

And Man Created God: Kings, Cults and Conquests at the time of Jesus  
by Selina O'Grady.  
Atlantic Books, 2012.

Selina O'Grady is a former radio producer turned popular historian. As such she brings to her writing a lightness of touch that will, and readability that should, encourage those who might not be tempted to read this book to do so.

In *And Man Created God*, a premise that earns her a warm endorsement from A C Grayling, Selina O' Grady takes the reader on a guided tour through what she sets out as being the crucial period in terms of the defining of faiths and key doctrines in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE and the first century CE. Her theory is developed initially through the change that occurred in Rome, at the beginning of its days of empire, when the person of the Emperor was deified and a cult dedicated to a human being spread throughout its dominions. She then journeys through the Middle East, to India and then China, giving examples of the ways in which Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism responded to the challenges of the period, setting in stone ideas and concepts that have, by and large, stood the test of time.

The nineteen chapters of *And Man Created God* conclude with the transformation by St Paul of the Galilean Jew, Jesus, into the Christ, and the acceptance by Constantine, and after him the Roman Empire, of the Christian faith and the deity of Jesus.

For O'Grady, the events of two thousand years ago have a direct bearing on the world we currently inhabit, and her book also serves as a powerful reminder that religious doctrines, no matter how credible they may, or may not be only gain real traction when they are allied to a political machine that has the clout to diffuse them widely.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh