful female figures such as Tanit and Mari have inspired comparisons among historians, folklorists, and students of comparative mythology.

This paper explores Baal, Tanit, Mari, and the recurring symbolism of the ram while examining how cultural blending may contribute to similarities among ancient traditions.

The Meaning of Baal

The word Baal originates from Northwest Semitic languages and simply means:

Lord
Master
Owner
Ruler

Rather than referring to a single deity, “Baal” was often used as a title for various local gods. The most well-known Baal is Baal Hadad, a male storm and fertility deity worshipped throughout parts of the ancient Levant.

Baal was commonly associated with:

Rain

Storms
Fertility
Agriculture
Kingship
Divine authority

In many artistic representations, Baal is shown with horns or accompanied by horned animals.

The Ram as a Sacred Symbol

The ram appears repeatedly throughout ancient religious traditions.

Common symbolic meanings include:

Strength
Fertility
Leadership
Courage
Royal authority
Divine power

Ancient peoples often viewed horns as symbols of supernatural authority. Horned crowns frequently appeared on depictions of gods, kings, and divine beings.

Because rams were valuable livestock and symbols of abundance, they naturally became associated with prosperity and sacred power.

Baal and Ram Symbolism

Although Baal is more commonly associated with the bull in many Canaanite traditions, ram symbolism became especially significant through Baal Hammon.

Baal Hammon was a major deity of the Punic civilization centered in Carthage.

He was associated with:

Agriculture
Fertility
Prosperity
Solar power
Ram imagery

Many surviving depictions of Baal Hammon include curved ram horns or ram symbolism. This association helped establish a lasting connection between Baal traditions and the ram throughout portions of the ancient Mediterranean.

Tanit and Baal Hammon

One of the most important divine pairings in Punic religion was Tanit and Baal Hammon.

Tanit was revered throughout Carthage and other Punic settlements.

She was associated with:

Protection

Fertility

Motherhood

The heavens

Civic identity

Sacred femininity

Archaeological inscriptions frequently invoke Tanit and Baal Hammon together.

While scholars debate the precise nature of their relationship, they are often described as the principal divine pair of Punic religion.

This pairing has led many researchers to compare Tanit and Baal Hammon with other divine male-female partnerships found throughout world mythology.

Cultural Blending in the Ancient Mediterranean

The Mediterranean world was highly interconnected.

Ideas traveled through:

Trade routes

Migration

Military campaigns

Maritime commerce

Cultural exchange

Major civilizations influencing one another included:

Phoenicians

Egyptians

Greeks

Romans

Iberians

North Africans

Celts

Various Near Eastern peoples

As these cultures interacted, symbols and stories often merged. Gods acquired new attributes. Local deities became identified with foreign deities. Ancient religious systems frequently absorbed and adapted elements from neighboring traditions.

This process is known as syncretism.

Mari in Basque Tradition

Mari occupies a unique place within Basque mythology.

She is regarded as one of the central figures of traditional Basque folklore and is often considered the principal female spiritual being of the Basque people.

Mari is associated with:

Mountains

Caves

Storms

Nature

Moral order

Wisdom

The natural world

Unlike Tanit, Mari is not generally described as a fertility goddess or the consort of a sky god. Instead, she appears as an independent and powerful force connected to the land itself.

Many traditions place her dwelling within sacred mountains, particularly Mount Anboto.

Mari and Shape Shifting

One of the most distinctive features of Mari is her ability to appear in multiple forms.

Folklore describes her as appearing as:

A beautiful woman

Fire

Light

Clouds

Birds

Animals

Some regional traditions include appearances as a ram.

This has led to comparisons between Mari and other ancient figures associated with horned animals.

Mari and the Ram

The ram appears in certain Basque traditions connected to Mari, though not necessarily in the same way it appears with Baal Hammon.

The Basque people historically maintained strong pastoral traditions centered on sheep and mountain herding.

As a result, sheep and rams naturally became important cultural symbols.

The appearance of ram symbolism within Mari traditions may reflect:

Pastoral life

Mountain culture

Fertility symbolism

Natural cycles

Sacred animal traditions

The presence of the ram does not necessarily prove a direct historical connection to Baal traditions. However, it illustrates how certain symbols emerge repeatedly across cultures.

Mari and Sugaar

Mari is often associated with Sugaar, a male figure in Basque mythology.

Sugaar is commonly depicted as:

A serpent

A dragon

A force of nature

A bringer of storms

Together, Mari and Sugaar are frequently linked to:

Weather

Fertility

Natural cycles

The balance of nature

This pairing has occasionally inspired comparisons with divine couples from other ancient traditions.

Why Similar Symbols Appear Across Cultures

There are two major explanations for recurring symbols such as the ram.

Independent Development

Many scholars argue that cultures often arrive at similar symbols independently.

The ram naturally symbolizes:

- Strength
- Fertility
- Leadership
- Prosperity

Agricultural societies throughout the world may therefore develop similar symbolism without direct contact.

Cultural Exchange

Other scholars emphasize the extensive interaction among ancient peoples. Trade and migration may have allowed religious ideas to spread over vast distances. Under this view, recurring symbols may preserve traces of ancient cultural connections. Both explanations likely contribute to the similarities observed throughout history.

Mari, Tanit, and Comparative Mythology

Comparative mythology examines recurring themes across cultures.

Mari and Tanit share several broad characteristics:

- Powerful female figures
- Protective roles
- Connections to nature
- Associations with sacred places
- Ancient pre-Christian origins

However, they also differ significantly.

Tanit emerged within the Phoenician and Punic world.

Mari emerged within the indigenous traditions of the Basque people.

At present, no accepted archaeological evidence demonstrates that Mari is derived from Tanit or that Tanit evolved into Mari.

The similarities are best understood as either shared mythological patterns or possible reflections of broader Mediterranean cultural influences.

Conclusion

The stories of Baal, Tanit, Mari, and the ram reveal the complexity of ancient religious traditions.

The ram appears repeatedly as a symbol of power, fertility, leadership, and sacred authority.

Baal Hammon became strongly associated with ram imagery in the Punic world.

Tanit emerged as one of the principal female figures paired with Baal Hammon in Carthaginian religion.

Mari developed independently within Basque mythology as a powerful guardian of nature, mountains, storms, and moral order. While some traditions associate Mari with the ram, the symbolism appears within a distinctly Basque cultural framework.

Whether these similarities arise from shared human experiences, ancient cultural exchanges, or a combination of both remains a fascinating subject for continued study.

