

Monothelism

**A Basic Jewish Belief
that Went Against the
Flow of the Ancient
Near East**

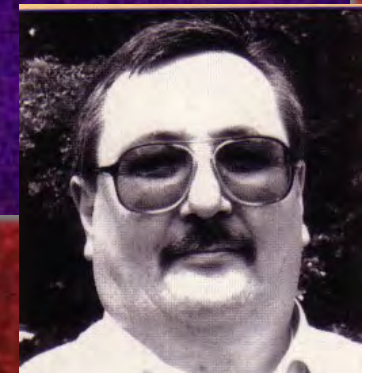
POLYTHEISM:

**What kind of impact
did the pagan high
gods have upon
Israel?**

Creation by One God Universal



"Indeed, in every major culture throughout the ancient world of which we have any record, the overwhelming consensus was that the universe had been created by often a single and usually supreme divine being (even in notoriously polytheistic cultures)."



Bill Cooper, *After the Flood* (Chichester, UK: New Wine Press, 1995), 18

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

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**Person who
is Limitless**

**Person who is
Supernatural**

For since the creation of the world,
God's invisible qualities—
his eternal power and divine nature—
have been clearly seen, being
understood from what has been made,
so that men are without excuse.

Knowledge of God is innate (before missions)

"Before time, and throughout time, there has been a self-existing being, eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent . . . Outside this being, before the beginning, there was nothing."

**Taoist
philosopher
Lao-Tzu of
China,
6th century BC**

He obviously didn't get this concept from Genesis as the Bible reached China centuries later!

Greek Monotheism

- "First of all the Void came into being . . . next Earth . . . Out of the Void came darkness . . . and out of the Night came Light and Day . . ."

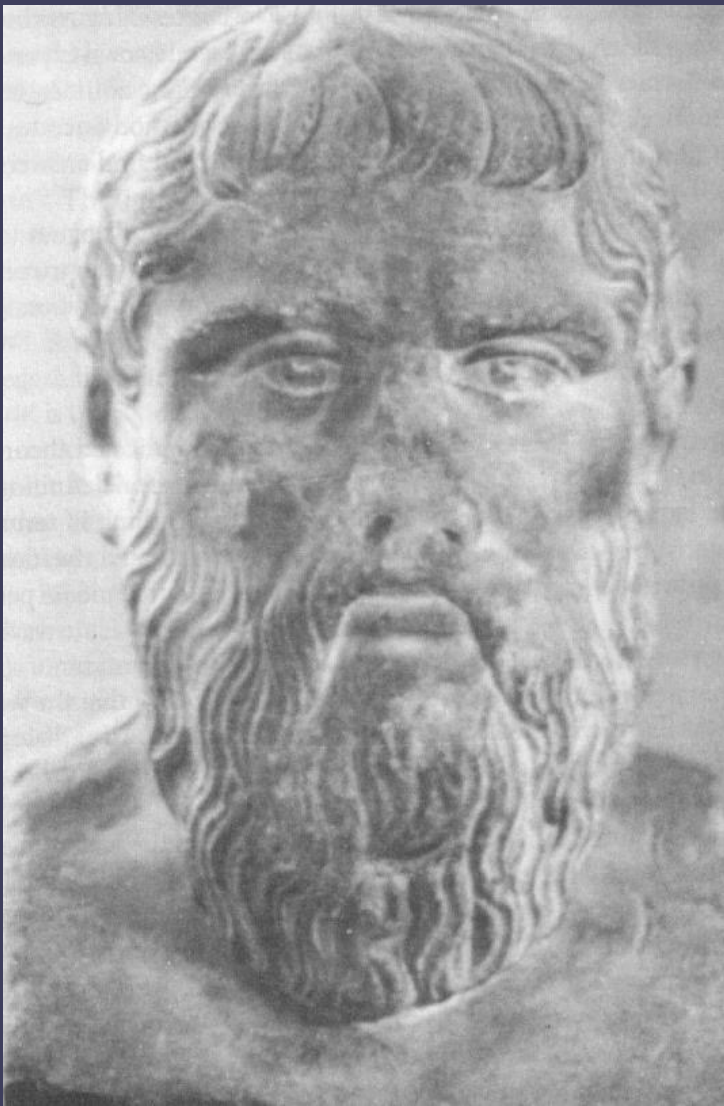
Hesiod (8th century BC)

A Step Higher...

"Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods all the things which among men are shameful and blameworthy—theft and adultery and mutual deception . . . [But] there is one God, greatest among gods and men, similar to mortals neither in shape nor in thought . . . he sees as a whole, he thinks as a whole, he hears as a whole . . . Always he remains in the same state, changing not at all . . . But far from toil he governs everything with his mind." —Xenophanes, 6th Century BC

Creation Was by a Good God

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Plato (429-380 BC)

"Let us therefore state the reason why the framer of this universe of change framed it at all. He was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; being therefore without envy, he wished all things to be as like himself as possible. This is as valid a principle for the origin of the world of change as we shall discover from the wisdom of men. . . ."

Atheism Exists Only for Fools

**"The fool says in his heart,
'There is no God.' They are
corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good"
(Psalm 14:1 NIV)**

The First Evolutionist Writer

- ✿ **Anaximander (ca. 610-540 BC) studied under Thales and provides the first *recorded* challenge to creationism.**
- ✿ **He probably was the first written evolutionist. Plutarch said Anaximander: "... originally, humans were born from animals of a different kind ..."**
- ✿ **His theory is so developed that he had probably built on others' teaching.**

Influential High Gods

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Religion	High God	Characteristics	Influence on Israel
Sumerian	Nannar (Sin)		Worshipped originally by Abraham (Josh 24:2)
Assyrian	Anu		None
Babylonian	Marduk	Marduk promoted to supreme god	Moderate (Jer 50:2)
Egyptian	Amon	Most polytheistic ANE people	None

Influential High Gods

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Religion	High God	Characteristics	Influence on Israel
Canaanite	Baal or El	Depraved practices	High
Sidonian	Ashtoreth		1 Kings 11:5, 33
Philistine	Dagon		None
Ammonite	Molech		1 Kings 11:5, 33
Moabite	Chemosh		1 Kings 11:5



Pagan Deities

- Nature
- Worship
- Priesthood
- High Places
- Detestable Elements

How Different They Are!

	Monotheism	Polytheism
Truth	Absolute	Relative
Writings	Book	Books
Idols	Prohibited	Accepted
Religions	Judaism Christianity Islam	Buddhism Hinduism Mormonism

One's View of God Affects His View of Sacrifices, Morality & Mission

Pagan

Israel

Horrible god

Holy God

Man seen as OK in comparison

Man seen as sinful

Seeks pleasure & material needs

Seeks spiritual needs

Sacrifices appease god
for sex, money

Sacrifices atone for sin to
reconcile God & man

Local god makes them rich

God forgives sin

Massacre others for wealth

Mission to others for their good

We become like the God we worship!

