



The Case For God: What religion really means

Author: Karen Armstrong
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Did God invent us... or did we invent Him?

The history of 'God', is an interesting one. Practically every civilisation throughout history has believed in a creator, an all-powerful entity that brought everything else into being. But, if God *did* create everything, then who could have created God? How can something come from nothing? In *The Case For God* Karen Armstrong, a former nun and prolific writer about all things religious, examines our attempts to answer these questions and many others like them.

Adopting the strict perspective of a historian as opposed to a 'believer', the text sees Armstrong reach far back to the infancy of Western literary history to investigate the origins of the first Bible stories, their ('real') authors – that is, the first people to have written them down - and the context in which they were written. She also examines the Gospels, the founding of Islam, and how various civilisations, before and since, have developed their relationship with God. The main body of the text 'weighs in' at a tad over 300 pages, and comes complete with a very extensive glossary, giving an explanation of all the people, places and religious terms contained within. The really clever part, though, is the way in which she manages to incorporate the philosophers of Ancient Greece, the founding of Rome, and the beginnings of Christianity/Judaism/Islam into one inter-woven time line. I honestly had no idea that some of these people had even heard of one another before reading this, yet the way that the information has been linked together into an easy-to-read and flowing text has made that learning experience a very pleasurable one.

As an agnostic amateur historian, this book has certainly filled a few gaps in my knowledge, more specifically, the formation of the three great Abrahamic religions. Yet it is by no means blasphemous. Armstrong does not go out disrespect God, or any of the groups who believe in Him; instead one could read almost read her effort as a chronicle of the written word, a history which just happens to reflect a strong religious influence. Very interesting.

8 sausages out of 10

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