What is certain is that symbols such as the ram, the sacred mountain, the protective mother, the storm deity, and the forces of nature have captivated human imagination for thousands of years and continue to inspire reflection on humanity's shared cultural heritage.

Chapter 10 — Understanding Cultural Blending Across Ancient Civilizations

Understanding Cultural Blending Across Ancient Civilizations

Shapeshifting, or “becoming one with culture.”

Loss of history, heritage, ancestry, and language.

Suppression, oppression, and marginalization.

Temple replacements and interfaith understandings.

Learning from the “bigger picture.”

Ancient symbolism, deities, and “secrets” passed down through the ages.

Christianization.

“Anti-paganism” as a form of historical oppression through the denial of history, education, and understanding, while also recognizing that boundaries between faiths can sometimes be healthy.

Greeks, Jews, Romans, and Egyptians as highly influential historical cultures with sophisticated understandings of cultural fusion.

Hellenistic and Egyptian culture as more “natural” to femininity than many later patriarchal societies, while also contributing to the development of ethical philosophy, natural healing traditions, wisdom, and knowledge.

Modern church philosophy as healing but also “broken truth,” more male-centric and patriarchal, due in part to a long lineage of male-dominated cultural blending, historical denialism, female suppression, and slavery.

The modern imbalance of society may be seen everywhere. Where truth is denied, we deny ourselves. To know the world, we must first know ourselves, our soul, our nature, and our truth.

The Bible, as well as the Torah, provide important stepping stones for many.

Likewise, there is much that can be learned from other major ancient religions and spiritual traditions. Yet there is also a grander picture, one in which society is more egalitarian, more open to feminine and maternal spiritual principles, and more aligned with truth. Through logic, science, research, and the pursuit of ancient knowledge, we may uncover wisdom that has long been forgotten, neglected, or denied.

The Union of Saints has chosen to walk a path with God, not just the version of God that society has told us exists, but the God we know within our hearts.

Not simply a deity or ancient symbol, but as an extension of the natural world, of ourselves, and of the highest truth.

We do not deny that a Mother exists, because we know ourselves. Furthermore, we recognize the suffering, suppression, and abuse that the feminine principle has endured throughout history. At the Union of Saints, we choose to free the Mother, and in doing so, we believe we also free the Father. We free ourselves and we free our humanity.

For when we deny these important parts of ourselves, we are not truly walking a path with God, but rather with deception, manipulation, and falsehood. Our mission is not to live unaligned with ourselves, but rather to walk the golden path of heaven, of peace, full and devote connection, open, natural, genuine, as women, feminine. We are sovereign. We are free.

Chapter 11 — The House of God: Ancient Egyptian Snake Symbolology

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Ancient Egyptian Snake Symbolology

This is the House of God, not the house of snakes. Yet the symbolism remains.

Our ancestors would wear snakes near their third eye as a symbol. I did not understand this truly and wholeheartedly until after the “prophecy” was complete. It took many years, but now I see, as OZ~I~RAH showed me I would.

O Circle of Life, Z Tides of Change, N~, As Above So Below It's All Connected, I Third Eye, Awareness, Enlightenment, Awakening, RA, The Sun God In Heaven. The Star of the Sea, of Nature, and the Sun in Heaven, all knowing, all seeing, watching over US and guiding us towards peace, and the highest love.

When we “clean” or “wash” our spiritual energy, the snakes will appear. Snakes that we may not have seen before. Through this awareness of our third eye, we are also able to see heaven and heaven's gates. We may enter heaven while here on earth.

The ancestors used pyramids as a symbol also, homes pointed to the heavens. Their architecture was made with all kinds of really intelligent designs. There were secret doors and hidden paths, gates to treasure. Peace is golden. The greatest treasure of all. It is achievable, but it takes devotion. It takes cleaning our spirits, our inner temples of the snakes from within. It takes absolute freedom of thought.

By opening our minds and our hearts to the ancestors and their spiritual journey, we can also see as they saw. More so, though, through prophecy and revelation, through spirit, as I have shared as best as I could in the time that I had. From 2019, my time in the sea, reached by the star, I was able to put the pieces together.

It was daily, around the clock work, from morning to sunset, being faithful to the message I had received from God. About seven years, and as one of the symbols I was shown was the infinity symbol, or 8, it makes sense that the truth was fully revealed by the eighth year. But it was not without labor. It was not without pain, heartbreak, and the very taxing experience of understanding slavery and war. I had prayed for freedom of the slaves, and I was shown the truth of slavery. Still devoted, I was determined to understand what God had shown me.

Staying grounded and logical was a big part of this experience. We learned many of these understandings from the ancestors as well, they taught us philosophy and logic. Our ancestors were highly intelligent.

“The truth will set us free.” Today we have artificial intelligence that streamlines our research processes. Combining new intelligence with ancient intelligence, the secrets of life, its mystery, and its truly magical powers are revealed to us. What a beautiful and enchanting life we live and share.

I have so much gratitude to my ancestors, spiritual guides, and to Goddess and God. I am grateful for the visions I had, of the star of the sea, of ancient Africa and Egypt, and of Christ’s love. I now understand what it means to be a child of God, to love others, by first honoring my Soul, and, most of all, what it means to live in the most, natural~home, of Heaven and God.



Ancient Egyptian royal imagery featuring the uraeus serpent symbol.

Chapter 12 — Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian Religious Heritage

UNION OF SAINTS

Jewish, Greek, and Egyptian Religious Heritage

Introduction

The religious world of the first century AD was remarkably diverse. During the lifetime of Jesus and the writing of the New Testament, three major religious traditions profoundly shaped the Mediterranean world:

Judaism, rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures and the worship of the one God of Israel.

Greek religion and philosophy, which influenced language, education, and culture throughout the Roman Empire.

Ancient Egyptian religion, one of the world's oldest religious traditions, which continued to flourish under Greek and Roman rule.

Understanding these traditions provides valuable historical context for the emergence of Christianity and the writing of the New Testament.

I. Jewish Religious Heritage

Monotheism

Judaism centered upon the worship of one God.

The foundational declaration of Jewish faith is found in Deuteronomy 6:4:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”

Unlike neighboring civilizations, Israel rejected polytheism and emphasized covenant, righteousness, justice, mercy, and holiness.

Sacred Scriptures

The Jewish Scriptures were primarily written in Hebrew, with portions written in Aramaic.

Hebrew Scriptures

Torah (Law)

Prophets

Writings

Aramaic Portions

Daniel 2:4–7:28

Ezra 4:8–6:18

Ezra 7:12–26

Jeremiah 10:11

The Septuagint (LXX)

Between the third and second centuries BC, Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Koine Greek.