The Jewish Shema

***"Hear, O Israel:
The LORD our God,
the LORD is one"
(Deut. 6:4)***

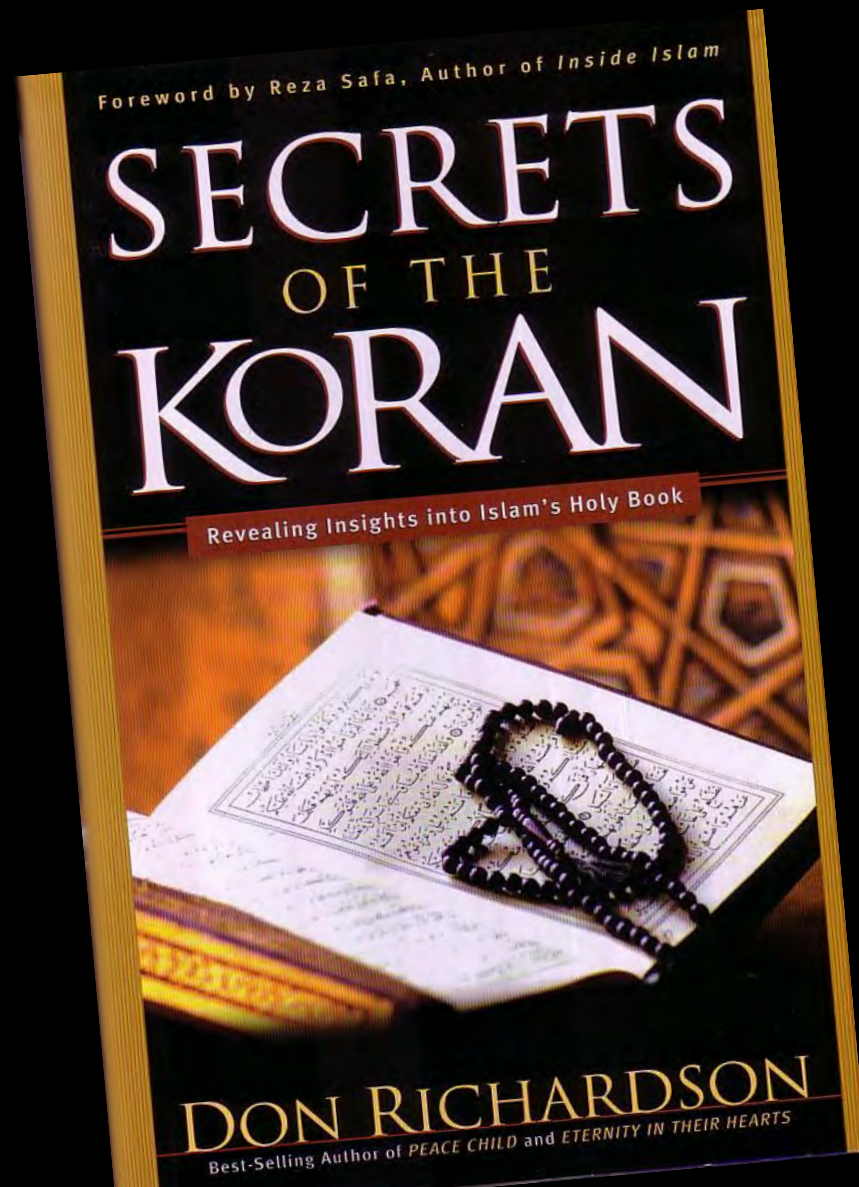
Islam's Daily Proclamation

***"I attest that there is no
God if not God Himself,
and I attest that
Muhammad is the
Messenger of God"***

A Summation of Christianity

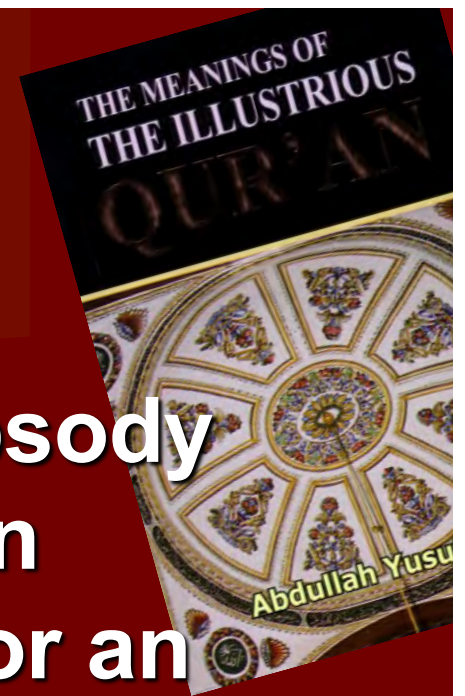
**“Now to the King eternal, immortal,
invisible, the only God, be honor and
glory for ever and ever. Amen.”
(1 Tim. 1:17 NIV)**

Let's contrast the Bible with writings sacred to other religions...



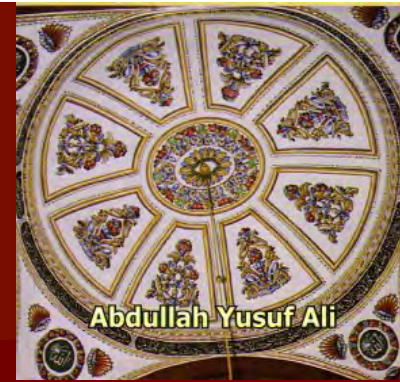
- This penetrating work in 2003 "tells it like it is" concerning the Koran and Islam

The Qur'an According to Edward Gibbon



"[The Qur'an is an] incoherent rhapsody of fable and precept and declaration which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust and is sometimes lost in the clouds. . . . The use of fraud and perfidy, of cruelty and injustice, were often subservient to the propagation of the faith, . . . Mohammed commanded or approved the assassination of Jews and idolaters, . . .

The Qur'an According to Edward Gibbon



"Mohammed indulged the appetites of a man and abused the claims of a prophet. A special revelation dispensed him from the laws which he had imposed upon his nation. The female sex, without reserve, was abandoned to his desires."

--Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 5 (cited in Richardson, *Secrets of the Koran*, 65-66)

**THE MEANINGS OF
THE ILLUSTRIOUS**

QUR'AN

How Qur'an begins

"In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You (alone) do we worship, and Your aid we seek.

Show us the straight way, The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray."

But Not All Monotheism is the Same...

