



**By**

**Mark McGee**



*World Religions in Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic* (IVP Academic, 2023) by Douglas Groothuis is well-named. It is a ‘small’ introduction to a ‘vast’ topic, which is what may help many Christians understand the beliefs of friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

My previous experience with Dr. Groothuis’ writing has primarily been through his massive *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. You can read [my review of that book here](#). While I highly recommend *Christian Apologetics* to any Christian interested in learning ‘Christian apologetics,’ committing to reading a book with more than 800 pages is a task that many may view as too large to undertake.

That is one reason I think *World Religions in Seven Sentences* is perfect for any Christian. It is a small paperback book (eBook also available) with about 176 pages. It covers seven major worldviews with each worldview receiving about 20 pages of the author’s expert insights.

As a former atheist I was especially interested in how Dr. Groothius would approach that worldview. I thought he handled it very well. I studied Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism prior to becoming an atheist and thought his approach to each was both accurate and helpful to understanding those belief systems. The same is true of his chapters on Judaism and Islam based on talking with many Jews and Muslims about Christ. The better we know and understand someone's background and beliefs, the better we can represent our Lord.

If you are looking for a short book that will help you in your ministry to much of the world's population, *World Religions in Seven Sentences* is just what the 'doctor' ordered.

*... while religions are many, truth is one; and all religions cannot be one, given their differing truth claims about the ultimate reality, humanity, morality, spiritual liberation, the afterlife, and more. There are many approaches or methods to the study of religion, by mine is self-consciously cognitive and apologetic. I address the central doctrines of each religion (1) in relation to Christianity (to show similarities and*

*differences) and (2) attempt to ascertain how each religion testifies to the bar of truth. You should not be surprised, then, to find my evaluations of each faith after discussing their central tenets. My conviction is that truth is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ, so it will serve as the lens through which I understand other faiths and other claims to the truth.*

*pp 6-7*

## **WORLD RELIGIONS IN SEVEN SENTENCES**

# Contents

Introduction

1. Nietzsche: God is Dead

2. Judaism: I AM WHO I AM

3. Hinduism: You Are That

4. Buddhism: Life Is Suffering

5. Daoism: The Dao that Can Be Spoken Is Not the Eternal  
Dao

6. Christianity: Before Abraham Was, I Am

7. Islam: There is One God, and Mohammad is His Prophet

Conclusion

## Publisher Description

**Understanding the beliefs and practices of other faiths is essential not just to the task of interreligious dialogue, but also to grasping one's own faith.**

In this brief volume in IVP Academic's Introductions in Seven Sentences, philosopher Douglas Groothuis creatively uses a single sentence representing each of several world religions as a way to open readers to their depth and complexity, including:

- Atheism: "God Is Dead."
- Judaism: "I Am Who I Am."
- Hinduism: "You Are That."
- Buddhism: "Life Is Suffering."
- Daoism: "The Dao That Can Be Spoken Is Not the Eternal Dao."
- Christianity: "Before Abraham Was, I Am."

- Islam: “There Is One God, and Mohammad Is His Prophet.”

With a sympathetic but not uncritical approach, Groothuis welcomes readers to a vital and global conversation.

The accessible primers in the Introductions in Seven Sentences collection act as brief introductions to an academic field, with simple organization: seven key sentences that give readers a birds-eye view of an entire discipline.



## Reviews

*“Most of us will never become scholars of the major world religions. But as society becomes more pluralistic and technology increases our awareness of and interconnection with countries all over the world, there has never been a time when it is more crucial for believers to understand the major religious worldviews. Enter Douglas Groothuis’s marvelous book *World Religions in Seven Sentences*. Groothuis has earned the reputation of being a first-rate scholar who deals fairly and accurately with views he critiques. And *World Religions in Seven Sentences* may be his best example yet. This work is unique in that it accurately presents the major religious worldviews; provides fair, hard-hitting criticisms of them; and accomplishes all this in a brief, easy-to-read way. In my view, this is now the first book to read for anyone who wants to get at the heart of important religions and compare them with Christianity. I love this book!”*

J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, and author of *A Simple Guide to Miracles*

*“This innovative primer succeeds where most introductory texts fail, namely in combining a lucid and succinct exposition with accuracy and precision. Another great virtue of the text is its capacity to introduce religious and atheistic positions in a most hospitable manner while adding some constructive, critical observations from the Christian point of view. All in all, an extraordinary tool for both seasoned and novice students of living faiths and secularism.”*

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, professor of systematic theology at Fuller Theological Seminary and docent of ecumenics at the University of Helsinki

*“Knowledge of religions other than one’s own is not widespread, and often this limited knowledge is based on the trappings of a given religion rather than its worldview and necessary doctrines. As a philosopher, Dr. Groothuis has captured what is most needful to understand in the major*

*religions of the world in a book easy to read and understand. I commend him for this work and believe that his book can be an important introduction to the study of faiths other than one's own. I would encourage anyone wanting to have a better understanding of different religions to read this book."*

H. Wayne House, distinguished research professor of theology, law, and culture at Faith International University, author of *Charts of World Religions*

*"Douglas Groothuis has written a terrific book that introduces us to the heart of the world's leading faiths, including atheism. Writing from a Christian perspective, he spells out the tenets of seven world religions in a clear, accessible, and lively manner. He reminds us of the importance of applying logic and reason to these worldviews in order to better assess their truth status, which is all the more vital in a culture that frequently espouses an 'all religions are basically the same' way of thinking."*

Paul Copan, Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University and author of *A Little Book for New Philosophers*

*“As always, Doug Groothuis excels with his solid and sharp reasoning, expressed in his usual flowing and convincing style. He addresses six religions (including Christianity) and atheism (Nietzsche) by drawing a significant sentence or phrase from each. He then interprets the religions on the basis of this ‘headline’ and discusses the strengths and weaknesses, particularly in comparison and contrast with biblical Christianity. A very helpful handbook.”*

Winfried Corduan, professor emeritus of philosophy and religion at Taylor University

## About the Author

Douglas Groothuis (PhD, University of Oregon) is professor of philosophy at Denver Seminary. He is the author of numerous books, including *Christian Apologetics*, *Fire in the Streets*, *Philosophy in Seven Sentences*, *Unmasking the New Age*, *Truth Decay*, *On Pascal*, *On Jesus*, and *Walking Through Twilight*. He has written for scholarly journals such as *Religious Studies*, *Sophia*, *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and *Philosophia Christi*, as well as for numerous popular magazines.

[From IVP Academic Website]

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