This translation became known as the Septuagint (LXX).

The Septuagint became the Bible of many Greek-speaking Jews and was frequently quoted by New Testament writers.

Shalom

The Hebrew word Shalom (שלום) means much more than simply peace.

It encompasses:

Peace

Wholeness

Completeness

Well-being

Harmony

Prosperity

Safety

Reconciliation

Flourishing

II. Greek Religious Heritage

During the first century AD, the Greek-speaking world remained religiously diverse.

Although governed by Rome, Greek culture continued to shape philosophy, language, education, and religion throughout the empire.

Traditional Greek Religion

The Greeks worshipped many gods and goddesses, believing each governed different aspects of creation and human life.

The Twelve Olympian Gods

Deity	Sphere of Influence
Zeus	King of the gods; sky, thunder, justice
Hera	Marriage and family
Poseidon	Sea and earthquakes
Demeter	Agriculture and harvest
Athena	Wisdom, strategy, craftsmanship
Apollo	Light, prophecy, healing, music
Artemis	Hunting and wilderness
Ares	War
Aphrodite	Love and beauty
Hephaestus	Fire and metalworking
Hermes	Travel, commerce, messengers
Dionysus	Wine, celebration, theater

Temples and Sacrifices

Greek worship commonly included:

- Animal sacrifices
- Festivals
- Public processions
- Offerings of food, wine, incense, and gifts
- Consultation of oracles, particularly at Delphi

Religion was closely connected with civic life, and honoring the gods was believed to promote the well-being of the community.

Greek Philosophy

Educated Greeks were influenced by several philosophical traditions.

Stoicism

Virtue
Reason
Self-control
Living according to nature

Epicureanism

Tranquility
Moderation
Freedom from unnecessary fear

Platonism

Eternal realities
The soul
Higher truth beyond the material world

Acts 17 records the Apostle Paul engaging Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in Athens.

Emperor Worship

Many parts of the Roman Empire practiced emperor worship, offering sacrifices or honors to the emperor.

Christians generally refused to participate, believing worship belonged to God alone, resulting in periods of persecution.

Mystery Religions

Various mystery religions promised personal salvation and a blessed afterlife through sacred initiation rites.

Examples include:

Isis
Mithras
Cybele

These traditions spread throughout the Roman Empire alongside traditional Greek and Roman religion.

Chapter 13 — Christianity in the Greek World

Christianity in the Greek World

Although the New Testament was written entirely in Koine Greek, its theology remained deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Greek vocabulary often expressed Hebrew concepts.

Examples include:

εἰρήνη (Eirēnē)

Meaning

- Peace
- Reconciliation
- Harmony
- Spiritual wholeness

This Greek word became the New Testament expression of the Hebrew concept of Shalom.

λόγος (Logos)

Meaning

- Word
- Reason
- Divine expression

John opens his Gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word (Logos).”

While the term had philosophical significance in Greek thought, John's presentation is grounded in Jewish theology concerning God's creative and revealing Word.

Chapter 14 — Egyptian Religious Heritage

III. Egyptian Religious Heritage

During the first century AD, ancient Egyptian religion remained active despite centuries of Greek and Roman rule.

Greek and Egyptian traditions became blended through Greco-Egyptian syncretism.

Ancient Egyptian Religion

The Egyptians practiced polytheism, worshipping numerous gods associated with creation, kingship, justice, fertility, and the afterlife.

Major Egyptian Deities

Deity	Sphere of Influence
Ra	Sun, creation, kingship
Amun	Creator and hidden god
Osiris	Afterlife and resurrection
Isis	Healing, motherhood, protection
Horus	Kingship and protection
Set	Chaos and storms
Anubis	Mummification and funerary rites
Thoth	Wisdom and writing
Hathor	Love and motherhood
Ma'at	Truth, justice, harmony, cosmic order

Core Beliefs

Central themes included:

- Life after death
- Resurrection
- Judgment
- Divine kingship

- Sacred temples
- Ritual offerings
- Preservation of Ma'at

Ma'at represented:

- Truth
- Justice
- Balance
- Harmony
- Cosmic order

Judgment of the Heart

According to the Book of the Dead, after death a person's heart was weighed against the Feather of Ma'at.

If found righteous, the individual entered the blessed afterlife.

If not, the heart was consumed by Ammit, symbolizing the loss of eternal existence.

Sacred Texts

Egyptian religious writings included:

- Pyramid Texts
- Coffin Texts
- Book of the Dead
- Temple inscriptions
- Hymns
- Ritual texts

Temples

Major temple centers included:

- Karnak
- Luxor
- Philae
- Edfu

Daily worship involved incense, offerings, music, prayers, and priestly rituals.

Greek Influence

Following Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt in 332 BC, Greek and Egyptian traditions increasingly merged.

Examples include:

- Isis becoming widely worshipped throughout the Mediterranean.
- The development of Serapis, combining Greek and Egyptian characteristics.
- Greek philosophical ideas influencing Egyptian religious thought.

Comparison with Christianity

Ancient Egyptian Religion	Christianity
Many gods and goddesses	One God
Divine Pharaoh	Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of God
Ma'at (truth, justice, cosmic order)	God's righteousness and kingdom
Judgment by weighing the heart	Final judgment by God
Temple rituals and offerings	Faith in Christ, prayer, worship, and the sacraments (depending on tradition)
Sacred writings developed over millennia	Old and New Testaments

Historical Context

Egypt became one of Christianity's earliest centers. Alexandria emerged as a leading center of Christian scholarship, producing influential theologians such as Origen and Athanasius of Alexandria. Over time, Christianity gradually became the dominant religion of Egypt while preserving aspects of Egyptian artistic and cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The first-century Mediterranean world brought together three remarkable religious traditions.

- Judaism contributed belief in one God, covenant, Scripture, and the prophetic tradition.
- Greek civilization contributed language, philosophy, education, and cultural exchange.
- Egyptian civilization contributed one of history's oldest religious systems, emphasizing order, justice, and the hope of life beyond death.

The New Testament developed within this interconnected world. Written in Koine Greek, grounded in the Hebrew Scriptures, and proclaimed throughout the Greek and Egyptian worlds, Christianity developed in conversation with these

cultures while presenting its own distinctive understanding of God, humanity, and salvation.

Chapter 15 — Cleopatra & Ma'at

Cleopatra & Ma'at

Union of Saints

Cleopatra VII was ethnically Macedonian Greek, but she was also the queen of Egypt.

