



God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World

By Stephen Prothero

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In *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Religious Literacy* and religion scholar Stephen Prothero argues that persistent attempts to portray all religions as different paths to the same God overlook the distinct problem that each tradition seeks to solve. Delving into the different problems and solutions that Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Yoruba Religion, Daoism and Atheism strive to combat, *God is Not One* is an indispensable guide to the questions human beings have asked for millennia—and to the disparate paths we are taking to answer them today. Readers of Huston Smith and Karen Armstrong will find much to ponder in *God is Not One*.

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God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World By Stephen Prothero Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #21240 in Books
- Brand: HarperOne
- Published on: 2011-05-03
- Released on: 2011-05-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .90" w x 5.31" l, .66 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Exclusive: A Letter from Stephen Prothero



On my last visit to Jerusalem, I struck up a conversation with an elderly man in the Muslim Quarter. As a shopkeeper, he seemed keen to sell me jewelry. As a Sufi mystic, he seemed even keener to engage me in matters of the spirit. He told me that religions are human inventions, so we must avoid the temptation of worshipping Islam rather than Allah. What matters is opening yourself up to the mystery that goes by the word God, and that can be done in any religion. As he tempted me with more turquoise and silver, he asked me what I was doing in Jerusalem. When I told him I was researching a book on the world's religions, he put down the jewelry, looked at me intently, and, placing a finger on my chest for emphasis, said, "Do not write false things about the religions."

As I wrote *God is Is Not One*, I came back repeatedly to this conversation. I never wavered from trying to write true things, but I knew that some of the things I was writing he would consider false.

Mystics often claim that the great religions differ only in the inessentials. They may be different paths but they are ascending the same mountain and they converge at the peak. Throughout this book I give voice to these mystics: the Daoist sage Laozi, who wrote his classic the *Daodejing* just before disappearing forever into the mountains; the Sufi poet Rumi, who instructs us to "gamble everything for love"; and the Christian mystic Julian of Norwich, who revels in the feminine aspects of God. But my focus is not on these spiritual superstars. It is on ordinary religious folk—the stories they tell, the doctrines they affirm, and the rituals they practice. And these stories, doctrines, and rituals could not be more different. Christians do not go on the hajj to Mecca; Jews do not affirm the doctrine of the Trinity; and neither Buddhists nor Hindus trouble themselves about sin or salvation.

Of course, religious differences trouble us, since they seem to portend, if not war itself, then at least rumors thereof. But as I researched and wrote this book I came to appreciate how opening our eyes to religious differences can help us appreciate the unique beauty of each of the great religions--the radical freedom of the Daoist wanderer, the contemplative way into death of the Buddhist monk, and the joy in the face of the divine life of the Sufi shopkeeper.

I plan to send my Sufi shopkeeper a copy of this book. I have no doubt he will disagree with parts of it. But I hope he will recognize my effort to avoid writing "false things," even when I disagree with friends. --*Stephen Prothero*

From Publishers Weekly

Expressing his astonishment, Prothero (*Religious Literacy*) arrives late at the party that has been celebrating for years the diversity and plurality of the world's religions. Although he is correct in asserting that an entire generation of scholars, teachers, and interested readers have claimed in the interest of religious tolerance that the world's religions were simply different paths to the same one God, such a claim functions as little more than a red herring in what is otherwise a useful introduction to the world's religions. Once past that assertion, Prothero sets up a helpful model for examining each religion on its own terms: he explores a problem that dominates the religion, the religion's solution to the problem, the technique the religion uses to move from problem to solution, and the exemplar who charts a path from problem to solution. For example, in Buddhism the problem is suffering; the solution is nirvana; the technique is the Noble Eightfold Path; and the exemplars are the arhats, bodhisattvas, and lamas. Despite his naïveté about contemporary interreligious dialogue, Prothero's survey is a useful introduction to eight of the world's great religions. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Prothero vehemently disagrees with the politically correct notion that all religions are equal. "This is a lovely sentiment, but it is dangerous, disrespectful, and untrue." The idea of religious unity, he maintains, is nothing but wishful thinking. Hence, this book is meant to be—and most definitely is—a bracing dose of realism. Religion is not just a private matter, he continues. Rather, it affects the world from social, economic, political, and military perspectives. Religion has two faces as a force of both good and evil. He discusses what he considers the great religions of the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), India (Hinduism and Buddhism), and East Asia (Confucianism and Daoism)—great in this context being contingent on number of adherents and historical significance. As the eighth religion of the subtitle, Prothero includes—which may surprise some—the Yoruba religion of West Africa and its vast diaspora. There is also a brief chapter on atheism. Provocative, thoughtful, fiercely intelligent and, for both believing and nonbelieving, formal and informal students of religion, a must-read. --June Sawyers

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jesse Reid:

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information these days can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a information or any news even a problem. What people must be consider when those information which is inside former life are challenging to be find than now is taking seriously which one is acceptable to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you obtain it as your main information it will have huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen within you if you take *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World* as the daily resource information.

Christina Lazarus:

The guide with title *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World* includes a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. That book exist new expertise the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world now. That is important to yo7u to be aware of how the improvement of the world. This particular book will bring you with new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book on your smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

Virginia Kang:

Why? Because this *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World* is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of gains than the other book have such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking method. So , still want to delay having that book? If I had been you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

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