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**Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**  
by [Lucius Cauthorn](#) - Thursday, 1 October 2009, 06:49 PM

We all read the data saying they are peace lovers, and the data stating facts. I believe that there were some small groups or (villages) not affected by the larger Mayan culture that may have been good people. I think that the larger culture much like the Romans were consumed with death and violence.

So I say off my LIMITED knowledge that yes they were blood thirsty. One vote

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**  
by [Rachael Phillips](#) - Saturday, 3 October 2009, 10:00 PM

Based on your "vote" that the Mayans were "bloodthirsty", one could argue that the puritans who burned, drowned and tortured people, the English colonists who slauthered people by the thousands, the Americans who drop nuclear bombs on civilians,... were all bloodthirsty savages because they followed their ideologies condoned these practices. One could also argue the same for any religion that belives in martyrdom. Yes, evidence does imply that the Mayans, in their ancient past did make human sacrifices. The fact that the did makes them no better or worse, no more "bloodthirsty", than any other culture on the planet.

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**  
by [Lucius Cauthorn](#) - Sunday, 4 October 2009, 04:35 PM

Well, Actually all those things you mentioned were for a purpose, Such as defence of the innocent or ones country. Your not comparing apples to apples. The Mayans killed people for no other reason than to have some sort of sick offering to the "Gods". Religion that believes in Martyrdom...Umm...well, that is dieing for something you believe in, not murdering thousands of people. The Martyrs are not killing themselves, rather are the ones being killed. Big difference.

"Yes, evidence does imply that the Mayans, in their ancient past did make human sacrifices. The fact that the did makes them no better or worse, no more "bloodthirsty", than any other culture on the planet." -YOU

Human sacrifice does make them worse, and frankly if you don't believe that human sacrifice makes a person AND culture worse then you need help.

Cheers!

Luc Cauthorn

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**  
by [Andrew Godard](#) - Monday, 5 October 2009, 12:57 AM

The problem with attempting to judge a people who lived so long ago, is that you can only see them through your own modern perception. You have to realize that these people believed in their gods just as much, or probably more than anyone alive does in theirs. To them, their gods were a reality, not just an empty belief. They believed that the gods required sacrifices, and that if the gods were unhappy, their civilization could be destroyed. Since we do not share their beliefs, we cannot understand their reasons, and since we do not feel their hardships, we cannot understand their need. I

do not believe it is our place to judge good or bad of a people who were trying to survive. Yes, their methods were brutal, and beyond our comprehension, but how far would you go to keep your family safe? As far as I see it, that's what they were trying to do. They thought they could keep themselves and their families safe by sacrificing others to the gods.

Also, please try to keep in mind that every image we see, and every scrap of information we hear has passed through the influence of someone else, and however much accuracy we receive, we also receive the perceptions, beliefs, and interpretations of those who pass it on.

Rachael brought up some good points, and I do believe that she *IS* comparing apples to apples. There have been many atrocities performed in the name of religion, such as the Salem witch trials, the crusades, and many more. When the Puritans killed the supposed "witches," they were performing a form of human sacrifice, though they may not have called it that. They were killing people to satisfy certain religious purposes. That is a human sacrifice as far as I see it.

Well, I think that's about enough of that. As far as your "vote" goes, I do not believe they were anymore blood thirsty than any other civilization that has risen and fallen. They were just living the way they knew.

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [Rachael Phillips](#) - Monday, 5 October 2009, 03:39 PM

Thank you Andrew. The point that i was trying to make is that all the acts that I listed could and have been considered bloodthirsty and barbarous by outsiders. Same goes for the Mayan practice of human sacrifice. It may not make sence to us, just as bombing villages and burning woman may not make sence to some people, but it was what they believed in thousands of years ago. Also, if you bothered to read the articles that were handed out in class you would have learned that the Mayans did not just randomly sacrifice thousands of people on a whim. They exicuted criminals, enimes of war, nobles from their own tribes, and even volenteers. It was an honorable way to die. Again, if we're going to start calling ancient cultures bloodthirsty and barbaric we need to at least start in our own back yard. Crasus's (spelling?) cruxifixion of thousands of slaves on the Appian Way, St.Peter's slauther of Celtic pagans, the extermination of the First Nation peoples, the whiping out of entire villages in Vietnam... this is our history. Millions dead because of Judeo-Christian heritage. Does that make us bloodthirsty savages? Those who's slate is clean, start throwing stones.

