



# **Cults in Roman and Greek Cultures.**

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# Cults in Roman and Greek Cultures.

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## Topics.

- Cults in Roman and Greek Cultures.
- Three Attractions to Cults.

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## FOUR THINGS CULTS HAVE IN COMMON

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Cults in Roman and Greek cultures had the following

1. They claimed to help others with their daily problems.
2. They were emotional and enthusiastic.
3. They promised immortality.
4. They taught and enabled their devotees to share with others their belief and their god.
5. They initiated their devotees into the ultimate riddles of the universe.

For the lower-class Jewish religions could be a lonely place because people's needs were often met with cold and clever dialect of the philosophers whereas the cults provided emotional and religious feelings for the people (especially the common people). Cults offered companionship and their devotees held common cult meals in their temples followed by dancing girls and wild parties. In many Roman and Greek cults woman took the most prominent part and were often the spiritual leaders.

The enthusiasm engendered by these cults was great they were led by professional priesthoods, which explained the meaning of the ritual to the initiates. They were entirely supported by the contributions of their devotees with no financial aid from the state and their priesthood was fully aware that people always value what they pay for. Their devotees had a strong sense of brotherhood and promised a proper burial.

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## THREE ATTRACTIONS TO CULTS

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Cults offered the following three attractions:

1. People in the Roman and Greek world had a sense and awareness of sin this is because Greek thought had deeply impressed upon the world the truth, that wrongdoing must be punished and because of this, cults promised freedom from guilt. One of the cult ways of cleaning a person from sin was to place the person under a steel grill that had been erected about one meter off the ground. On top of this grill a bull or ram was laid and the animals' throat was cut so that the blood would flow down through the steel grate and drench the sinner kneeling underneath in the animal's blood symbolizing both the cleansing and the energizing power of the animal. The sinner would emerge from under the grill crying out that he or she was born again for eternity.
2. People saw the world as a fearful place lead by evil emperors they believed nothing could deliver them from the jaws of unfeeling fate. This is where cults got their power from, they appealed to pride by offering power over fate, they offered a way of escaping from the chill of destiny.

People felt they were at the mercy of blind fate, but cults offered a day of deliverance for their devotees, they taught that their god was greater than fate which gave their devotees a sense of union with the delivering god or goddess. Following are four foundational teachings that underlie all mystery religions:

- 1 The promise of cleansing from sin.
- 2 The promise of freedom from guilt.
- 3 The promise of security and immortality.
- 4 The promise that being in union with the cult god would be guarantee security.

The major focus of these cults was that it was being in union with their cult god that security was found. No Christian has to be a Bible scholar to see that the four promises that underlie all mystery religions are the same four promises that underlie the Christian faith. This should not surprise anyone since if these promises were not the same deception would not be so subtle or so dangerous. Added to this we are all made of the same clay, we all have the same emotions the same needs physically and spiritually so whatever religion that is proclaimed will have to have these same core teachings and promises to have any form of appeal and any form of long-term global success.

**BUT:** though the four underlying promises maybe the same there is a vast difference between cult religions and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and that difference is the truth that Jesus Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world is the foundation of the Christian religion and that it is only through faith in him alone and God's grace that anyone can be united to the one true immortal, invisible, Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life.

The apostle Paul wrote:

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:10-13).

And Jesus said:

- This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).