

a history of god

A History of God: Tracing the Evolution of Religious Belief

Author: Karen Armstrong, a renowned scholar of comparative religion and a former Roman Catholic nun, brings unparalleled expertise to A History of God. Her extensive knowledge of various religious traditions, spanning Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, provides a nuanced and informed perspective. Armstrong's background ensures a deep understanding of the theological intricacies and historical context crucial for analyzing the evolution of the concept of God.

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf, a prominent publishing house known for its high-quality non-fiction works, particularly in the realms of history and religious studies, published A History of God. Their reputation for rigorous editorial processes and commitment to scholarly accuracy lends significant credibility to Armstrong's work.

Editor: While specific editor information for A History of God isn't readily available publicly, it's safe to assume the book underwent extensive editorial review given Knopf's standards. A skilled editor with expertise in religious studies and history would have been crucial in shaping the narrative and ensuring factual accuracy within a history of god.

The Axial Age and the Emergence of Monotheism (700-300 BCE): A Foundation for "A History of God"

Karen Armstrong's A History of God begins by exploring the Axial Age (8th to 3rd century BCE), a period marked by the emergence of seminal religious and philosophical thinkers across diverse civilizations. This period laid the groundwork for the monotheistic traditions that would later dominate Western thought. Armstrong argues that figures like Zoroaster, the Buddha, Confucius, and the Hebrew prophets, despite their geographical and cultural differences, shared a common concern: a profound yearning for spiritual transformation and a deeper understanding of the cosmos. This period saw the shift from polytheistic, ancestor-based worship towards more abstract and ethical conceptions of the divine. This pivotal shift forms the bedrock of a history of god, highlighting the gradual evolution of religious beliefs and practices, far from a sudden revelation. Research into the textual and archaeological evidence from this era consistently supports Armstrong's thesis on the parallel development of sophisticated ethical and religious systems.

Judaism: The Genesis of Monotheism and Its

Impact on "A History of God"

Armstrong dedicates a significant portion of a history of god to exploring the development of monotheism within Judaism. She traces the evolution of the concept of God from the early anthropomorphic depictions in the Hebrew Bible to the more abstract and transcendent understanding that emerged later. The shift from a God who actively intervenes in the world to a God who is both immanent and transcendent is a key theme. This transition wasn't linear; Armstrong highlights internal debates and tensions within Judaism regarding God's nature and attributes, enriching the narrative of a history of god. Scholarly research on ancient Hebrew texts and the socio-political context of their creation strongly supports Armstrong's interpretation of this complex theological evolution. The development of Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah) further contributes to the nuanced portrayal of God's nature in a history of god.

Christianity: Expanding the Concept of God in "A History of God"

Armstrong analyzes the emergence and development of Christianity, examining how the Jewish concept of God was adapted and transformed within the new faith. The concept of the Trinity—God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—presents a unique theological challenge, and Armstrong expertly navigates the historical and theological complexities. The emphasis on Jesus Christ as both divine and human profoundly altered the understanding of God's relationship with humanity. This section of a history of god draws upon extensive historical and theological research, analyzing the impact of early church councils, the writings of church fathers, and the evolution of Christian doctrines. The examination of the evolving relationship between the human and the divine showcases the dynamic nature of a history of god.

Islam: A New Monotheistic Paradigm in "A History of God"

In a history of god, Armstrong explores Islam's emergence within the context of the existing monotheistic traditions. She emphasizes the strong connection between Islam and Judaism and Christianity, particularly in its emphasis on a single, all-powerful God (Allah). However, she also highlights the unique features of Islamic theology, including the concept of prophecy and the importance of the Quran. The analysis includes examining the historical context of Muhammad's life and the expansion of Islam across the Middle East and beyond. Research on early Islamic texts and the historical development of Islamic theology supports Armstrong's portrayal of Islam's contributions to the ongoing narrative of a history of god.

The Challenges to Traditional Concepts of God: Modernity and Beyond in "A History of God"

The final sections of a history of god delve into the challenges posed to traditional conceptions of God by modern science, philosophy, and social changes. Armstrong explores the impact of Enlightenment thought, the rise of secularism, and the impact of globalization on religious belief. She doesn't offer a definitive conclusion but rather presents a thoughtful consideration of the evolving nature of spirituality in a rapidly changing world. This section utilizes extensive sociological and philosophical research to demonstrate how the understanding of a history of god continues to evolve, reflecting broader societal shifts.

Summary of A History of God

Karen Armstrong's *A History of God* offers a comprehensive and insightful exploration of the evolution of religious belief. It traces the development of monotheism from its roots in the Axial Age through its expressions in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The book emphasizes the dynamic and often contested nature of religious belief, highlighting internal debates and conflicts within each tradition. Armstrong concludes that the concept of God is not static but rather a continuously evolving entity, shaped by historical, cultural, and philosophical forces. The book challenges readers to consider the ongoing evolution of spirituality in a constantly changing world, enriching our understanding of a history of god.

Conclusion

A History of God stands as a seminal work in religious studies, offering a nuanced and deeply researched account of the evolution of religious belief. Karen Armstrong's scholarly expertise and engaging writing style make this book accessible to a wide audience, while still maintaining a rigorous academic standard. The book encourages readers to engage critically with the history of religious thought and to appreciate the complexities inherent in the concept of God. By understanding the historical evolution of religious beliefs, we gain a more profound understanding of the contemporary religious landscape and its impact on human civilization.

FAQs

1. What is the central argument of *A History of God*? The central argument is that the concept of God has undergone significant evolution throughout history, shaped by various cultural, historical, and philosophical forces. It's not a static entity, but rather a continuously developing idea.
1. What are the major religious traditions covered in the book? The book primarily focuses on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, tracing the development of monotheism within these traditions.

1. How does Armstrong approach the subject of religious differences? Armstrong emphasizes the interconnectedness of these faiths, highlighting both commonalities and divergences in their understanding of God. She avoids a judgmental approach, focusing instead on understanding the historical development of beliefs.

1. What is the role of the Axial Age in Armstrong's narrative? The Axial Age is presented as a crucial period in the development of more sophisticated religious and philosophical thinking, laying the foundation for the emergence of monotheism.

1. How does A History of God address the challenges to traditional beliefs in the modern era? The book acknowledges the impact of science, secularism, and globalization on religious belief but refrains from providing a definitive answer to the challenges posed to traditional concepts of God.

1. What is Armstrong's personal perspective on the nature of God? Armstrong maintains a scholarly distance, presenting various perspectives without imposing her own beliefs. The book avoids offering a conclusive answer on the nature of God.

1. Is the book suitable for non-academic readers? Yes, while grounded in academic research, Armstrong's clear writing style makes the book accessible to a wide audience.

1. What are some of the criticisms of A History of God? Some critics have questioned the scope of the book, arguing that it doesn't fully address certain aspects of religious history. Others have debated specific interpretations.

1. What makes A History of God a significant contribution to religious studies? Its comprehensive approach, rigorous research, and clear writing style have made it a widely read and influential work in the field of comparative religion.

Related Articles:

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concept of mysticism in various religious traditions, focusing on the shared experiences and practices of mystics across different faiths.

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a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1994-08-09 Why does God exist? How have the three dominant monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—shaped and altered the conception of God? How have these religions influenced each other? In this stunningly intelligent book, Karen Armstrong, one of Britain's foremost commentators on religious affairs, traces the history of how men and women have perceived and experienced God, from the time of Abraham to the present. The epic story begins with the Jews' gradual transformation of pagan idol worship in Babylon into true monotheism—a concept previously unknown in the world. Christianity and Islam both rose on the foundation of this revolutionary idea, but these religions refashioned 'the One God' to suit the social and political needs of their followers. From classical philosophy and medieval mysticism to the Reformation, Karen Armstrong performs the near miracle of distilling the intellectual history of monotheism into one superbly readable volume, destined to take its place as a classic. Praise for History of God "An admirable and impressive work of synthesis that will give insight and satisfaction to thousands of lay readers."—The Washington Post Book World "A brilliantly lucid, spendidly readable book. [Karen] Armstrong has a dazzling ability: she can take a long and complex subject and reduce it to the fundamentals, without oversimplifying."—The Sunday Times (London) "Absorbing . . . A lode of learning."—Time "The most fascinating and learned study of the biggest wild goose chase in history—the quest for God. Karen Armstrong is a genius."—A.N. Wilson, author of Jesus: A Life

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 2004 A study of the deity of the world's three dominant monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In a dynamic interplay between religion and society's ever-changing beliefs, values, and traditions, human beings' ideas about God have been transformed. Ideas about God have been molded to apply to the spiritual needs of the people who worship him in a particular place and time. The author explores and analyzes the development and progression of the various perceptions of God from the days of Abraham to present times--Adapted from book jacket.

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1994 Explores the ways in which the idea and experience of God evolved among monotheists--Jews, Christians and Muslims.

a history of god: God Reza Aslan, 2017-11-07 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • The author of Zealot explores humanity's quest to make sense of the divine in this concise and fascinating history of our understanding of God. In Zealot, Reza Aslan replaced the staid, well-worn portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth with a startling new image of the man in all his contradictions. In his new book, Aslan takes on a subject even more immense: God, writ large. In layered prose and with thoughtful, accessible scholarship, Aslan narrates the history of religion as a remarkably cohesive attempt to understand the divine by giving it human traits and emotions. According to Aslan, this innate desire to humanize God is hardwired in our brains, making it a central feature of nearly every religious tradition. As Aslan writes, "Whether we are aware of it or not, and regardless of whether we're believers or not, what the vast majority of us think about when we think about God is a divine version of ourselves." But this projection is not without consequences. We bestow upon God not just

all that is good in human nature—our compassion, our thirst for justice—but all that is bad in it: our greed, our bigotry, our penchant for violence. All these qualities inform our religions, cultures, and governments. More than just a history of our understanding of God, this book is an attempt to get to the root of this humanizing impulse in order to develop a more universal spirituality. Whether you believe in one God, many gods, or no god at all, *God: A Human History* will challenge the way you think about the divine and its role in our everyday lives. Praise for *God* “Timely, riveting, enlightening and necessary.”—HuffPost “Tantalizing . . . Driven by [Reza] Aslan’s grace and curiosity, *God* . . . helps us pan out from our troubled times, while asking us to consider a more expansive view of the divine in contemporary life.”—The Seattle Times “A fascinating exploration of the interaction of our humanity and God.”—Pittsburgh Post-Gazette “[Aslan’s] slim, yet ambitious book [is] the story of how humans have created God with a capital G, and it’s thoroughly mind-blowing.”—Los Angeles Review of Books “Aslan is a born storyteller, and there is much to enjoy in this intelligent survey.”—San Francisco Chronicle

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1993 We look first at the gradual move away from the pagan gods to the full-fledged monotheism of the Jews during the exile in Babylon. Next considered is the development of parallel, yet different, perceptions and beliefs among Christians and Muslims.

a history of god: *The Case for God* Karen Armstrong, 2009-09-22 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • A nuanced exploration of the role of religion in our lives, drawing on insights of the past to build a faith for our dangerously polarized age—from the New York Times bestselling author of *The History of God* Moving from the Paleolithic age to the present, Karen Armstrong details the great lengths to which humankind has gone in order to experience a sacred reality that it called by many names, such as God, Brahman, Nirvana, Allah, or Dao. Focusing especially on Christianity but including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Chinese spiritualities, Armstrong examines the diminished impulse toward religion in our own time, when a significant number of people either want nothing to do with God or question the efficacy of faith. Why has God become unbelievable? Why is it that atheists and theists alike now think and speak about God in a way that veers so profoundly from the thinking of our ancestors? Answering these questions with the same depth of knowledge and profound insight that have marked all her acclaimed books, Armstrong makes clear how the changing face of the world has necessarily changed the importance of religion at both the societal and the individual level. Yet she cautions us that religion was never supposed to provide answers that lie within the competence of human reason; that, she says, is the role of logos. The task of religion is “to help us live creatively, peacefully, and even joyously with realities for which there are no easy explanations.” She emphasizes, too, that religion will not work automatically. It is, she says, a practical discipline: its insights are derived not from abstract speculation but from “dedicated intellectual endeavor” and a “compassionate lifestyle that enables us to break out of the prism of selfhood.”