*(Edited by [Joe Escobar](#) - original submission Monday, 5 October 2009, 02:55 PM)*

Rachel, there are many historical and factual problems with this last response. I know I stated that this forum was a place for students to talk, but I'd rather remove the forum entirely than to let gross historical inaccuracies and problems with logic and reasoning stand without begin addressed.

I hope my criticisms can be received in a constructive way, which is my purpose.

The Apocalypto articles in class were by no means exhaustive or thorough depictions of Mayan culture. As a matter of fact, some of them stated facts that conflicted with one another. (eg. the existence of mass graves)

You state that the Mayan execution of enemies of war was an honorable way to die, but would the condemned see it that way. Americans today certainly do not practice or condone that type of official treatment of prisoners of war.

More problems begin with the conclusion about millions dead due to Judeo-Christians heritage. The Roman General Crassus died in 53BC and could not have Christianity attributed to him. He was certainly not a Jew either. Crucifixion as a form of punishment certainly did pre-date Jesus and was used often by the Romans.

I would like to know your source for St. Peter's slaughter of Celtic pagans. I have never heard of it, and to my knowledge, cannot find evidence of it in the historical record.

Careful using the word extermination. That implies an absoluteness that although may be true in some cases (of specific tribes), is not true in many others, who persevered and remain with us to this day.

The inclusion of Vietnam is an example better (more accurately) left to anti-communistic and/or imperialistic motives, rather than Judeo-Christianity.

Finally, does that make "us" savages implies that all are either Judeo-Christian or even that you can legitimately serve as a spokesperson for that entire group.

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [David Verner](#) - Saturday, 10 October 2009, 04:36 PM

Luc, you cannot say that human sacrifice makes the Mayans worse than other cultures. You say it was for no purpose, but they would have believed at the time it was for a great, great purpose! The reason they were doing it was to please some form of a higher being, and they believe in it very seriously, that if they did not please them they would be punished. Now, does this make them worse than a country plundering another for their own gain? I am not saying any is worse than the next, but trying to point out that each culture had a reason for doing something. I think human sacrifice is a disgusting piece of human history, but at the time it was either that or die from a vengeful god as the Mayans saw it. So this could be said as personal defense even? Just try to see it how they may have seen it.

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [Rachael Phillips](#) - Sunday, 11 October 2009, 10:17 PM

Exactly. Saying the Mayans were bloodthirsty is a gross historical inaccuracy and saying so opens the gate for others. When I say Judeo-Christian I am referring to culture and not necessarily religion. Western society is based in Judeo-Christian philosophy. Western ideas on time, gender, morality... they all hold Cristian roots even though many westerners are not christian. Roman and Greek philosophy also weaves into western culture, so I felt that the history was appropriate to mention as part of our background. I meant St.Patrick, not St.Peter.

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [Taylor Sanders](#) - Tuesday, 13 October 2009, 11:43 AM

*yes they did for religious perposes and from what i read and heard about them they got a little carried away with how they did their religion after a while.*

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [Lucius Cauthorn](#) - Wednesday, 14 October 2009, 08:31 PM

Well, actually Human sacrifice is quite a bit different than war or other such things. Human sacrifice is murder in front of an audience that finds pleasure in it. I don't know how you could say that this is comparable to other cultures. Yeah the Romans had the coliseums, but even that is not to the extent of the Mayans mass graves and skull buildings. Hmmm....

OK, let's say I believe that the gods will be angry with me if I don't kill 100 people and bury them under my house by tuesday. Does that make me any less sick. Not really, no. It makes me confused and sick. The Mayans were confused and Bloodthirsty. I'll settle for that. But this discussion intentionally wasn't made to discuss morals.

So were the Mayans Blood thirsty?

I think we all agree they were indeed blood thirsty, eh?

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**Re: Poll: Did the Mayans sacrifice humans?**

by [Rachael Phillips](#) - Thursday, 15 October 2009, 01:34 AM

By saying that the Mayans were bloodthirsty you are making a moral judgement and therefore inviting moral discussion. And no, we can't all agree that the Mayans were bloodthirsty because I and two of the three other people who have responded to this forum do not.

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