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## God and His Demons

*Michael Parenti*

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**Michael Parenti : God and His Demons** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised God and His Demons:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. What the Bible Really Says Isn't What You Think It Says By BookwormXParenti, an objective and scholarly researcher, shows that the faithful are misinterpreting the ideas put forth in Biblical scripture and that it must be read very carefully to understand what it really says. The basic concepts of Christianity as a creed, similar to the "Great Chain of Being," which facilitates a hierarchical social system are evident throughout Parenti's book; however, this is best understood in the section titled The Lord's Lords where

Parenti explains that in feudal Europe (where there were three social classes or "estates"), the ruling elite of church and state colluded in exploiting the unfortunate peasants and artisans. Religious teaching, with its mystical, otherworldly imagery, promised the common people everything in the next world - heaven for the faithful and obedient, or Hell for the others - while the princes and bishops lived lavishly off the peasants' labor in this world. He explains that this church-state alliance continued into the twentieth century, and is now a church-state-corporate alliance in which the The Roman Church is a worldwide organization that possesses more wealth in real estate, gold reserves, stocks, bonds, and art treasures than any other single institution or transnational corporation. In protecting the church's pecuniary, material interests as a member of the pro-business owner-investor class, (both protestant and Catholic) church leaders have assisted in the disempowerment of labor unions and popular political movements, and the workers (today's peasant equivalents) are conditioned, via regular church attendance and cultural conditioning, to comply with secular managerial authority (e.g. Romans 13 1-7). Sin is defined as a failure of the worker's personal responsibility rather than as a consequence of problems in the socioeconomic environment. Parenti cites Biblical passages showing that the Bible promotes a hierarchical system that demands obedience to both God and worldly authority figures, and acceptance of one's place in the social hierarchy, no matter how lowly. For example, he notes that the Bible sanctions slavery (e.g. Colossians 3:22 and Ephesians 6:5) - including sexual slavery (e.g. Exodus 21:7-11) - which was the custom in ancient societies. He notes that the Bible disguises slavery with euphemisms such as servant, maidservant, or bondmaid and that Jesus said masters (slave owners) have a right to render whippings whenever a servant's duties are not performed to the master's satisfaction (e.g. Luke 12:47-48). Using Biblical citations, Parenti exposes Jesus as a tyrant who demanded compliance with his authority, and deadly retribution for all nonbelievers, but today's Christianists assure us that Jesus' love was unconditional. Parenti explains that famous religious personalities such as Martin Luther and Mother Teresa were aligned with the ruling elite, not with the common people, and, as Parenti describes Mother Teresa, she was a right-winger who used the poor as her pets and as her props, flew first class on her frequent trips, praised the poor for their exemplary acceptance of their circumstances, received only the best healthcare for herself, and concealed the amount of money and property accumulated by her charities. Today's religious right is richly funded by ultra-wealthy right-wing authoritarian ideologues whose Christianist media propagate free-market corporatism, militarism and super-patriotism. In the section titled Priestly Procurers, Parenti reports that as of 2007, in the U.S., the Roman Catholic church had paid out \$2 billion in sexual abuse settlements, legal fees and counseling for pedophile priests. In the section titled A Secular State, Parenti explains that the nation's founders did not intend for the Republic to be beholden to any religion. For example, he quotes James Madison, as follows: Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind, and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect. I strongly recommend this book, as well as all of Parenti's other books, some of which, unfortunately, are no longer in print. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I've read better history from people who aren't even historians. By Anon Ymous I'm halfway through it, but so far it's very banal. I've read better history from people who aren't even historians. Feels like he slammed out a book just to say he did. Can't blame him of course, for riding the atheism wave. Still, it's Parenti and that's miles better than most authors. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Easy to read. By Joe K. Easy to read with no conjecture, but rather, documented facts. I found some details astounding. The book stands very well for the case it presents.

A noted author and activist brings his critical acumen and rhetorical skills to bear in this polemic against the dark side of religion. Unlike some popular works by stridently outspoken atheists, this is not a blanket condemnation of all believers. Rather the author's focus is the heartless exploitation of faithful followers by those in power, as well as sectarian intolerance, the violence against heretics and nonbelievers, and the reactionary political and economic collusion that has often prevailed between the upper echelons of church and state. Parenti notes the deleterious effects of past theocracies and the threat to our freedoms posed by present-day fundamentalists and theocratic reactionaries. He discusses how socially conscious and egalitarian minded liberal religionists have often been isolated and marginalized by their more conservative (and better financed) coreligionists. Finally, he documents the growing strength of secular freethinkers who are doing battle against the intolerant theocratic usurpers in public life. Historically anchored yet sharply focused on the contemporary scene, this eloquent indictment of religions dangers will be welcomed by committed secular laypersons and progressive religionists alike.

From Publishers Weekly Anyone looking for a catalogue of religion's darkest moments will find it in this angry volume by the Berkeley-based cultural critic and activist. A New Atheist in the mold of Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Richard Dawkins, Parenti spares no adjectives in describing the evils of religion, be it creationism or televangelists. He claims he does not want to destroy other people's beliefs and that his book is not addressed to religious progressives, whom he finds tolerable. But he writes about religion, whether Christianity or Islam, with unconcealed scorn and derision. Parenti makes no clear argument, nor does his polemic offer an introduction or conclusion. Instead it might be understood as a call to arms against what he calls religionists the world over. He complains that progressive dissidents usually are denied access to mass media audiences, a charge that might confound his publisher and the

industry that has made leading New Atheists household names. His condescending tirade is directed not so much at religion as at human beings whom one gets the impression he can barely suffer. (Mar.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "God and His Demons is filled with sparkling insights, sly wit, and beautiful writing of a kind we have come to expect from Michael Parenti. He strips away the virtuous pretenses of self-proclaimed religionists throughout the world, and he does it with evidence and arguments that are historically and biblically informed. A riveting read that I recommend to all." --Julia Scheeres, author of *Jesus Land*"Michael Parenti's *God and His Demons* is wonderfully irreverent, institutionally challenging, and humanizingly relevant -- a recommended read for believers, agnostics and atheists." --Peter Phillips, professor of sociology, Sonoma State University, editor of *Project Censored* yearbooks"God and His Demons picks apart the teachings and practices of organized religions with characteristic wit, humor, and incision: vintage Parenti." --Jacques R. Pauwels, author of *The Myth of the Good War* and *Beneath the Dust of Time*."Pharisees and charlatans beware. In *God and His Demons*, veteran scholar Michael Parenti turns pen to sword with acumen and rapier wit; slaying the sacred cows of organized religions. *God and His Demons* is vintage Parenti. A great book, much needed, which will hopefully be widely read. Parenti defiles the true religious defilers like no one else can -- with stunning underreported facts, a wry smile, and world-class wit." --Mickey Huff, associate professor of history, Diablo Valley College, co-editor of *Censored 2010*About the AuthorMichael Parenti (Berkeley, CA) is the acclaimed author of more than twenty books, including, most recently, *Contrary Notions: The Michael Parenti Reader*; *The Assassination of Julius Caesar*; and *The Culture Struggle*. *The New York Times Book Review*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Nation*, and *Antioch* are among the countless publications that have praised Parenti's work. Visit him at [www.michaelparenti.org](http://www.michaelparenti.org).