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1999 In this extensive and original account of the evolution of belief, Karen Armstrong examines Western society's unerring fidelity to the idea of One God and the many conflicting convictions it engenders.

a history of god: God John Bowker, 2002 A history of religion explores the ways in which various cultures and civilizations have viewed God, religion, and spirituality through the ages.

a history of god: *A History of God* Karen Armstrong, As soon as they became recognizably human, men and women--in their hunger to understand their own presence on earth and the mysteries within and around them--began to worship gods. Karen Armstrong's masterly and illuminating book explores the ways in which the idea and experience of God evolved among the monotheists--Jews, Christians and Muslims. Weaving a multicolored fabric of historical, philosophical, intellectual and social developments and insights, Armstrong shows how, at various times through the centuries, each of the monotheistic religions has held a subtly different concept of God. At the same time she draws our attention to the basic and profound similarities among them, making it clear that in all of them God has been and is experienced intensely, passionately and

often--especially in the West--traumatically. Some monotheists have seen darkness, desolation and terror, where others have seen light and transfiguration; the reasons for these inherent differences are examined, and the people behind them are brought to life. We look first at the gradual move away from the pagan gods to the full-fledged monotheism of the Jews during the exile in Babylon. Next considered is the development of parallel, yet different, perceptions and beliefs among Christians and Muslims. The book then moves generationally through time to examine the God of the philosophers and mystics in all three traditions, the God of the Reformation, the God of the Enlightenment and finally the nineteenth- and twentieth-century challenges of skeptics and atheists, as well as the fiercely reductive faith of the fundamentalists of our own day. Armstrong suggests that any particular idea of God must--if it is to survive--work for the people who develop it, and that ideas of God change when they cease to be effective. She argues that the concept of a personal God who behaves like a larger version of ourselves was suited to mankind at a certain stage but no longer works for an increasing number of people. Understanding the ever-changing ideas of God in the past and their relevance and usefulness in their time, she says, is a way to begin the search for a new concept for the twenty-first century. Her book shows that such a development is virtually inevitable, in spite of the despair of our increasingly Godless world, because it is a natural aspect of our humanity to seek a symbol for the ineffable reality that is universally perceived.--Publisher's description.

a history of god: A History of the Bible John Barton, 2020-08-04 A literary history of our most influential book of all time, by an Oxford scholar and Anglican priest In our culture, the Bible is monolithic: It is a collection of books that has been unchanged and unchallenged since the earliest days of the Christian church. The idea of the Bible as Holy Scripture, a non-negotiable authority straight from God, has prevailed in Western society for some time. And while it provides a firm foundation for centuries of Christian teaching, it denies the depth, variety, and richness of this fascinating text. In *A History of the Bible*, John Barton argues that the Bible is not a prescription to a complete, fixed religious system, but rather a product of a long and intriguing process, which has inspired Judaism and Christianity, but still does not describe the whole of either religion. Barton shows how the Bible is indeed an important source of religious insight for Jews and Christians alike, yet argues that it must be read in its historical context--from its beginnings in myth and folklore to its many interpretations throughout the centuries. It is a book full of narratives, laws, proverbs, prophecies, poems, and letters, each with their own character and origin stories. Barton explains how and by whom these disparate pieces were written, how they were canonized (and which ones weren't), and how they were assembled, disseminated, and interpreted around the world--and, importantly, to what effect. Ultimately, *A History of the Bible* argues that a thorough understanding of the history and context of its writing encourages religious communities to move away from the Bible's literal wording--which is impossible to determine--and focus instead on the broader meanings of scripture.

a history of god: A History of the Concept of God Daniel A. Dombrowski, 2016-01-01 A history of the concept of God through the lens of process thought.

a history of god: The Battle for God Karen Armstrong, 2001 One of the most potent forces bedeviling the modern world is religious fundamentalism. Armstrong explains how and why fundamentalists' understanding of religion and society differs so starkly from that of their contemporaries.