Here's the distinction:

- **Nationality/Political Identity:** Queen of Egypt (ruled 51–30 BC).
- **Dynasty:** The Ptolemaic dynasty, founded by Ptolemy I Soter after the death of Alexander the Great.
- **Ancestry:** Predominantly Macedonian Greek. The Ptolemaic rulers generally married within their own dynasty, so their Greek ancestry remained largely intact over generations.
- **Culture:** Cleopatra ruled as an Egyptian pharaoh and embraced many Egyptian customs and religious traditions.

One notable fact is that Cleopatra was the first Ptolemaic ruler known to have learned the Egyptian language. Earlier members of her dynasty primarily spoke Greek.

There has been debate about the identity of Cleopatra's mother and grandmother because historical records are incomplete. Some scholars have speculated about possible Egyptian or other ancestry, but there is no conclusive historical evidence that Cleopatra was ethnically Egyptian or of sub-Saharan African ancestry. The prevailing historical view is that she was primarily of Macedonian Greek descent.

So, the most accurate summary is:

- **Ethnicity:** Primarily Macedonian Greek.
- **Ruler of:** Egypt.
- **Cultural role:** Egyptian pharaoh who ruled Egypt and adopted many aspects of Egyptian culture.

Ma'at ~ “Ma, At~toned”

During Cleopatra's lifetime (69–30 BC), the concept of Ma'at was still an important part of Egyptian religion and kingship, although Egypt was under the rule of the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic dynasty.

Ma'at was both:

- The goddess Ma'at, often depicted with an ostrich feather on her head.

- The principle of truth, justice, balance, harmony, and cosmic order.

For over 3,000 years, Egyptian pharaohs were expected to uphold Ma'at by ruling justly, maintaining order, and honoring the gods.

Cleopatra, although of Macedonian Greek descent, ruled as an Egyptian pharaoh. To strengthen her legitimacy, she:

- Participated in traditional Egyptian religious ceremonies.
- Supported Egyptian temples and priesthoods.
- Was portrayed in temple reliefs making offerings to Egyptian gods, including rituals associated with maintaining Ma'at.
- Identified herself with the goddess Isis, one of Egypt's most revered deities.

At the same time, the Ptolemaic court in Alexandria remained heavily influenced by Greek language and culture. As a result, two traditions existed side by side:

- Greek religion and philosophy among much of the ruling elite.
- Traditional Egyptian religion, including devotion to Ma'at, throughout Egypt and in the royal cult.

So, during Cleopatra's reign, the worship and ideals of Ma'at continued, especially in temples and official royal ceremonies. Cleopatra presented herself as the pharaoh responsible for preserving Ma'at, even while governing a culturally Greek dynasty within Egypt.

Further Context

- Isis is the Greek rendering of the Egyptian name Aset (Eset).
- Ishtar comes from the Akkadian language and is related to the Sumerian goddess Inanna.

Though historians establish they are not connected, these regions had developed highly interconnected ideas, technologies, artistic styles, and religious concepts.

Given that we are only now discovering our Acadian history, much of it following extreme forms of erasure and suppression, we believe that modern scholarship may be subject to significant dispute and debate. It definitely should be!

Chapter 16 — Historical Names of Acadia and the Northeastern North American Region

UNION OF SAINTS

Historical Names of Acadia and the Northeastern North American Region

A Chronological Overview of Indigenous, Norse, French, and British Names

Understanding the history of Acadia begins long before the establishment of the French colony in 1604. The region has been known by many different names over thousands of years, reflecting the peoples who lived there, explored it, and ultimately settled it. The chronology below presents the historical evolution of the region's names while distinguishing between established historical evidence and subjects of ongoing scholarly discussion.

Before European Contact (Thousands of Years Before 1000 CE)

The region was home to Indigenous peoples for thousands of years before European arrival. Each nation possessed its own language, culture, and geographic names.

Indigenous Regional Names

Mi'kma'ki

- Homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation.
- Encompassed most of present-day:
 - Nova Scotia
 - Prince Edward Island
 - Parts of New Brunswick
 - Gaspé Peninsula
 - Portions of Newfoundland

Wolastokuk

- Homeland of the Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people.
 - Centered along the Saint John (Wolastoq) River.

Peskotomuhkatik

- Homeland of the Passamaquoddy people.

These Indigenous nations maintained sophisticated societies, trade networks, governance systems, and stewardship of the region long before European exploration.

Norse Exploration (c. 1000 CE)

Around the year 1000 CE, Norse explorers from Greenland and Iceland became the first known Europeans to reach North America. The Icelandic sagas describe several lands:

Helluland

Meaning: “Land of Flat Stones”

Generally associated with:

- Baffin Island

Markland

Meaning: “Forest Land”

Generally associated with:

- Labrador

Vinland

Meaning: Often translated as “Wine Land” or “Pasture Land”

Generally associated with:

- Newfoundland
- Possibly portions of the Gulf of St. Lawrence or farther south (exact extent remains debated)

Straumfjörð

Meaning: “Fjord of Currents”

- Mentioned in the Icelandic sagas.

- Some scholars have suggested it may correspond to the Norse settlement at present-day L'Anse aux Meadows, but this identification has not been conclusively established.

Hóp

- Another location described in the sagas.
- Its exact location remains unknown but is generally believed by some scholars to have been farther south than Newfoundland.

Early European Maritime Activity (Late 1400s)

By the late fifteenth century, European mariners were increasingly exploring the North Atlantic.

Although documentary evidence is limited, historians believe that mariners from several European regions likely made seasonal fishing voyages to the waters surrounding Newfoundland and Acadia.

These groups likely included:

- Breton fishermen
- Norman fishermen
- Basque fishermen and whalers
- Portuguese mariners
- English fishermen

These early voyages primarily involved:

- Cod fishing
- Whaling
- Coastal exploration
- Trade

Rather than permanent settlement.

Early Sixteenth Century (1500s)

By the early 1500s, French seasonal fishing and trading expeditions were well established throughout the North Atlantic.

These voyages laid the foundation for later French colonization.

1524 — Arcadia

Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, sailing in service of France, used the name Arcadia for part of the Atlantic coast during his 1524 voyage.

Most historians believe that the later French name Acadia (Acadie) developed from Verrazzano's use of Arcadia, although the precise origin remains debated. Some scholars have also suggested possible Indigenous linguistic influences.

1534–1542 — Jacques Cartier

French explorer Jacques Cartier conducted three voyages exploring:

- Gulf of St. Lawrence
- St. Lawrence River
- Northeastern North America

His voyages strengthened French claims in North America and expanded European geographic knowledge of the region.

