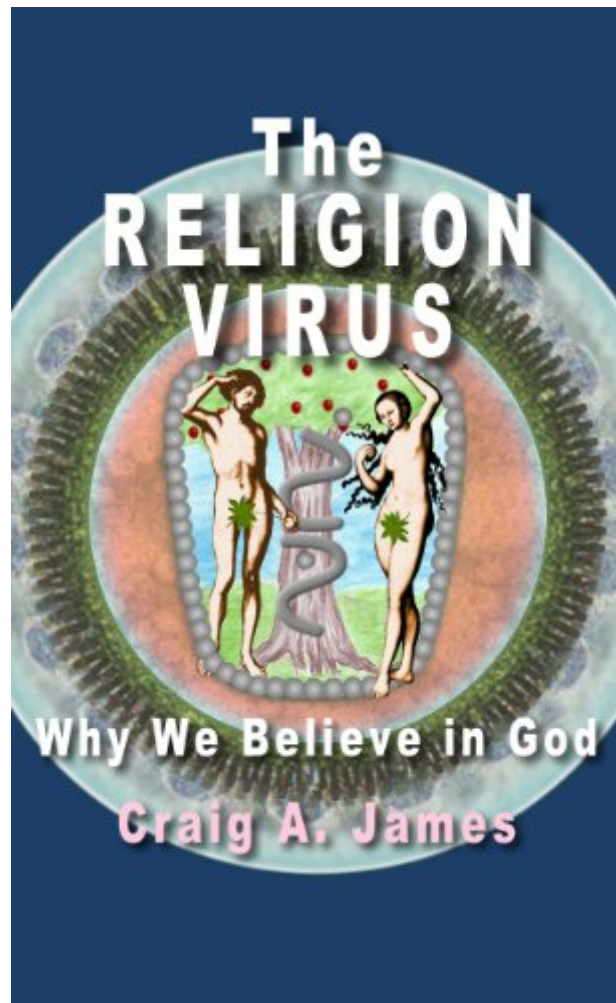


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The Religion Virus: Why We Believe In God



Synopsis

The Religion Virus is a fun and fascinating tour of how simple ancient spiritualism evolved into the incredibly infectious religions we know today, punctuated with humorous and insightful stories of the author's own spiritual journey. Whether you are religious, agnostic, or atheist, when you close the book's last chapter, your understanding of religion will forever be changed. "Ingenious. Craig James has cracked open the mystery of Religion's tenacity. It puts the pieces together into a fascinating, coherent model that makes sense!" - Dan Barker, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and author of Godless. At any given moment, tens of thousands of religions, branches, sects, and belief systems are competing with each other for survival in a battle as ferocious as anything in nature. But this battle takes place in our minds and in our culture. Religions are locked in an endless fight for survival, and with each generation there are winners and losers. Only the "fittest" survive. The trouble is, "fitness" has little to do with truth and everything to do with what we want to believe and fear. Religion has evolved for thousands of years, and in the process has become incredibly infectious to the human mind. It preys on our hopes, fears, instincts, and desires, and it's very good at it. Like biological life, ninety-nine percent of the world's religions are extinct, but the ones that remain are quite remarkable, the very strongest and best. "I don't say this about very many books, but Craig A. James's The Religion Virus can facilitate a wholesale change in the way we think about religion ... an engaging, entertaining, and educational journey ... packed with a lot of good information." -- Secular News Daily "Full of powerful, ground-breaking ideas, packaged in a deceptively simple, easy-reading style. This is the most fun I've had reading non-fiction in a long time." -- Phil Steele, editor of The Passion of Ayn Rand's Critics

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Customer Reviews

I don't say this about very many books, but Craig A. James's *The Religion Virus* can facilitate a wholesale change in the way we think about religion. By itself, it stands strong and makes a great argument. When it works together with the already growing "God Virus" meme, it forms a powerful meme-plex, and gives us a great framework for examining and talking about religion. The subtitle - *Why we believe in God: An evolutionist explains religion's incredible hold on humanity* - might confuse some readers. Indeed, I expected to read about cognitive mechanisms or the evolution of human psychology. And to be fair, chapter 7 does cover one possible explanation for our seemingly innate attraction to religion. But that's not what this book is primarily about. Don't let that deter you from picking up a copy, though. *The Religion Virus* is an engaging, entertaining, and educational journey from the earliest animist religions to modern Christianity, with a focus on the meme as a unit of "idea evolution." James takes us on a guided tour of religion's development as both a reaction and a shaping force in history. Since memes are a relatively new concept, with an evolving definition, James helps us out by discussing and explaining his use of the word. In short, a meme is an idea. More specifically, it's an idea that is passed from human to human and/or generation to generation, and "evolves" as it moves through space and time. He is quick to point out that it does not evolve precisely the same way as organisms, but the similarities are striking enough to use the term "evolution" in a colloquial sense and be well justified. The most important characteristic of memes is that they have "survival ability." A meme's survival is not dependent on its truth value.

The Religion Virus: Why we believe in God: An evolutionist explains religion's incredible hold on humanity by Craig A. James *The Religion Virus* is a well-written book that answers quite cogently the question of why religion succeeds as a meme. It's a book that takes a Darwinian approach on how religion has evolved. The book is composed of the following ten chapters: 1. *Why is Religion like an Elephant's DNA?*, 2. *Religion's Infancy*, 3. *Evolution and Memes*, 4. *Religion Grows Up*, 5. *Why Do Humans Talk?* 6. *Religion's Immunity System*, 7. *Why Is Religion So Appealing?*, *The Atheist's Paradox*, 9. *Religion, Technology and Government*, and 10. *Closing Sermon*. Positives: 1. An excellent, well-written, accessible book that answers to satisfaction why we believe in God. 2. Great

use of Darwinian concepts of evolution and cultural concepts such as memes to answer the premises of the book.3. Non-confrontational, even-handed tone throughout.4. Excellent Kindle value. More wisdom per dollar.5. Great list of memes (ideas that become accepted cultural beliefs) and better explanations on how said memes help religion survive.6. Great quotes.7. The evolution of the concept of god.8. Sound arguments, good use of logic and supporting data.9. Some arguments will stay with me. "Survival isn't the relevant term - reproduction is all that matters."10. Mr. James does a wonderful job of tying everything up.11. Great references.12. A treat to read. Highly recommended.Negatives:1. I would have liked a table that summarized all the memes.2. No links to references.In summary, "The Religion Virus", was a fun, educational, relevant book that exceeded my expectations.

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