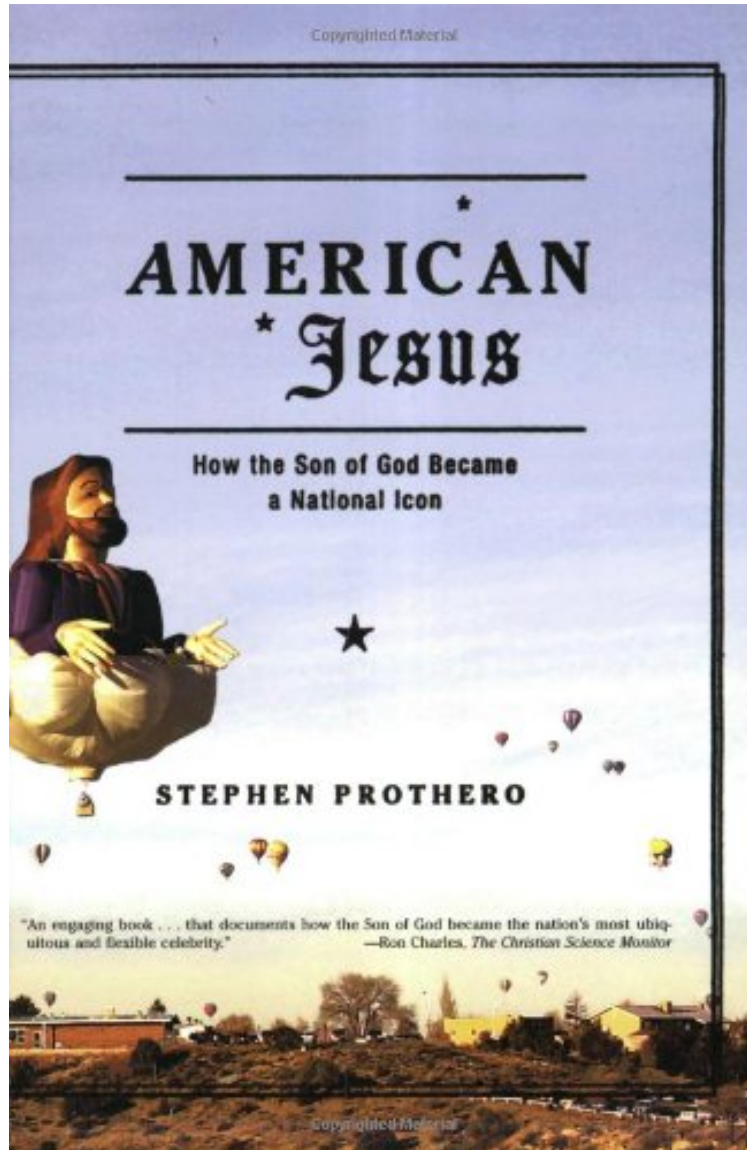


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American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon

Stephen Prothero

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Stephen Prothero : American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. the icon...By Reid MccormickCongress shall make no law

respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof This is the first clause of the first amendment of the United States Constitution. It is probably one of the most important lines (and most debated) in all of American freedoms. It is what makes the United States unique. Christianity has a very unique history in the United States because there is no central authority. There is no pope to monitor the flock. Every American has the right to view Jesus in his or her own way and thus worship and share this Jesus with whomever they want. Our third president and founding father, Thomas Jefferson, was one of the first to challenge the accepted status quo of Jesus in America. His Jesus was different from his citizens. He did not force his subjects to accept his Jesus. He did not mistreat or torture his dissenters. They were free to express their opinions, as so was he. American Jesus walks through the different views of Jesus throughout the nations history. Jesus is a national icon because he is up for interpretation. If you dont like someones view of Jesus, you can change it to make it yours. Your view of Jesus is up to you. This book presents the different popular views of Jesus over the years and how he has developed over the decades. The first couple of chapters were interesting, but overall, this book was too long and not super interesting. At the end of the book, I was hoping to read more about the modern Jesus during the moral majority and Reagan years. Though this book was well-researched as better than others, it still does not reach the top of my suggestion list. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Rare Book, Indeed! By JKAs those of us who still read should acknowledge in this country, the only subject more difficult to write objectively about than politics, is religion. Mr. Prothero has accomplished this. Actually, I am a Roman Catholic, and my priest loaned me his copy to read! I enjoyed it so much that by the time I'd read the introduction I'd ordered a copy for myself, on here. I would find it difficult to dispute this comprehensive history, regardless of which religion in this country I followed. Certainly, many of the statistics, particularly from the past, were quite fascinating. It is enlightening to realize that our country's founders, and not just the founding fathers, weren't nearly so tied to organized religion as we might want to think. As well-written and researched as this volume is, it is also a peripheral illustration of the value of American media and technology in cementing this country together. It might be interesting to today's Americans that there was very little mention of Islam in the book, considering our present political situation. This is a great read, and I've already purchased another book by Prothero in anticipation of enjoying it also. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. America's Fondness to Create/Recreate Jesus In Its Image By rodboomboom This is very seductive book in pulling the reader into its web looking at what America has done through its history with Jesus. The author, a religious professor, takes the reader on a whirlwind tour of this history, revolving in his opinion around none other than Jefferson himself, who scissored the NT into his own liking and image, thus creating the American way: make Jesus what you want him to be like, probably one that is comfortable to your image. Thus the American variety of Heinz varieties: black, Mormon, Asian, female, white, even Jewish making him more Judaistic leaning. This chronicles all of them in a delightful to read style, at least for this reviewer until he hits the wall (it would seem) at about chapter six where it bogged down and dragged me to the end. This being said, it certainly opens one to the past and present matrix of Jesus' views and the ever changing embrace that this country seems to have with Jesus. Its "sola cultura" at its democratic, capitalistic, now diverse pluralistic melting pot best. The author honestly disclaims before any attacks that his goal is not to theologially judge these American Jesus iconoclasts, but rather to do the excellent and engaging expose on them which this work does enjoyably. Enjoy the read; ponder Matthew 16:13-28; clues are certainly here to be unloaded to identify the real Jesus, whether or not America is ready to confess Him.