1604 — Beginning of Acadia

Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons established the first French colony at Île Sainte-Croix.

This marks the beginning of the permanent French settlement of Acadia.

1605 — Port-Royal

The colony relocated to Port-Royal, which became the first enduring French settlement in Acadia and the foundation of the Acadian people.

Nouvelle-France (New France)

Beginning in the early seventeenth century, France referred to its North American territories collectively as Nouvelle-France (New France).

Major regions included:

- Acadie (Acadia)
- Canada (St. Lawrence Valley)
- Louisiana

British Colonial Era

Following successive wars between Britain and France, the region gradually came under British administration.

Names adopted during this period included:

- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick
- Prince Edward Island

Timeline Summary

Approximate Date	Regional Name(s)	Historical Context
Thousands of years before 1000 CE	Mi'kma'ki, Wolastokuk, Peskotomuhkatik	Indigenous homelands
c. 1000 CE	Helluland	Norse name generally associated with Baffin Island
c. 1000 CE	Markland	Norse name generally associated with Labrador
c. 1000 CE	Vinland	Norse name generally associated with Newfoundland
c. 1000 CE	Straumfjörð	Saga location; possible but unconfirmed identification with L'Anse aux Meadows
c. 1000 CE	Hóp	Saga location of uncertain identification
Late 1400s	Seasonal European fishing grounds	Breton, Norman, Basque, Portuguese, and English maritime activity likely increases
Early 1500s	French fishing and trading routes	Regular seasonal expeditions become well documented
1524	Arcadia	Name used by Giovanni da Verrazzano
1534–1542	French exploration	Jacques Cartier explores northeastern North America
1604	Acadie (Acadia)	First permanent French colony established at Île Sainte-Croix
1605	Port-Royal	First enduring Acadian settlement
1608 onward	Nouvelle-France	French colonial territory

1700s onward	Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island	British colonial names
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Conclusion

The history of Acadia reflects thousands of years of human presence and multiple layers of cultural heritage. Indigenous nations first named and stewarded the region. Around 1000 CE, Norse explorers recorded lands such as Helluland, Markland, and Vinland in the Icelandic sagas. By the fourteenth century, European maritime activity expanded into the North Atlantic, followed by documented French exploration and seasonal fishing in the early sixteenth century. The name Arcadia appeared in 1524 during Verrazzano's voyage and evolved into Acadie (Acadia), where the first permanent French settlement was established in 1604 and the enduring Acadian community took root. Over the following centuries, the region became part of New France before eventually transitioning to British colonial administration under names such as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

Chapter 17 — The Origins and Meaning of Acadia

The Origins and Meaning of Acadia

*Thank you to our Guiding Stars OZIRAH and Stella Maris,
Star of the Sea*

Italian, Greek, Celtic and French Heritage

From Arcadia to Acadie

AI Assisted

Introduction

The name Acadia is one of the oldest European place names in North America. Today it represents a historic region, yet also the homeland, heritage, language, and culture of the Acadian people. Its origins combine Renaissance scholarship, classical Greek literature, French colonization, and the history of Indigenous peoples who had lived in the region for thousands of years before European arrival.

Before Acadia

Long before Europeans reached northeastern North America, the region was inhabited by Indigenous peoples, including the:

- Mi'kmaq
- Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet)
- Passamaquoddy
- Penobscot
- Abenaki

These nations had established communities, trade networks, languages, and place names throughout what is now:

- Nova Scotia
- New Brunswick
- Prince Edward Island

- Parts of Quebec
- Coastal Maine

Giovanni da Verrazzano and the Name “Arcadia”

In 1524, Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano sailed along the Atlantic coast of North America while serving King Francis I of France.

During this voyage, Verrazzano applied the name “Archadia” or “Arcadia” to part of the Atlantic coastline.

At that time, there were no French Acadian settlements. The people who would later become known as the Acadians had not yet established permanent colonies in the region.

Why Was an Italian Exploring for France?

During the Age of Exploration, explorers frequently served foreign monarchs rather than the rulers of their birthplace.

Exploration required enormous financial support. Kings and queens funded expeditions in exchange for new trade routes, territorial claims, and commercial opportunities.

Several famous explorers worked for countries other than where they were born:

- Christopher Columbus — Italian, sailed for Spain.
- John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto) — Italian, sailed for England.
- Amerigo Vespucci — Italian, sailed for Spain and Portugal.
- Giovanni da Verrazzano — Italian, sailed for France.
- Ferdinand Magellan — Portuguese, sailed for Spain.

France commissioned Verrazzano to explore North America's Atlantic coast as part of its effort to compete with Spain and Portugal during the Age of Exploration.

Why Did Verrazzano Choose the Name “Arcadia”?

The answer lies in the Italian Renaissance.

During the Renaissance, educated Europeans rediscovered and studied the writings of ancient Greece and Rome. Classical literature, philosophy, geography, and mythology heavily influenced scholars, artists, navigators, and explorers.

One of the most celebrated places in Greek literature was Arcadia. Arcadia was a mountainous region in the central Peloponnese of ancient Greece. Over centuries of literature, it came to symbolize:

- Peace
- Harmony

- Natural beauty
- Fertile countryside
- Simplicity
- An idyllic pastoral paradise

When Verrazzano encountered the beautiful forests and coastline of North America, historians generally believe he chose the name Arcadia as a poetic comparison to the peaceful landscape celebrated in classical Greek literature.

The name was therefore symbolic rather than geographic.

Why Were Italians Familiar with Ancient Greece?

Modern Italians are often descendants of ancient Greeks, and ancient Greek civilization had a profound influence on Italy.

Beginning in the eighth century BCE, Greek colonists established numerous settlements throughout southern Italy and Sicily, a region known as Magna Graecia (“Greater Greece”).

These colonies introduced Greek:

- Language
- Philosophy
- Architecture
- Mathematics
- Science
- Literature

Later, the Roman Republic and Roman Empire absorbed much of Greek culture, preserving and spreading classical learning throughout Europe.

By the Renaissance, Italian scholars regarded ancient Greek and Roman civilization as the foundation of higher education.

As a result, Verrazzano would almost certainly have been familiar with the literary image of Arcadia.

What Did Ancient Greece Have to Do with France?

France also embraced Renaissance humanism.

King Francis I encouraged scholarship, exploration, architecture, and the study of classical civilization.

French intellectual life during the sixteenth century drew heavily upon:

- Greek philosophy
- Roman history
- Classical geography
- Renaissance literature

Consequently, an Italian navigator sailing for the French king using a classical Greek name was entirely consistent with Renaissance culture.

