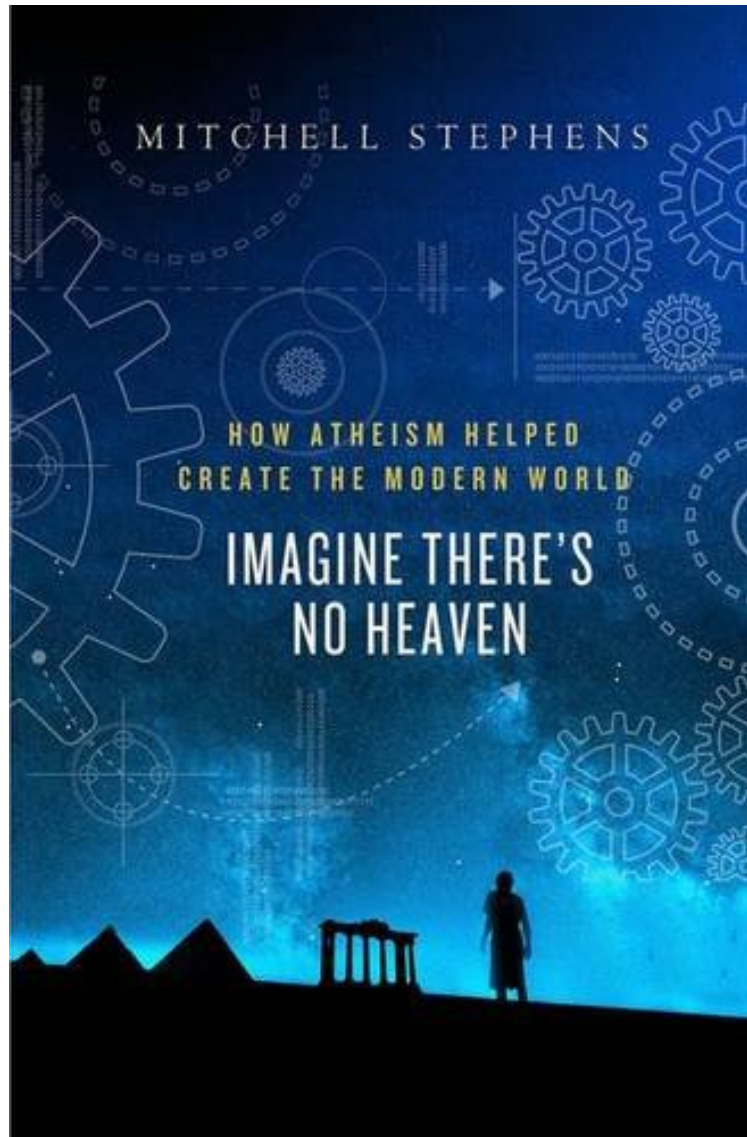


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Imagine There's No Heaven: How Atheism Helped Create the Modern World

Mitchell Stephens

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Mitchell Stephens : Imagine There's No Heaven: How Atheism Helped Create the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Imagine There's No Heaven: How Atheism Helped Create the Modern World:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. TimelyBy John ProeschExcellent intellectual history. Atheism is

nothing new and this is a basic history of non-belief. It also chronicles the story of the persecution of non-belief. Very timely. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful philosophy of life inside. By O. Blacklock. It's full of freethinking good sense and makes me sad that these ideas are not shared by more people. The world would be such a better place if these beliefs were dominant. Some of my family and friends see the light, thank "god". 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great read for those interested in why we believe. By LHC. Delightful book. I especially liked his take on religiosity in America as compared to Europe.

The historical achievements of religious belief have been large and well chronicled. But what about the accomplishments of those who have challenged religion? Traveling from classical Greece to twenty-first century America, *Imagine There's No Heaven* explores the role of disbelief in shaping Western civilization. At each juncture common themes emerge: by questioning the role of gods in the heavens or the role of a God in creating man on earth, nonbelievers help move science forward. By challenging the divine right of monarchs and the strictures of holy books, nonbelievers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot, help expand human liberties, and influence the early founding of the United States. Revolutions in science, in politics, in philosophy, in art, and in psychology have been led, on multiple occasions, by those who are free of the constraints of religious life. Mitchell Stephens tells the often-courageous tales of history's most important atheists like Denis Diderot and Salman Rushdie. Stephens makes a strong and original case for their importance not only to today's New Atheist movement but to the way many of us believers and nonbelievers now think and live.

[The] story of atheism as an articulate movement. We learn an enormous amount about figures censored out of history, and about the persecution that freethinkers suffered until shockingly recently. His martyrs fill our hearts; his heroes inspire. moving. The New Yorker Stephens provides an intriguing take on a topic that has sparked much discussion and will surely spark more to come. Publishers Weekly Provocative, deeply researched and enlightening. Kirkus s The only thing new about the New Atheists are the names. As Mitchell Stephens reveals in this gripping narrative history of atheism, many brave souls have come out of the atheist closet over the centuries to challenge the religious dogma of their day, and many paid the ultimate price for so doing. We all stand on the shoulders of these giants so artfully brought to life along with their ideas in this important contribution to the burgeoning literature on unbelief. Michael Shermer, Publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, and author of *The Believing Brain*, and *The Science of Good and Evil*. An intriguing book, presenting a magnificent cast of characters who helped shape modernity. It helps us all measure even those we disagree with most in terms of their creativity and moral worth rather than what they do, or do not, believe. Jonathan Israel, Professor of History, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton University. *Imagine There's No Heaven* is a landmark study of the role played by atheism and other forms of religious doubt in the development of Western civilization. Mitchell Stephens strides through history as deftly as he steps across disciplines, uncovering a dramatic chronicle of unbelief as a goad to innovation that centuries of more devout scholarship tended to obscure. This book invites atheists to celebrate and others to acknowledge the outsized role that unbelievers have played in shaping the West. Tom Flynn, editor of *Free Inquiry* magazine, and editor, *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief*. Mitchell Stephens' new book "*Imagine There's No Heaven*" is smart, evenhanded, and full of personality. He has a great eye for the important details, which is particularly evident in his evocative portraits of individuals, such as Sartre and Camus. Deserves to be on every skeptic's bookshelf and we can hope it reaches many among the faithful as well. Jennifer Michael Hecht, author of *Doubt: A History*. About the Author