a history of god: Fields of Blood Karen Armstrong, 2014-10-28 A sweeping exploration of religion and the history of human violence—from the New York Times bestselling author of *The History of God* • “Elegant and powerful.... Both erudite and accurate, dazzling in its breadth of knowledge and historical detail.” —The Washington Post In these times of rising geopolitical chaos, the need for mutual understanding between cultures has never been more urgent. Religious differences are seen as fuel for violence and warfare. In these pages, one of our greatest writers on religion, Karen Armstrong, amasses a sweeping history of humankind to explore the perceived connection between war and the world's great creeds—and to issue a passionate defense of the

peaceful nature of faith. With unprecedented scope, Armstrong looks at the whole history of each tradition—not only Christianity and Islam, but also Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Judaism. Religions, in their earliest days, endowed every aspect of life with meaning, and warfare became bound up with observances of the sacred. Modernity has ushered in an epoch of spectacular violence, although, as Armstrong shows, little of it can be ascribed directly to religion. Nevertheless, she shows us how and in what measure religions came to absorb modern belligerence—and what hope there might be for peace among believers of different faiths in our time.

a history of god: People of God Anthony E. Gilles, 2000 The history of Catholicism is the history of Christian faith. Anthony E. Gilles traces its development—from its beginnings in hushed gatherings within the Roman Empire to its current size and influence—in an accessible and enjoyable style. A revised and updated compilation of the history volumes from his best-selling People of God series, this book will help you understand how the Church developed in relation to, or in rebellion against, the larger culture. It details centuries of crucial turning points from the development of apostolic succession to the implementation of the reforms of Vatican II. Complete with maps, timelines and special focus sections on important events and issues, this valuable resource belongs in the collection of every student of Church history.

a history of god: The Great Transformation Karen Armstrong, 2009-02-24 From one of the world's leading writers on religion and the highly acclaimed author of the bestselling *A History of God*, *The Battle for God* and *The Spiral Staircase*, comes a major new work: a chronicle of one of the most important intellectual revolutions in world history and its relevance to our own time. In one astonishing, short period – the ninth century BCE – the peoples of four distinct regions of the civilized world created the religious and philosophical traditions that have continued to nourish humanity into the present day: Confucianism and Daoism in China; Hinduism and Buddhism in India; monotheism in Israel; and philosophical rationalism in Greece. Historians call this the Axial Age because of its central importance to humanity's spiritual development. Now, Karen Armstrong traces the rise and development of this transformative moment in history, examining the brilliant contributions to these traditions made by such figures as the Buddha, Socrates, Confucius and Ezekiel. Armstrong makes clear that despite some differences of emphasis, there was remarkable consensus among these religions and philosophies: each insisted on the primacy of compassion over hatred and violence. She illuminates what this “family” resemblance reveals about the religious impulse and quest of humankind. And she goes beyond spiritual archaeology, delving into the ways in which these Axial Age beliefs can present an instructive and thought-provoking challenge to the ways we think about and practice religion today. A revelation of humankind's early shared imperatives, yearnings and inspired solutions – as salutary as it is fascinating. Excerpt from *The Great Transformation*: In our global world, we can no longer afford a parochial or exclusive vision. We must learn to live and behave as though people in remote parts of the globe were as important as ourselves. The sages of the Axial Age did not create their compassionate ethic in idyllic circumstances. Each tradition developed in societies like our own that were torn apart by violence and warfare as never before; indeed, the first catalyst of religious change was usually a visceral rejection of the aggression that the sages witnessed all around them. . . . All the great traditions that were created at this time are in agreement about the supreme importance of charity and benevolence, and this tells us something important about our humanity.

a history of god: A Short History of Myth (Myths series) Karen Armstrong, 2010-10-29 What are myths? How have they evolved? And why do we still so desperately need them? A history of myth is a history of humanity, Karen Armstrong argues in this insightful and eloquent book: our stories and beliefs, our curiosity and attempts to understand the world, link us to our ancestors and each other. This is a brilliant and thought-provoking introduction to myth in the broadest sense—from Palaeolithic times to the “Great Western Transformation” of the last 500 years—and why we dismiss it only at our peril.