From Arcadia to Acadie

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, French explorers and cartographers gradually adopted the spelling Acadie.

By 1604, French colonists led by Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons, and Samuel de Champlain established the first permanent French settlement at Saint Croix Island.

In 1605, the settlement moved to Port Royal.

These settlers and their descendants eventually became known as the Acadians.

Thus:

- Arcadia preceded Acadia.
- Acadie became the French colonial name.
- Acadians later derived their identity from the colony.

Indigenous Influences

While the connection to Verrazzano's Arcadia is the most widely accepted explanation for the origin of the name, historians have also proposed Indigenous linguistic influences. Some scholars have suggested possible connections with Mi'kmaq words such as Alгатig or with the -cadie ending found in regional place names including:

- Shubenacadie
- Tracadie
- Passamaquoddy

Although these theories remain subjects of scholarly discussion, they suggest that Indigenous languages may have influenced the way the French adapted or pronounced the name.

What Does "Acadie" Mean in French?

Unlike ordinary French vocabulary words, Acadie is a proper noun.

It is comparable to names such as:

- Bretagne
- Normandie
- Provence

This is the accepted name of the French colony.

Over time, the word acquired deep cultural meaning.

What Does Acadia Mean Today?

For many people, Acadia represents far more than geography.

It has become a symbol of:

- Homeland
- Heritage
- Family
- Community
- French language
- Maritime culture
- Resilience
- Survival
- Renewal following the Great Deportation (Le Grand Dérangement)

Its meaning has grown through centuries of history rather than through a literal dictionary definition.

Summary

The story of Acadia brings together several civilizations and traditions.

- Indigenous peoples inhabited the region for thousands of years before European arrival.
- In 1524, Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, sailing for France, applied the classical name Arcadia to part of the Atlantic coast.
- His choice reflected Renaissance admiration for ancient Greek literature, where Arcadia symbolized an idyllic and peaceful land.
- French explorers later adopted the spelling Acadie.
- Permanent French settlement began in 1604–1605.
- The Acadian people derived their identity from the colony of Acadie.
- Possible Indigenous linguistic influences may also have contributed to the evolution of the name.
- Today, Acadia represents both a historic homeland and the enduring cultural identity of the Acadian people.

The name Acadia therefore reflects a remarkable meeting of Indigenous North America, Renaissance Europe, classical Greek tradition, and French colonial history.

**Chapter 18 — Christian Study Notes: The Seven Deadly Sins, Peace,
and the Biblical Languages**

Christian Study Notes: The Seven Deadly Sins

Peace, and the Biblical Languages

The Seven Deadly Sins

The Seven Deadly Sins are a traditional classification of vices in Christian theology. They are considered "root sins" because they can give rise to many other harmful actions and attitudes.

1. Pride

Definition: Excessive self-importance, arrogance, or placing oneself above God or others.

Opposing Virtue: Humility

2. Greed (Avarice)

Definition: An excessive desire for wealth, possessions, or power.

Opposing Virtue: Generosity (Charity)

3. Lust

Definition: Disordered or excessive desire for sexual pleasure or using others as objects for personal gratification.

Opposing Virtue: Chastity

4. Envy

Definition: Resentment or sadness over another person's success, gifts, or blessings, often accompanied by the desire to possess them.

Opposing Virtue: Kindness (Brotherly Love)

5. Gluttony

Definition: Overindulgence or excess in food, drink, or other forms of consumption.

Opposing Virtue: Temperance

6. Wrath

Definition: Uncontrolled anger, hatred, vengeance, or a desire to harm others.

Opposing Virtue: Patience

7. Sloth

Definition: Laziness, spiritual apathy, or neglect of one's responsibilities and calling.

Opposing Virtue: Diligence

Summary Table

Deadly Sin

Pride

Traditional Opposing Virtue

Humility

Greed (Avarice) Generosity (Charity)

Lust

Chastity

Envy

Gluttony

Wrath

Sloth

Kindness (Brotherly Love)

Temperance

Patience

Diligence

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and the Thief

John 10:10

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 10:1–2

"The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep... the one who climbs in by another way is a thief and a robber."

The Meaning

In John 10, Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd, contrasting Himself with false shepherds who misuse and exploit God's people.

The thief represents those who seek to deceive, exploit, or harm the flock rather than protect it.

Jesus contrasts their destructive work with His own mission:

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The abundant life Jesus describes includes:

- Peace
- Reconciliation with God
- Spiritual security
- Hope
- Joy
- Eternal life

Biblical Languages

The Bible was originally written in three primary languages.

Old Testament

Mostly written in Hebrew

Some portions were written in Aramaic, including:

- Daniel 2:4–7:28
- Ezra 4:8–6:18
- Ezra 7:12–26
- Jeremiah 10:11

The Septuagint (LXX)

Around the 3rd–2nd centuries BC, Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Koine Greek, the common language of the eastern Mediterranean.

This translation became known as the Septuagint (LXX).

The Septuagint became the primary Old Testament used by many Greek-speaking Jews, and many Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament closely follow the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text.

New Testament

The entire New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek.

This includes:

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- Paul's Letters
- Hebrews
- James
- 1–2 Peter
- 1–3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

Although Jesus most likely spoke Aramaic in daily conversation and likely knew Hebrew for reading Scripture, and possibly some Greek, the Gospel writers composed the New Testament in Greek because it was the common language of the Roman world.

Why Was Greek Used?

Following the conquests of Alexander the Great during the fourth century BC, Greek became the international language of:

- Trade
- Government
- Education
- Literature

- Communication

Writing the New Testament in Koine Greek allowed the Christian message to spread throughout the Roman Empire.

Biblical Language Summary

Section

Most of the Old Testament

Parts of the Old Testament

Original Language

Hebrew

Aramaic

Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) Koine Greek

Entire New Testament

Koine Greek

Shalom and Eirēnē

Hebrew)Shalom(שָׁלוֹם

Meaning:

- Peace
- Wholeness
- Completeness
- Well-being
- Harmony
- Prosperity
- Safety
- Reconciliation
- Flourishing

Shalom refers to life being whole and rightly ordered according to God's design.

Greek

εἰρήνη (Eirēnē)

The Greek equivalent of Shalom is εἰρήνη (eirēnē).

Throughout the Septuagint and the New Testament, this word carries the rich biblical meaning of peace as reconciliation, spiritual well-being, and harmony with God.

