



# The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion

*Martin Riesebrodt*

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# The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion

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## **The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion** Martin Riesebrodt

Why has religion persisted across the course of human history? Secularists have predicted the end of faith for a long time, but religions continue to attract followers. Meanwhile, scholars of religion have expanded their field to such an extent that we lack a basic framework for making sense of the chaos of religious phenomena. To remedy this state of affairs, Martin Riesebrodt here undertakes a task that is at once simple and monumental: to define, understand, and explain religion as a universal concept.

Instead of propounding abstract theories, Riesebrodt concentrates on the concrete realities of worship, examining religious holidays, conversion stories, prophetic visions, and life-cycle events. In analyzing these practices, his scope is appropriately broad, taking into consideration traditions in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, and Shinto. Ultimately, Riesebrodt argues, all religions promise to avert misfortune, help their followers manage crises, and bring both temporary blessings and eternal salvation. And, as *The Promise of Salvation* makes clear through abundant empirical evidence, religion will not disappear as long as these promises continue to help people cope with life.

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