

PART TWO of FOUR: Pagan Converts and the Power of God

This is the second lecture I gave at the Smithsonian on Feb. 10, 2018, based on my book [The Triumph of Christianity: How A Forbidden Religion Swept the World](#). The premise behind the lecture: as Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, it converted almost entirely pagans (after the first couple of decades). Who were these people, and what were they converting *from*? And why?

Paganism is not and was not really a “thing.” The term was designed (by Christians) simply to designate all the ancient religious practices that were not either Jewish or Christian — that is, it lumped together all kinds of religious practices, thousands of them, as some “thing” opposed to the faith in the Jewish god.

But is there anything all these religions spread throughout the Roman world had in common? And how did Christians approach people from these traditional religions, religions that each individual would have always assumed was simply right, involving rituals and ideas that had always been part of their heritage going back for many many centuries? What is it that Christians possibly say that would both connect with such people and show that the Christian way was better? It’s not as easy a question as one might think....

Here, in any event, is my talk about the pagans in the Roman empire Christians were trying to convert.

Please adjust gear icon for 1080p High-Definition:



[Why Did Christianity Take Over the World? Smithsonian Lecture 3.](#)
[Fund Raising Event on the Blog: Contradictions in the Gospels??](#)