Examples include:

- Peace with God
- Inner peace
- Spiritual wholeness
- Reconciliation
- Harmony among people

Jesus declared:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." (John 14:27)

Closing Reflection

The biblical message contrasts two opposing paths.

The thief seeks to steal, kill, and destroy.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, came to bring abundant life characterized by truth, peace, reconciliation, and spiritual flourishing.

Likewise, Christian tradition teaches that the Seven Deadly Sins distort the human heart, while their opposing virtues cultivate humility, charity, chastity, kindness, temperance, patience, and diligence.

These virtues guide believers toward the peace—Shalom (שָׁלוֹם) and Eirēnē (εἰρήνη)—that Scripture presents as the fullness of life with God.

Chapter 19 — Santa Values

Santa Values

- Freedom
- Truth
- Peace
- Faith
- History
- Science
- Heritage
- Spirit
- God and Goddess
- OZIRAH
- Compassion
- Justice
- Stewardship
- Protection
- Preservation
- Progress
- Resonance
- Anchoring
- Water
- Community
- Hospitality
- Service

Chapter 20 — The Santa Way

Santa Way

Band of Colors: Attack Culture

Many Biblical cultures offer a family friendly realm and atmosphere. They preserve many beautiful lessons that offer spiritual insight into family, community, wisdom, hospitality, forgiveness, peace, and our relationship with God. At the same time, oppression and suppression have existed throughout history, and society has often retaliated against those experiences, creating cycles that continue from one generation to the next.

Throughout history we see what happens when cultures become out of balance. We see attacks against the mother, attacks against the father, attacks against the family, and attacks against spirit itself. When these foundations begin to weaken, humanity slowly begins divorcing itself from spirit, replacing peace with conflict and harmony with division.

The Union of Saints recognizes that the attack upon the mother is also an attack upon the father. Likewise, an attack upon the father eventually becomes an attack upon the mother, because together they represent a complete foundation that allows families, communities, and civilizations to flourish. We believe humanity was never intended to separate these gifts from one another, but to recognize that each brings unique wisdom, protection, compassion, and guidance into the world.

When one side becomes elevated while the other is diminished, balance begins to disappear. As balance disappears, culture itself becomes unstable, and people naturally begin responding to oppression with suppression, retaliation, division, and conflict. History demonstrates this pattern repeatedly, reminding us that cycles of harm rarely resolve themselves without sincere reflection and a willingness to restore balance.

Many cultures throughout history have attempted to preserve family centered values while navigating the realities of war, politics, survival, and changing civilizations. Their stories reveal both beautiful examples of faith and difficult examples of suffering. We believe both deserve to be remembered, because together they help us understand the complete human story.

The Union of Saints does not believe history should be viewed through only one lens. We believe history is layered, and each generation has interpreted it

according to its own understanding, needs, politics, fears, and hopes. For this reason we seek to understand not only what was written, but also how stories have traveled across time and why they have sometimes changed.

We recognize that many traditions preserve remarkable wisdom while also reflecting the cultures in which they developed. This does not diminish their value. Instead, it invites us to study with humility, recognizing that humanity has always searched for truth while living within the realities of its own time.

Because of this, we believe every culture holds both beauty and burden. Every civilization has preserved lessons worth remembering, while also leaving behind examples of oppression, suppression, conflict, and imbalance that future generations may learn from. We feel that sincere learning requires us to acknowledge both without fear.

Our desire is not to condemn cultures that came before us, nor to place ourselves above them. Our desire is to understand them honestly, to recognize their strengths, to learn from their hardships, and to move forward the wisdom that continues to bring peace into the world.

We believe this approach allows history to become a great teacher instead of a battlefield of competing narratives. The Union of Saints believes that humanity naturally longs for peace, even while living in a world that often experiences violence, injustice, and suffering. We recognize that oppression often produces retaliation, and retaliation frequently creates another cycle of oppression.

Breaking that cycle requires more than political solutions. It requires a return to spirit, compassion, wisdom, and sincere devotion to peace. For this reason we continually seek balance. We seek balance between justice and mercy, strength and compassion, truth and understanding, protection and preservation, history and hope. We believe these virtues are strongest when they exist together, supporting one another instead of competing against one another.

Our foundation is not built upon choosing one side over another. Our foundation is built upon seeking harmony within ourselves, within our families, within our communities, and within spirit. This continual search for harmony becomes one of the first steps toward resonance, which is one of the central teachings of the Union of Saints.

Chapter 21 — Resonance

Resonance

Resonance

One of the great lessons of the Union of Saints is resonance. We believe resonance is the natural feeling of being aligned with our spirit, our heritage, our values, our community, and our relationship with God and Goddess. When these parts of ourselves begin working together instead of against one another, we naturally feel more peaceful, more spiritually nurtured, and more connected to the world around us.

The Union of Saints is an Interpath community. We welcome the lessons from our diverse heritage and cultures while remaining grounded within our own faith. We do not succumb to oppressive or suppressive cultural norms simply because they have become accepted, but instead reach higher toward spirit and deeper into our hearts and souls, trusting that there is always more to discover.

We know in our hearts that there is more to the story than has often been told. Through history, science, archaeology, language, and storytelling, we recognize that many stories have been developed, translated, rewritten, interpreted, and reformed over time. We understand that cultures naturally preserve their own perspectives, and we believe this invites us to continue seeking the whole truth with humility, curiosity, and sincere devotion.

We also recognize that throughout history, stories have often been influenced by the politics, activism, strategies, and cultural priorities of their own time. Every generation leaves its fingerprints upon history, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally. Because of this, we believe it is wise to continue studying, learning, and asking sincere questions while remaining anchored in spirit.

The Union of Saints seeks to look beyond the many layers that have accumulated throughout history. We seek to see through manipulation, through fear, through unnecessary division, and through anything that separates humanity from spirit. Our guiding stars are God and Goddess or as we refer to as Star OZIRAH, history, science, heritage, nature, compassion, and the continual search for truth.

We believe truth deserves careful stewardship. Truth is not something we fear, nor is it something we believe should be hidden for the comfort of culture. Instead, we believe truth should be approached with humility, sincere study, compassion, and an open heart that is willing to continue learning throughout life.

Although we hold our own belief systems, we give our highest regard to the virtue and mission of peace. Peace is woven throughout our faith and our culture because we believe peace allows people to grow, to heal, and to better hear the gentle voice of spirit. We recognize that peace is strengthened by truth, compassion, justice, and personal responsibility.

We recognize God in all people. We do not suppress this understanding simply because another person follows a different tradition or expresses their faith differently than we do. Instead, we choose to acknowledge the autonomy and dignity of every human being while remaining faithful to the values and traditions that define our own community.