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1993-09-30

a history of god: The Battle for God Karen Armstrong, 2001-01-30 In the late twentieth

century, fundamentalism has emerged as one of the most powerful forces at work in the world, contesting the dominance of modern secular values and threatening peace and harmony around the globe. Yet it remains incomprehensible to a large number of people. In *The Battle for God*, Karen Armstrong brilliantly and sympathetically shows us how and why fundamentalist groups came into existence and what they yearn to accomplish. We see the West in the sixteenth century beginning to create an entirely new kind of civilization, which brought in its wake change in every aspect of life -- often painful and violent, even if liberating. Armstrong argues that one of the things that changed most was religion. People could no longer think about or experience the divine in the same way; they had to develop new forms of faith to fit their new circumstances. Armstrong characterizes fundamentalism as one of these new ways of being religious that have emerged in every major faith tradition. Focusing on Protestant fundamentalism in the United States, Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, and Muslim fundamentalism in Egypt and Iran, she examines the ways in which these movements, while not monolithic, have each sprung from a dread of modernity -- often in response to assault (sometimes unwitting, sometimes intentional) by the mainstream society. Armstrong sees fundamentalist groups as complex, innovative, and modern -- rather than as throwbacks to the past -- but contends that they have failed in religious terms. Maintaining that fundamentalism often exists in symbiotic relationship with an aggressive modernity, each impelling the other on to greater excess, she suggests compassion as a way to defuse what is now an intensifying conflict. **BONUS:** This edition contains an excerpt from Karen Armstrong's *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.

a history of god: The Two Cities: A History of Christian Politics Andrew Willard Jones, 2021-06-24 The prevailing narrative of human history, given to us as children and reinforced constantly through our culture, is the plot of progress. As the narrative goes, we progressed from tyranny to freedom, from superstition to science, from poverty to wealth, from darkness to enlightenment. This is modernity's origin myth. Out of it, a consensus has emerged: part of human progress is the overcoming of religion, in particular Christianity, and that the world itself is fundamentally secular. In *The Two Cities: A History of Christian Politics*, Andrew Willard Jones rewrites the political history of the West with a new plot, a plot in which Christianity is true, in which human history is Church history. *The Two Cities* moves through the rise and fall of empires; cycles of corruption and reform; the rise and fall of Christendom; the emergence of new political forms, such as the modern state, and new political ideologies, such as liberalism and socialism; through the horrible destruction of modern warfare; and on to the plight of contemporary Christians. These movements of history are all considered in light of their orientation toward or away from God. *The Two Cities* advances a theory of Christian politics that is both an explanation of secular politics and a proposal for Christians seeking to navigate today's most urgent political questions.

a history of god: God Has Spoken Gerald Bray, 2014-10-31 Christian theology didn't develop in a vacuum. Understanding the story behind the doctrines that have been debated, defined, and defended throughout history is crucial for truly understanding the doctrines themselves. In this groundbreaking resource, professor Gerald Bray traces the history of Christian theology from the early church to the modern era. Structured to parallel the order in which orthodoxy gradually matured in response to challenges from both within and without the church, this volume tells the story of how Christians have struggled to understand, confess, and worship the triune God through the centuries.

a history of god: Jesus A. N. Wilson, 2004 Extraordinarily entertaining....Learned, witty....Wilson [is] a gifted novelist and diligent biographer.--Newsday

a history of god: A History of God Joseph B. Lumpkin, 2016-12-30 In this book we will look at the history and evolution of the three deities making up the bulk of the world's religions and the evolution of the religions formed from the worship of these three deities. We will learn how the Gods of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths have evolved over time.

a history of god: History of Christianity Paul Johnson, 2012-03-27 First published in 1976, Paul Johnson's exceptional study of Christianity has been loved and widely hailed for its intensive research, writing, and magnitude—"a tour de force, one of the most ambitious surveys of the history

of Christianity ever attempted and perhaps the most radical” (New York Review of Books). In a highly readable companion to books on faith and history, the scholar and author Johnson has illuminated the Christian world and its fascinating history in a way that no other has. Johnson takes off in the year AD 49 with his namesake the apostle Paul. Thus beginning an ambitious quest to paint the centuries since the founding of a little-known ‘Jesus Sect’, *A History of Christianity* explores to a great degree the evolution of the Western world. With an unbiased and overall optimistic tone, Johnson traces the fantastic scope of the consequent sects of Christianity and the people who followed them. Information drawn from extensive and varied sources from around the world makes this history as credible as it is reliable. Invaluable understanding of the framework of modern Christianity—and its trials and tribulations throughout history—has never before been contained in such a captivating work.