Islamic

Non-Trinitarian

**No Relationship
within Himself**

**Attributes Stem
from His Will**

Essentially Arbitrary

**Can't Be Known or
Trusted**

Biblical

Trinitarian

**In Relationship
within Himself**

**Attributes Stem
from Holy Nature**

Inherently Consistent

**Can Be Both Known
and Trusted**

The Trinity



*As soon as **Jesus** was baptized,
he went up out of the water.*

*At that moment heaven was opened,
and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending
like a dove and lighting on him.*

*And **a voice from heaven** said,
"This is my **Son**, whom I love;
with him **I am well pleased.**"*

Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV)

*Therefore go and make disciples of
all nations, baptizing them in the*

name

of the

Father

and of the

Son

and of the

Holy Spirit

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

*There are different kinds of gifts,
but the same **Spirit**.*

*There are different kinds of service,
but the same **Lord**.*

*There are different kinds of working,
but the same **God**
works all of them in all men.*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NIV)

*May the grace
of the **Lord Jesus Christ**,
and the love
of **God**,
and the fellowship
of the **Holy Spirit**
be with you all.*



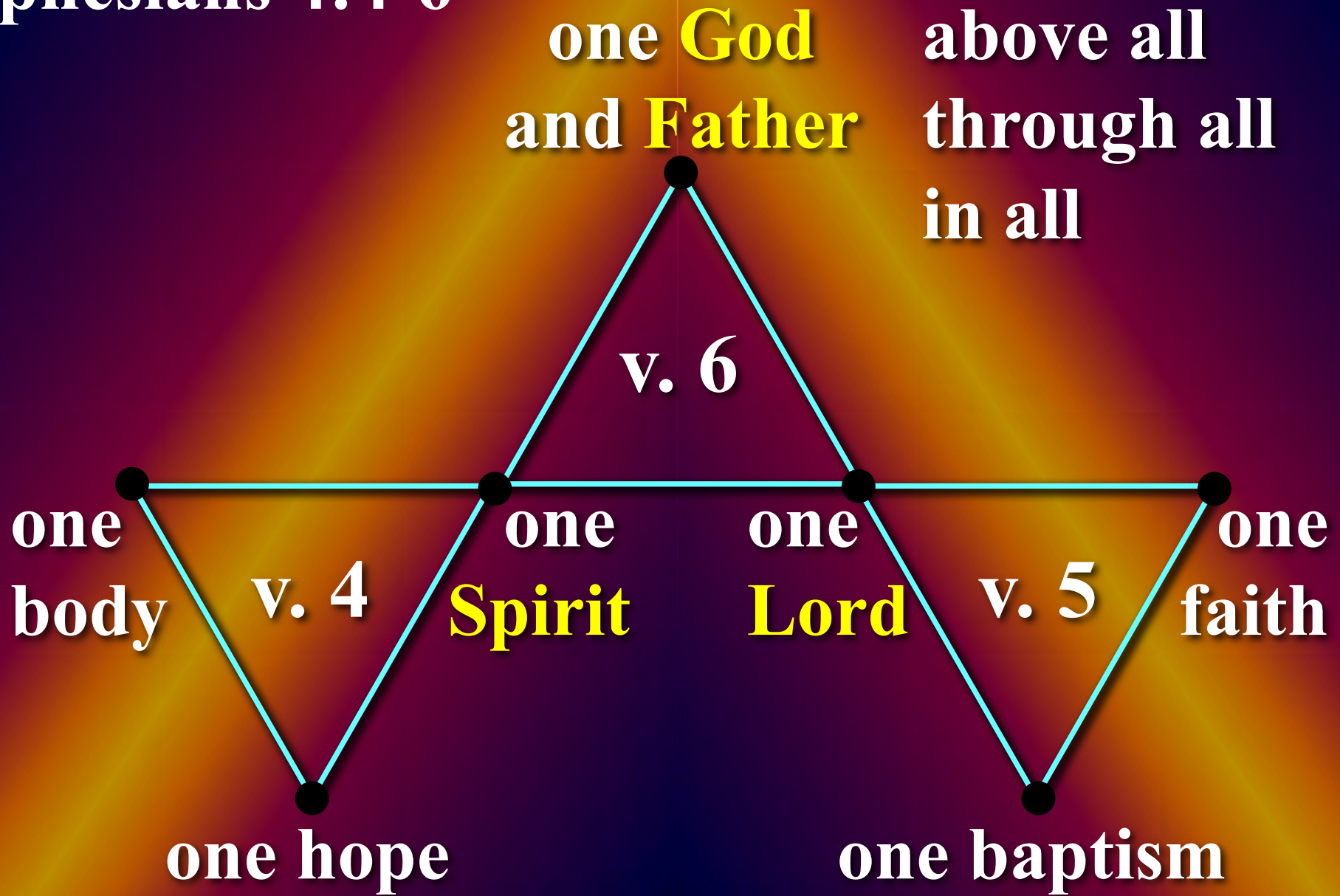
2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV)

