



## I Am God, I Am Jesus, I Am Allah, The Truth Will Set You Free

**Jeff Olson**

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*I Am God, I Am Jesus, I Am Allah, The Truth Will Set You Free is a creative religious tale positioned around the topic of salvation versus damnation.*

Jeff Olson's brief religious text *I Am God, I Am Jesus, I Am Allah, The Truth Will Set You Free* combines aspects of several religions, resulting in a Christian Universalism hybrid faith that emphasizes the importance of choosing light over darkness.

This text packs much into its short space, covering angels' conversations, proclamations from God, Satan's attempts to thwart Allah and God, and humanity's creation. Among all of these elements, the book is most concerned with redemption through Jesus, who, in the text, is also known as Noel.

Noel is presented as the son of Allah and Oceanna, or Mother Nature. Allah narrates and serves as the touchstone of this fabalistic tale. To effect salvation for all, Allah strives to do as God asks. He also experiences heartache, hardship, and Satan's betrayal, all for the good and survival of humanity, which he helped God to create. Mixed in with Allah's vignettes are memoir-esque sections that cover Olson's own experiences with the mystical, resulting in an interesting textual mashup.

Still, the memoir elements of the book are difficult to classify; their purpose in the story is unclear. The book's mix of memoir, manifesto, prophesy, and allegory elements is a challenge, suggesting a carte blanche approach that holds the audience at a distance. Creative religious claims—including that Noah's flood occurred on a planet other than Earth, and that Noah attempted to get Neanderthals onto his ark—arise, but their details are not sufficiently established.

Other logic-challenging claims arise, most of which depart from familiar religious notions. These include that Moses died of prostate cancer; that references to Jesus walking on water actually referred to him swimming, a concept built on the book's notion that first-century people didn't know how to swim; and that the Catholic Church existed during Jesus's lifetime, despite historical records that refute this claim.

Even though the ultimate theme of good winning out against evil is evident by the book's end, the book's delivery is too muddled to make the message compelling. Personal interjections break the fourth wall, impeding the story further. The incorporation of current topics, including immunization, tax evasion, and Jesus's return, represent attempts to bridge the past and the present, but this work is also done without enough context to be convincing.

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ALEX DAILEY (November 20, 2020)

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