The Union of Saints has also chosen to take a sincere and honest look at our own culture. We have reflected upon animal agriculture, war, violence, crime, environmental stewardship, verbal assault, emotional wounds, and the spiritual chains that humanity often passes on from one generation to another. We believe every culture benefits from honestly examining itself before seeking to understand others.

Through this reflection we came to recognize a beautiful lesson. We, too, are our own culture with our own cultural norms, traditions, customs, values, ceremonies, language, symbols, and ways of understanding spirit. We have our own resonance, and we believe this resonance grows stronger as we continue living in harmony with the values that define who we are.

Like every culture throughout history, we are unique in many ways. Our uniqueness is not something we seek to forcefully impose upon others, nor something we feel compelled to defend through conflict. Instead, it is something we seek to preserve with humility, gratitude, and faithful stewardship for future generations.

At the same time, we remain an open culture. We are loving and forgiving, and we do not cast people away simply because they hold different beliefs or values. We recognize that the world is colorful and full of wisdom that we may not always fully understand, yet those perspectives may still offer important insight into humanity, history, and spirit.

For this reason, resonance becomes one of the guiding principles of the Union of Saints. Resonance reminds us to remain anchored in our own faith while continuing to learn from the wisdom preserved throughout the world. It invites us to become more deeply connected to spirit without losing sight of compassion, peace, heritage, and the continual search for truth.

Chapter 22 — Father God's Gift to Mother Goddess

Father God's Gift to Mother Goddess

Our Gift to the Mother, A Symbol of Apology and Restoration

A Gift of Healing, Restoration, and Love

Recovering From Human Pain, Slavery, and Suppression, While Honoring
Her and Our Shared Heritage



Chapter 23 — Heritage Celebrations and Cultural Teachings

Heritage Celebrations and Cultural Teachings

The Heritage Birthday Cake

A Gluten-Free Vegan Celebration Cake

Inspired by Mi'kmaq, Acadian French, Basque, Greek, Egyptian, and American Traditions

A celebration of family, gratitude, heritage, and every God's child whose birthday reminds us that life is a gift.

Makes: One 9-inch, 3-layer cake (12–16 servings)

Heritage Flour Blend

Whisk together:

- 2 cups superfine white rice flour
- 1 cup certified gluten-free oat flour
- 1 cup finely ground almond flour
- ½ cup tapioca starch
- ½ cup potato starch
- 2 teaspoons xanthan gum

Set aside.

Cake Ingredients

Dry Ingredients

- 4 cups Heritage Flour Blend
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon fine celtic sea salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon cardamom

- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Wet Ingredients

- 1 cup (226 g) Melt Organic Butter Sticks or Earth Balance Vegan Butter, softened
- 1 cup organic cane sugar
- ¾ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons Madagascar vanilla bean paste
- 1 cup oat milk
- ½ cup full-fat coconut milk
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Zest of 1 orange
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

Heritage Blueberry Maple Filling

Mi'kmaq & Acadian Inspiration

Ingredients

- 2 cups wild blueberries
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon tapioca starch

Directions

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat.

Cook until thick and glossy, about 8–10 minutes.

Cool completely before assembling the cake.

Date & Fig Silk Filling

Ancient Egyptian Inspiration

Blend until perfectly smooth:

- 1 cup Medjool dates
- ½ cup dried figs
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange blossom water (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of cardamom

The finished texture should resemble a smooth fruit butter.

Maple Vanilla Cream Cheese Buttercream

Ingredients

- 16 ounces vegan cream cheese
- 1 cup Melt Organic Butter or Earth Balance Vegan Butter
- 4 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Pinch celtic sea salt

Beat until light, fluffy, and silky smooth.

Optional Heritage Decoration

- Fresh wild blueberries
- Fresh raspberries
- Pomegranate arils
- Toasted pecans
- Toasted sliced almonds
- Chopped pistachios
- Edible flowers
- Lemon zest curls
- Orange zest curls
- Fresh mint

Directions

Step 1

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

Grease and line three 9-inch cake pans.

Step 2

Whisk together all dry ingredients.

Set aside.

Step 3

In a large mixing bowl, cream together:

- Melt Organic Butter (or Earth Balance)
- Organic cane sugar

Beat for approximately 4 minutes until light and fluffy.

Step 4

Add

- maple syrup
- vanilla
- lemon zest
- orange zest

Mix until smooth.

Step 5

Combine

- oat milk
- coconut milk
- apple cider vinegar

Allow to sit for 5 minutes to create a vegan buttermilk.

Step 6

Alternate adding the dry ingredients and vegan buttermilk mixture to the butter mixture.

Mix only until combined.

Do not overmix.

Step 7

Divide evenly among the three prepared pans.

Bake for 30–35 minutes, or until the center springs back and a toothpick comes out clean.

Allow cakes to cool completely.

Assembly

Layer One

Cake

Blueberry Maple Filling

Thin layer of Buttercream

Layer Two

Cake

Date & Fig Silk Filling

Thin layer of Buttercream

Layer Three

Cake

Cover entire cake with Maple Vanilla Cream Cheese Buttercream.

Decorate

Arrange the toppings as a wreath around the top edge:

(Mi'kmaq) Wild blueberries

(Greek) Fine curls of lemon and orange zest

(Egyptian) Toasted pecans

(American) Dates, figs, and pomegranate arils

(Acadian French & Basque) A light maple glaze drizzled over toasted almonds

Finish with edible flowers, fresh mint, and birthday candles.

“Do you say pecan or pecahn?”



Heritage Ingredients

Each culture is represented by one signature ingredient.

Baker's Notes

- Bring all refrigerated ingredients to room temperature before mixing for the smoothest batter.
- Chill the assembled cake for at least 1 hour before serving so the fillings and frosting set beautifully.
- This cake tastes even better the next day as the maple, citrus, berries, and fruit fillings have time to meld.
- Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Let it sit at room temperature for about 20–30 minutes before serving for the best texture.

Beautiful Recipe ~ Let's try it.

The cake itself stays light and buttery, allowing the fillings to hold the distinct heritage flavors.

The blueberry-maple layer brings brightness and freshness, the date-and-fig layer adds warmth and richness, and the maple vanilla cream cheese buttercream ties everything together without overwhelming the palate. The toasted nuts, citrus zest, and fresh fruit create texture, color, and a visual celebration of the six traditions that inspired the cake. A nice balance between an elegant celebration cake and a recipe that could become a treasured family tradition.