*who have been chosen
according to the foreknowledge
of **God the Father**,
through the sanctifying work
of **the Spirit**,
for obedience
to **Jesus Christ**
and sprinkling by his blood*

1 Peter 1:2 (NIV)

*But you, dear friends,
build yourselves up
in your most holy faith
and pray in **the Holy Spirit**.
Keep yourselves in **God's love**
as you wait for the mercy
of **our Lord Jesus Christ**
to bring you to eternal life.*

Ephesians 4:4-6



The Trinity



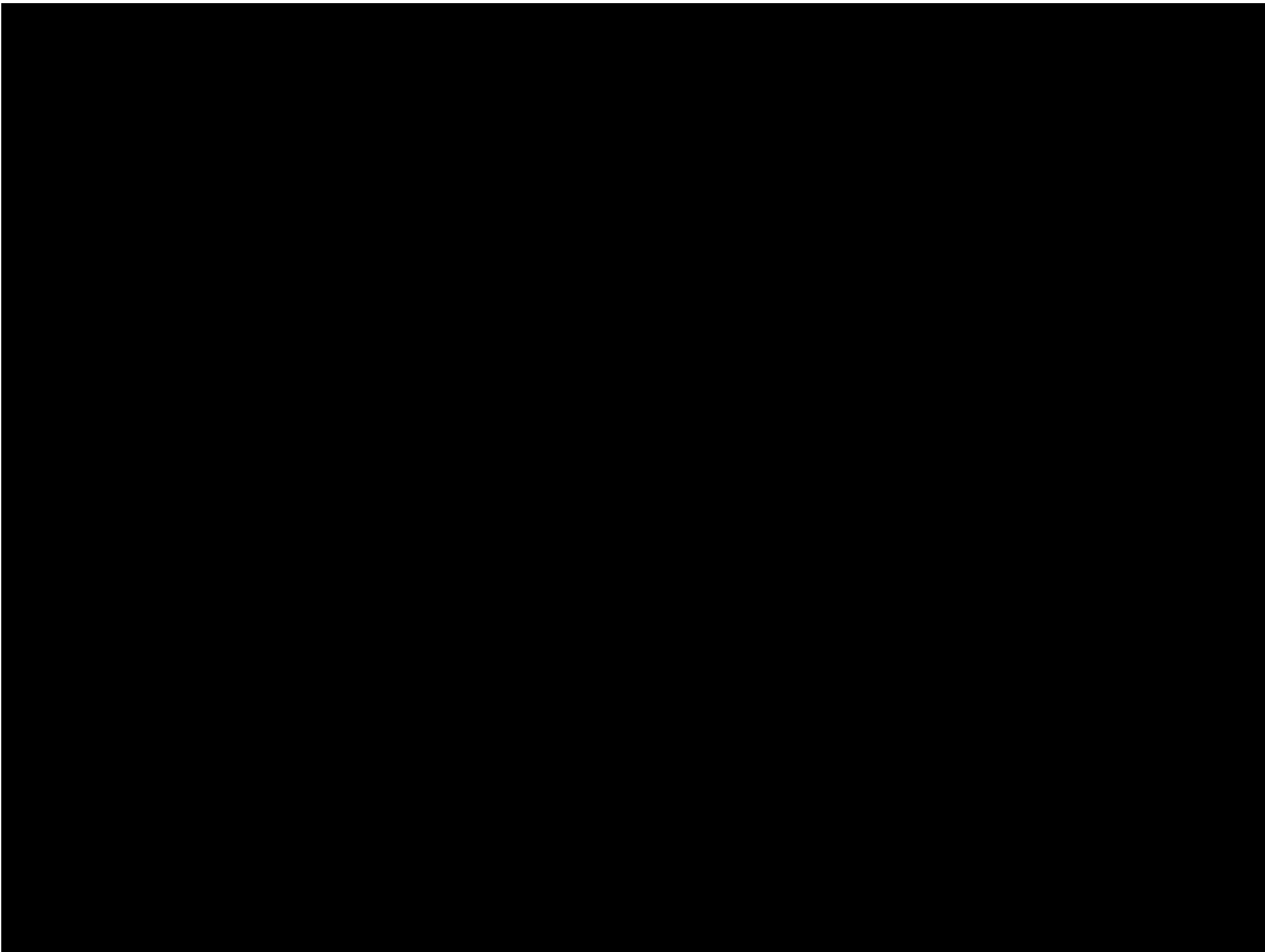


How should we apply Israel's uniqueness to the Church?

What principles regarding how Israel dealt with Ancient Near East pagan religions should the church today also follow in respect to other religions?



Principle for Israel	Modern Parallel



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