



Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths

By Karen Armstrong

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"SPLENDID . . . Eminently sane and patient . . . Essential reading for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike."

--The Washington Post

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.

"THE BEST SERIOUS, ACCESSIBLE HISTORY OF THE MOST SPIRITUALLY IMPORTANT CITY IN THE WORLD."

--The Baltimore Sun

"A WORK OF IMPRESSIVE SWEEP AND GRANDEUR."

--Los Angeles Times Book Review



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Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths By Karen Armstrong Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #77199 in Books
- Published on: 1997-04-29
- Released on: 1997-04-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.30" h x 1.10" w x 6.20" l, 1.27 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 512 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Jerusalem is the most famous city on the planet, a place vibrantly imagined even by people who have never been there. Karen Armstrong, author of the best-selling *A History of God*, shows why it might also be the most interesting, a sacred ground for rival Christians, Jews and Muslims. Much of her book is devoted to 5,000 years of history, but all of it addresses a longstanding and contemporary fascination unmatched by any other urban center.

From Publishers Weekly

British religious scholar Armstrong (*A History of God*) has written a provocative, splendid historical portrait of Jerusalem that will reward those seeking to fathom a strife-torn city. Her overarching theme, that Jerusalem has been central to the experience and "sacred geography" of Jews, Muslims and Christians and thus has led to deadly struggles for dominance, is a familiar one, yet she brings to her sweeping, profusely illustrated narrative a grasp of sociopolitical conditions seldom found in other books. Armstrong spares none of the three monotheisms in her critique of intolerant policies as she ponders the supreme irony that the Holy City, revered by the faithful as symbol and site of harmony and integration, has been a contentious place where the faiths have fought constantly, not only with one another but within themselves, in bitter factions. Her condemnation of Israel's 1967 annexation of the Old City and East Jerusalem in the Six-Day War ("It was impossible for Israelis to see the matter objectively, since at the [Western Wall] they had encountered the Jewish soul"), however, pushes too far her theme of sacred geography as the physical embodiment of motivating myths and legends.-- they had encountered the Jewish soul"), however, pushes too far her theme of sacred geography as the physical embodiment of motivating myths and legends.

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From Library Journal

On the 3000th anniversary of David's capture of Jerusalem, Armstrong (*A History of God*, LJ 9/15/93) wrote this book "to find out what a holy city was" and to see how it is holy to the Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Her work is a historical commentary based on contemporary accounts from the earliest mention of Jerusalem to 1995, thus differing from Hershel Shanks's *Jerusalem* (LJ 11/15/95), which focuses on archaeology, and from *City of the Great King* (LJ 2/15/96), which highlights specific aspects of religious attitude as reflected in art and intellectual history. The concepts of replacing God with the sacred, mythology as an ancient form of psychology, and the symbolism of sacred geography, architecture, and rituals as expressing truths about the inner life are all interwoven throughout the text. Though Armstrong overvalues speculation in promoting her own ideas, e.g., she confidently bases her argument that David and Solomon's court and society in Jerusalem was Jebusite on an elaborate sequence of "perhaps," "could also," and "may have been" statements, her narrative is sprightly and interesting. For academic libraries.?Eugene O. Bowser, Univ. of Northern Colorado, Greeley

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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