

# The Case For God Karen Armstrong

The Case for God A History of God The Battle for God A History of God The Great Transformation The Bible A History of God Visions Of God Fields of Blood Summary of Karen Armstrong's The Case for God In the Beginning Jerusalem A History of God The Case for God Sacred Nature Bede Griffiths' Images of God In the Beginning God in the Dark The Battle for God Through the Narrow Gate Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Everest Media, Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong Beatrice Green Karen Armstrong Peter Longson Karen Armstrong Karen Armstrong

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from the bestselling author of a history of god and the great transformation comes a balanced nuanced understanding of the role religion plays in human life and the trajectory of faith in modern times why has god become incredible 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 moving from the paleolithic age to the present karen armstrong details the lengths to which humankind has gone to experience a sacred reality that it called god brahman nirvana allah or dao she 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 with her trademark depth of knowledge and profound insight armstrong elucidates how the changing world has necessarily altered the importance of religion at both societal and individual levels and she makes a powerful convincing argument for structuring a faith that speaks to the needs of our

dangerously polarized age

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

reveals how the fundamentalist movements in christianity judaism and islam were born out of a dread of modernity

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

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

the bible is the most widely distributed book in the world translated into over two thousand languages it is estimated that more than six billion copies have been sold in the last two hundred years alone in this seminal account karen armstrong traces the gestation of the bible to reveal a complex and contradictory document created by scores of people over hundreds of years karen armstrong begins her analysis with the origins of the very earliest books of the hebrew bible in which god was called both yahweh and elohim she then traces the development of both the hebrew bible and the new testament to reveal the disparate influences that helped to form these sacred texts from the jewish practice of midrash and the christian cult of jesus to the influence of paul's letters on the reformation and the manipulation of revelations by christian fundamentalism armstrong explores the contexts in which these sixty six books were understood and explains the social needs they answered in the process she reveals an unfamiliar and paradoxical work that will permanently alter our understanding of the bible

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 mystics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were writes karen armstrong like the astronauts of our own day they broke into a new religion blazed a new trail to god and to the depths of the self a trail far from the beaten pilgrimage paths of chaucer and langland mysticism is a spiritual mystery shared in some form by all faiths it has a supernatural quality that extends beyond the given boundaries of religious creed and may be experienced by any lay person the thrilling intensity of a mystical experience as represented in this volume by the writings of four mystics of the middle ages can inspire other spiritual seekers with its insight into the limitless wonder of both human and divine experience dissatisfied by the strictures of dogma and a religion that failed to quench the human thirst for knowledge of a mystical order these four mystics richard Rolle of Hampole Walter Hilton Dame Julian of Norwich and the unknown author of the Cloud of Unknowing communicate an intense and passionate experience of faith rare in any time because of their unique beliefs and spiritual strength their knowledge and writings have proved timeless and in this beautiful volume show contemporary seekers important new insights into the nature of divine love

from the renowned and bestselling author of *A History of God* a sweeping exploration of religion's connection to violence for the first time in American history religious self-identification is on the decline some have cited a perception that began to grow after September 11 that faith in general is a source of aggression intolerance and divisiveness something bad for society but how accurate is that view and does it apply equally to all faiths in these troubled times we risk basing decisions of real and dangerous consequence on mistaken understandings of the faiths subscribed around us in our immediate community as well as globally and so with her deep learning and sympathetic understanding Karen Armstrong examines the impulse toward violence in each of the world's great religions the comparative approach is new while there have been plenty of books on jihad or the crusades this book lays the Christian and the Islamic way of war side by side along with those of Buddhism Hinduism Confucianism Daoism and Judaism each of these faiths arose in agrarian societies with plenty of motivation for violence landowners had to lord it over peasants and warfare was essential to increase one's landholdings the only real source of wealth before the great age of trade and commerce in each context it fell to the priestly class to legitimize the actions of the state and so the martial ethos became bound up with the sacred at the same time however their ideologies developed that ran counter to the warrior code around sages prophets and mystics within each tradition there grew up communities that represented a protest against the injustice and violence endemic to agrarian society this book explores the symbiosis of these 2

impulses and its development as these confessional faiths came of age the aggression of secularism has often damaged religion and pushed it into a violent mode but modernity has also been spectacularly violent and so armstrong goes on to show how and in what measure religions in their relative maturity came to absorb modern belligerence and what hope there might be for peace among believers in our time