a history of god: Manna and Mercy Daniel Erlander, 1992 Through imagination, clarity, humor and cartoon, Daniel Erlander retells the Bible's story. Follows the themes of bread and forgiveness.

a history of god: A Little History of Religion Richard Holloway, 2016-08-23 For curious readers young and old, a rich and colorful history of religion from humanity's earliest days to our own contentious times In an era of hardening religious attitudes and explosive religious violence, this book offers a welcome antidote. Richard Holloway retells the entire history of religion—from the dawn of religious belief to the twenty-first century—with deepest respect and a keen commitment to accuracy. Writing for those with faith and those without, and especially for young readers, he encourages curiosity and tolerance, accentuates nuance and mystery, and calmly restores a sense of the value of faith. Ranging far beyond the major world religions of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism, Holloway also examines where religious belief comes from, the search for meaning throughout history, today's fascinations with Scientology and creationism, religiously motivated violence, hostilities between religious people and secularists, and more. Holloway proves an empathic yet discerning guide to the enduring significance of faith and its power from ancient times to our own.

a history of god: Buddha Karen Armstrong, 2008-11-03 The author of *The Battle for God* and other works on religion focuses her attention on the Buddha, retracing his life from prince to savior of humankind, in a philosophical portrait that offers an illuminating look at how his life and path to spiritual enlightenment spawned one of the great religions of the world. Reprint.

a history of god: A History of God Karen Armstrong, 1997-04-22 An admirable and impressive work of synthesis that will give insight and satisfaction to thousands of lay readers. THE WASHINGTON POST BOOK WORLD In this stunningly intelligent book, Karen Armstrong, one of Britain's foremost commentators on religious affairs, traces the history of how men and women have perceived and experienced God, from the time of Abraham to the present. From classical philosophy and medieval mysticism to the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the modern age of skepticism, Karen Armstrong performs the near miracle of distilling the intellectual history of monotheism into one superbly readable volume, destined to take its place as a classic.

a history of god: Through the Narrow Gate, Revised Karen Armstrong, 2005-02-19 Read and cherished by thousands all over the world since it was first published in 1981, *Through the Narrow Gate* takes the reader on a spiritual journey that began one September day in 1962 when Karen Armstrong said good-bye to her family at London's King's Cross station and journeyed on to the convent in Tripton to become a nun. *Through the Narrow Gate* is by turns a book of spiritual revelation and an intimate look at life inside the cloistered walls of the convent.--BOOK JACKET.

a history of god: The Evolution of God Robert Wright, 2009-06-08 In this sweeping narrative that takes us from the Stone Age to the Information Age, Robert Wright unveils an astonishing discovery: there is a hidden pattern that the great monotheistic faiths have followed as they have evolved. Through the prisms of archaeology, theology, and evolutionary psychology, Wright's findings overturn basic assumptions about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and are sure to cause controversy. He explains why spirituality has a role today, and why science, contrary to conventional

wisdom, affirms the validity of the religious quest. And this previously unrecognized evolutionary logic points not toward continued religious extremism, but future harmony. Nearly a decade in the making, *The Evolution of God* is a breathtaking re-examination of the past, and a visionary look forward.

a history of god: *A History of Early Christian Literature* Justo L. González, 2019-08-27

Historical events have long been the standard lens through which scholars have sought to understand the theology of Christianity in late antiquity. The lives of significant theological figures, the rejection of individuals and movements as heretical, and the Trinitarian and christological controversies—the defining theological events of the early church—have long provided the framework with which to understand the development of early Christian belief. In this groundbreaking work, esteemed historian of Christianity Justo González chooses to focus on the literature of early Christianity. Beginning with the epistolary writings of the earliest Christian writers of the second century CE, he moves through apologies, martyrologies, antiheretical polemics, biblical commentaries, sermons, all the way up through Augustine's invention of spiritual autobiography and beyond. Throughout he demonstrates how literary genre played a decisive role in the construction of theological meaning. Covering the earliest noncanonical Christian writings through the fifth century and later, this book will serve as an indispensable guide to students studying the theology of the early church.

a history of god: *A History of the Last Church of God and His Christ* Gondwe, Wezi

