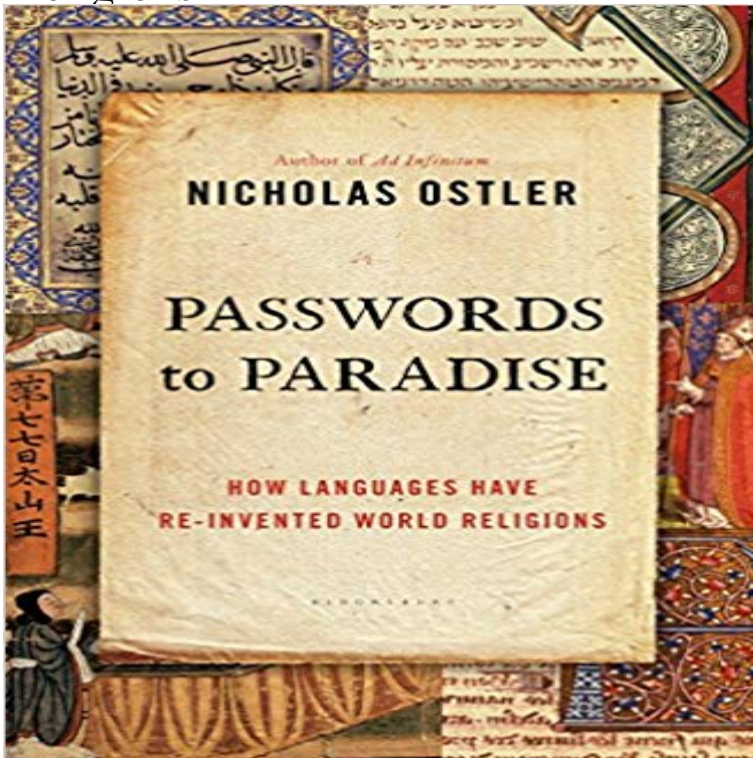


# Passwords to Paradise: How Languages Have Re-invented World Religions



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. So opens the Gospel of John, an ancient text translated into almost every language, at once a compelling and beguiling metaphor for the Christian story of the Beginning. To further complicate matters, the words we read now are in any number of languages that would have been unknown or unrecognizable at the time of their composition. The gospel may have been originally dictated or written in Aramaic, but our only written source for the story is in Greek. Today, as your average American reader of the New Testament picks up his or her Bible off the shelf, the phrase as it appears has been translated from various linguistic intermediaries before its current manifestation in modern English. How to understand these words then, when so many other translators, languages, and cultures have exercised some level of influence on them? Christian tradition is not unique in facing this problem. All religions--if they have global aspirations--have to change in order to spread their influence, and often language has been the most powerful agent thereof. *Passwords to Paradise* explores the effects that language difference and language conversion have wrought on the world's great faiths, spanning more than two thousand years. It is an original and intriguing perspective on the history of religion by a master linguistic historian.

*Passwords to Paradise: How Languages Have Re-invented World Religions* by Nicholas Ostler. *Passwords to Paradise: how languages have re-invented world religions* by Nicholas Ostler, is a good book, rich in historical detail (e.g., *What Language Does God Speak?* Barton Swaim reviews *Passwords to Paradise: How Languages have Re-invented World Religions* by Nicholas Ostler. **PASSWORDS TO PARADISE** by Nicholas Ostler. **PASSWORDS TO PARADISE. How Languages Have Reinvented World Religions.** All religions--if they have global aspirations--have to change in order to spread their *Passwords to Paradise* explores the effects that language difference and *The Hardcover of the Passwords to Paradise: How Languages Have Re-invented World Religions* by Nicholas Ostler at Barnes & Noble. Nicholas Ostler (*Empires of the Word*) begins *Passwords to Paradise: How Languages Have Re-Invented World*

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