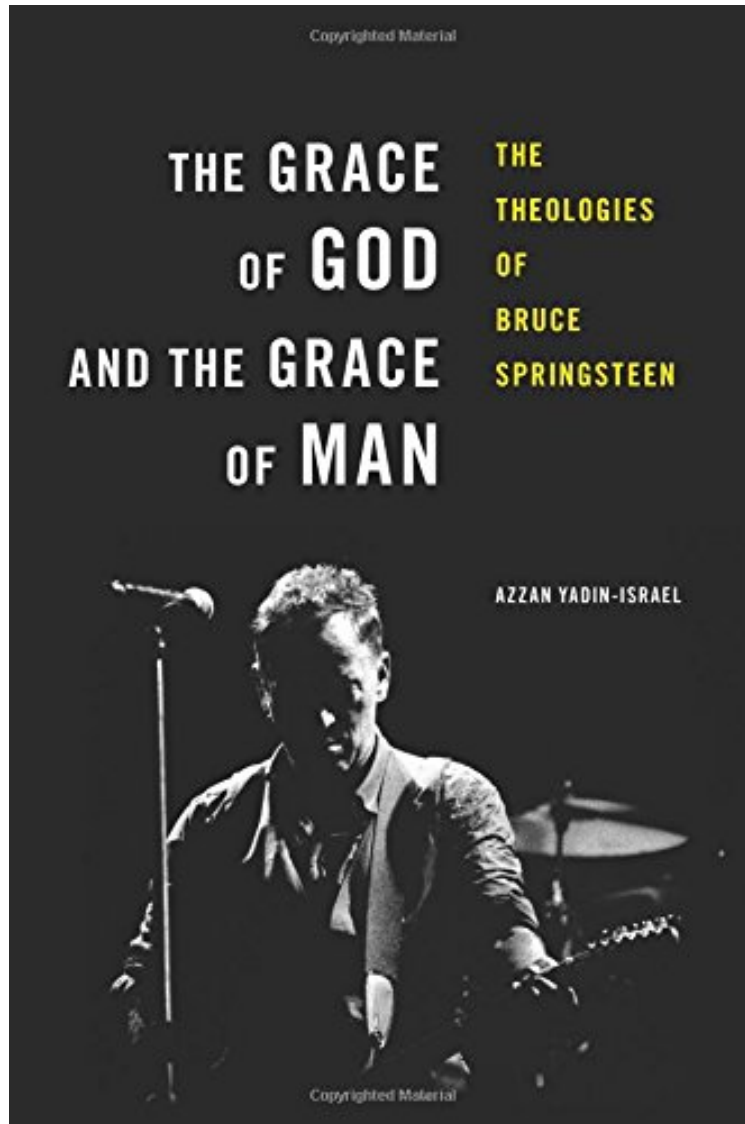


# The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen

Azzan Yadin-Israel

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**Azzan Yadin-Israel : The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Grace of God and the Grace of Man: The Theologies of Bruce Springsteen:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well researched, well organized, well deliveredBy Karen JohnstonI

read this as part of my own engagement with layers of meaning and resonance with Springsteen, as well as my intention to write a sermon with Springsteen music at the heart. This book's thorough content as well as its lack of overreach was helpful. I am compelled by the notion that Springsteen's sense of sin is about broken relationships. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not What I thought it was going to be. By Andrea Labe One can read many themes in Bruce's songs but this was really hard to relate to. I am no theologian so what this man asserts may be true but it really is searching for deep religious meaning in songs for everyday folks leading everyday lives. I thought it would focus on the evangelical, cathartic yet even religious experience between Bruce and his fans. I probably won't ever finish the book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Star By Roberta Straughn WAS RETURNED

Reading Springsteen's songs as one would a poem, *The Grace of God and the Grace of Man* sheds new light on Springsteen's work. The book's first section examines the theological overtones of Springsteen's early albums, focusing on his critique of traditional religious institutions and the promise of this-worldly salvation through romantic love and the open road. This trajectory in Springsteen's writing reaches an exhilarating apex in *Born to Run*, only to be methodically dismantled in the subsequent *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. The second section of the book examines the ways in which Springsteen reworks three traditional terms in his work after *Darkness on the Edge of Town*: sin, grace, and the struggle within. Drawing on songs from across Springsteen's later work, the book demonstrates that Springsteen consistently situates these terms in the lived struggle to overcome the forces that pull us away from our better selves. Sin is the surrender to these forces, and grace the blessings that come from overcoming them; both result from the struggle within. The third and final section, "Springsteen's Midrash," examines songs that explicitly interpret biblical passages, including "Into the Fire," "Adam Raised a Cain," and the hauntingly beautiful "Jesus Was an Only Son." *The Grace of God and the Grace of Man*'s close readings of Springsteen's songs provide a wealth of local insights as well as a new critical framework for the appreciation of this major American artist.

"[A] marvelous explication of Springsteen's lyrics as they allude to the Bible and discuss religious themes. Yadin-Israel shows how Springsteen's ideas on religion have evolved over the decades, and he analyzes Springsteen's lyrics with sensitivity and depth, even as he writes in a user-friendly and approachable way. This book will be of great interest not only to Bruce's fans but to anyone interested in religion in contemporary American culture." -Benjamin D. Sommer, Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages, the Jewish Theological Seminary "Fans gather at Bruce concerts for the rock and roll -- but often, too, for his rousing affirmation of those things that last: faith, hope, love. The author of this brilliant book understands this, and, like Bruce, invites his readers to think -- and sing -- along. Highly recommended." -Paul J. Contino, Professor of Great Books, Pepperdine University "Students of Springsteen have long recognized the importance of religious themes in his music, but no one has probed the theological depths of his work as fully and imaginatively as Azzan Yadin-Israel. *The Grace of God and Grace of Man* is essential reading for fans and scholars alike." -Louis P. Masur, author of *Runaway Dream: Born to Run and Bruce Springsteen's American Vision* About the Author Azzan Yadin-Israel is professor of Jewish Studies and Classics at Rutgers University. He is the author of two monographs on early rabbinic biblical interpretation and dozens of articles. His book *Intuitive Vocabulary: German* is also available through Lingua Press. His scholarly publications are available on academia.edu.