Makuni, 2018-01-05 Some scholars classify the Last Church of God and His Christ under the ecclesiastical-cultural bloc known as African Indigenous Churches (AICs). David Barret has divided the world's Christians into seven major ecclesiastical blocs. However, there are many large churches and denominations which do not define themselves under any of these three terms, and often reject all three. As far back as 1549 (Japan) and 1741 (USA), new types of Christianity have emerged that do not fit readily into any of these preceding six major blocs. These consist of denominations, churches and movements that have been initiated, founded and spread by black, Non-White or non-European peoples without European assistance, mainly in the Global South, but also among Black and Non-White minorities in the Western World. The African Indigenous Churches fall under this category. The aim of the book, is to examine the history of the Last Church of God and His Christ International in Malawi from its beginning (1916) through the years and to portray a picture of its current existence in its various branches: What developments and changes have taken place over the years? What has been the relationship of the church to African culture? How has the church grown or expanded? Has the church been able to maintain its unity? And what has been the relationship of the church with other churches?

a history of god: *Mother of God* Miri Rubin, 2009-04-21 A sweeping, ambitious study of the

Virgin Mary's emergence and role throughout Western history. How did the Virgin Mary, about whom very little is said in the Gospels, become one of the most powerful and complex religious figures in the world? To arrive at the answers to this far-reaching question, one of our foremost medieval historians, Miri Rubin, investigates the ideas, practices, and images that have developed around the figure of Mary from the earliest decades of Christianity to around the year 1600. Drawing on an extraordinarily wide range of sources—including music, poetry, theology, art, scripture, and miracle tales—Rubin reveals how Mary became so embedded in our culture that it is impossible to conceive of Western history without her. In her rise to global prominence, Mary was continually remade and reimagined by wave after wave of devotees. Rubin shows how early Christians endowed Mary with a fine ancestry; why in early medieval Europe her roles as mother, bride, and companion came to the fore; and how the focus later shifted to her humanity and unparalleled purity. She also explores how indigenous people in Central America, Africa, and Asia remade Mary and so fit her into their own cultures. Beautifully written and finely illustrated, this book is a triumph of sympathy and intelligence. It demonstrates Mary's endless capacity to inspire and her profound presence in Christian cultures and beyond.

a history of god: *A Human-Shaped God* Charles Halton, 2021-10-26 A Human-Shaped God

approaches the humanlike accounts of God in the Old Testament as the starting places for theology and uses them to build a picture of the divine. This understanding of God is then brought into conversation with traditional conceptions that depict God as a being who knows everything that happens, is at every place at the same time, is constant and unchanging, and does not ultimately have material form. But instead of pitting the Old Testament's humanlike view of God against traditional theology and assuming that only one of these understandings is correct, *A Human-Shaped God* posits that theologians should embrace both of these constructions simultaneously. This is a new way of theological inquiry that embraces both the humanlike characteristics of God and the transcendence of God in traditional theology. By seeing and understanding the humanlike depictions of God in the Old Testament and by using the rich language of traditional theology together in tandem, the reader acquires a much deeper and meaningful understanding of God.

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a history of god: *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars* Bruce Lincoln, 2015-07-09 Bruce Lincoln is one of the most prominent advocates within religious studies for an uncompromisingly critical approach to the phenomenon of religion—historians of religions, he believes, should resist the preferred narratives and self-understanding of religions themselves, especially when their stories are endowed with sacred origins and authority. In *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars*, Lincoln assembles a collection of essays that both illustrates and reveals the benefits of his methodology, making a case for a critical religious studies that starts with skepticism but is neither cynical nor crude. The book begins with Lincoln's "Theses on Method" and ends with "The (Un)discipline of Religious Studies," in which he unsparingly considers the failings of uncritical and nonhistorical approaches to the study of religions. In between, Lincoln presents new examinations of problems in ancient religions and relates these cases to larger comparative themes. While bringing to light important features of the formation of pantheons and the constructions of demons, chaos, and the dead, Lincoln demonstrates that historians of religions should take religious things—inspired scriptures, sacred centers, salvific rites, communities graced by divine favor—as the theories of interested humans that shape perception, community, and experiences. As he shows, it is for their terrestrial influence, and not their sacred origins, that religious phenomena merit consideration by the historian. Tackling many questions central to religious study, *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars* will be a touchstone for the history of religions in the twenty-first century.

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