please note this is a companion version not the original book sample book insights 1 the guide turns his flashlight on the ceiling of the underground caverns of lascaux and the painted animals seem to emerge from the depths of the rock the artwork is far more clear than it was to the palaeolithic artists since they had to work by the light of small flickering lamps 2 the caves were probably sanctuaries and their iconography reflected a radically different worldview than the outside world the cave paintings depict men confronting animals in a state of trance with upraised arms 3 the palaeolithic caves may have been the scene of similar rites the paintings include dancing men dressed as animals the bushmen say that their own rock paintings depict the world behind this one that we see with our eyes which the shamans visit during their mystical flights 4 the caves were used for the initiation ceremonies that marked the adolescent boy s rite of passage from childhood to maturity the purpose of the ritual was to train the boy to kill in the sacred manner he was introduced to the more esoteric mythology of his tribe during the initiation

karen armstrong is a genius a n wilson as the foundation stone of the jewish and christian scriptures the book of genesis unfolds some of the most arresting stories of world literature the creation adam and eve cain and abel the sacrifice of isaac yet the meaning of genesis remains enigmatic in this fascinating volume karen armstrong author of the highly acclaimed bestseller a history of god brilliantly illuminates the mysteries and profundities of this mystifying work bonus this edition contains an excerpt from karen armstrong s twelve steps to a compassionate life a lyrical chronicle of one woman s wrestling with genesis that can serve as a guide to others as notable for its scholarship as it is for its honesty and vulnerability publishers weekly armstrong can simplify complex ideas but she is never simplistic the new york times book review

venerated for millennia by three faiths torn by irreconcilable conflict conquered rebuilt and mourned for again and again jerusalem is a sacred city whose very sacredness has engendered terrible tragedy in this fascinating volume karen armstrong author of the highly praised a history of god traces the history of how jews christians and muslims have all laid claim to jerusalem as their holy place and how three radically different concepts of holiness have shaped and scarred

the city for thousands of years armstrong unfolds a complex story of spiritual upheaval and political transformation from king david s capital to an administrative outpost of the roman empire from the cosmopolitan city sanctified by christ to the spiritual center conquered and glorified by muslims from the gleaming prize of european crusaders to the bullet ridden symbol of the present day arab israeli conflict written with grace and clarity the product of years of meticulous research jerusalem combines the pageant of history with the profundity of searching spiritual analysis like karen armstrong s a history of god jerusalem is a book for the ages bonus this edition contains an excerpt from karen armstrong s twelve steps to a compassionate life

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

here armstrong argues that atheism has rarely been a denial of the sacred itself but has nearly always rejected a particular conception of god she suggests that if we draw on the insights of the past we can build a faith that speaks to our needs

a rich and subtle exploration of the sacredness of nature filled with a timeless wisdom and deep humanity guardian in this hugely powerful book karen armstrong argues that it isn t enough to change our behaviour to avert environmental catastrophe we must rekindle our spiritual bond with the natural world from gratitude and compassion to sacrifice and non violence armstrong draws themes from the world s religious traditions to offer practical steps to reconnect you with nature speaking to anyone interested in our relationship with nature worried about environmental destruction or searching for new actions to save our planet sacred nature will uncover the most profound connections between humans and the natural world a lamentation in the key of greta thunberg with undertones of carl jung wall street journal warm and witty a challenge to think differently in the face of climate change tablet karen armstrong is one of the handful of wise and supremely commentators on religion alain de botton

this book reveals how the images bede griffiths osb cam used for god are richly embedded with concepts ancient and new making them especially relevant for our current times it prompts insight into the great deposit of wisdom and scholarship that was his source and will benefit those interested in religious imagery gender equality monastic life interfaith dialogue evolution of consciousness practical theology and spirituality and integral thought led by christ the golden string griffiths made the sea change from great britain to india promoting the marriage of east and west the essential value of the feminine contemplative prayer interreligious dialogue and integral life his initiation to christian sannyasa and faith in the evolutionary process reflect his openness to change and to grow and highlight this great sage s masterful use of images grounded in his motto to always go beyond

in this fascinating book by the author of a history of god and jerusalem one of the best known and least understood books of the bible is clarified for modern readers armstrong shows readers how the ancient tales of the creation the fall cain and abel noah abraham jacob and joseph illuminate our most profound and impenetrable problems

what becomes of faith in god when bad stuff happens how do we react when we realise that for all its glories this world can be a dark dangerous and disappointing place peter longson's honest unflinching exploration of the nature of evil and its consequences for life and faith leads him to some surprising and liberating conclusions about the nature of god

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

the precursor to the bestselling the spiral staircase comes karen armstrong's classic memoir of her life as a young woman in a convent through the narrow gate is karen armstrong's intimate memoir of life inside a catholic convent with honesty and clarity she explains what drove her at age seventeen to devote herself to god over the next seven years she endures the difficulties of convent life the enforced silence the lack of friendship and family her own guilt at not being able to stifle her voracious intelligence and unveils the secrets of religious life during the post vatican ii years through the narrow gate is a moving account of a young woman's search for god and the experiences that put karen armstrong on her way to becoming one of the most admired and most



respected interpreters of religious faith

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