Jesus the Black Messiah; Jesus the Jew; Jesus the Hindu sage; Jesus the Haight-Asbury hippie: these Jesuses join the traditional figure of Jesus Christ in American Jesus, which was acclaimed upon publication in hardcover as an altogether fresh exploration of American history--and as the liveliest book about Jesus to appear in English in years. Our nation's changing images of Jesus, Stephen Prothero contends, are a kind of looking class into the national character. Even as most Christian believers cleave to a traditional faith, other people give Jesus a leading role as folk hero, pitchman, and countercultural icon. And so it has been since the nation's founding--from Thomas Jefferson, who took scissors to his New Testament to sort out true from false Jesus material; to the Jews, Buddhists and Muslims who fit Jesus into their own traditions; to the people who adapt Jesus for stage and screen and the Holy Land theme park. American Jesus is "a lively, illuminating and accessible survey that takes us into unexpected corners of our shared religious heritage" (Dan Cryer, Newsday).

From Publishers Weekly No religious personality has captivated so many Americans for so long as Jesus. Indeed, as Boston University historian Prothero demonstrates in this sparkling and engrossing book, Jesus is the one religious figure nearly every American, whether Christian or not, past and present, has embraced. From Thomas Jefferson's cut-and-paste Bible to Jesus Christ Superstar, from the feminized Christ of the Victorians to the "manly redeemer" of Teddy Roosevelt's era, from Buddhist bodhisattva to Black Moses, Prothero surveys the myriad ways Americans have remade Jesus in their own image. He usefully divides these American Jesuses into "resurrections"--revivals of Jesus within mainstream Christianity--and "reincarnations"--appropriations of Jesus by outsiders. This scheme allows Prothero to range widely, and if he sometimes drifts from his primary focus, the digressions are fascinating in their

own right. Nearly every page offers a fresh portrait of some corner of American religious history. A work of this breadth must depend heavily on other writers, but Prothero almost always has a judicious interpretation of his own to add—most of all, his contention that Jesus' enduring appeal confirms America's essentially Christian character even as it also demonstrates America's growing religious diversity. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *The New Yorker*. To the Puritans who settled the Colonies, Jesus was a marginal figure, and the Old Testament more important than the New. In the four centuries since, however, he has slipped the bonds of Christianity altogether to become icon and brand, as American as Mickey Mouse or the Coca-Cola bottle. This wide-ranging history traces a dual evolution: of American religion (not only Christianity but Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism) in terms of its relationship to Jesus; and of his multiform manifestations in response to changing cultural currents, from Thomas Jefferson's publication of a book of Jesus' life and sayings that excised all mention of the miracles and the resurrection to the Hindu Vedantists' veneration of "Christ the Yogi." Copyright 2005 *The New Yorker*. From *Booklist*. On magazine covers, movie screens, and even hot-air balloons, images of Jesus abound in a modern America ever more mesmerized by the central figures of Christianity—yet ever less conscious of Christian theology and doctrine. In a wide-ranging investigation, religious historian Prothero probes the cultural dynamics that have transformed Jesus into a ubiquitous American presence while weakening the tethers of orthodoxy. The analysis begins with stern Puritan divines emphatic about the justice of the Father but nearly silent about the mercy of the Son. But the focus soon shifts to liberal nineteenth-century Protestants joyous in their celebration of a tender, even feminine Jesus. A muscular, manly Jesus came next, and eventually even non-Christian Americans were turning Jesus into everything from a Jeffersonian sage to a Hindu avatar. Prothero assembles a dizzying national collage, piquant but strangely selective: Catholic images of Jesus occupy less space in this assemblage than other characterizations of him in rock music and science fiction. Fortunately, a rich bibliography will help readers to sort out the confusing plethora of American Jesuses. Bryce Christensen. Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved.