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St. Augustine Of Hippo: The City Of God



Synopsis

In The City of God (begun in 413, but Books 20-22 were written in 426) Augustine answers the pagans, who attributed the fall of Rome (410) to the abolition of pagan worship. Considering this problem of Divine Providence with regard to the Roman Empire, he widens the horizon still more and in a burst of genius he creates the philosophy of history, embracing as he does with a glance the destinies of the world grouped around the Christian religion, the only one which goes back to the beginning and leads humanity to its final term. The City of God is considered as the most important work of the great bishop. The other works chiefly interest theologians; but it, like the Confessions, belongs to general literature and appeals to every soul. The Confessions are theology which has been lived in the soul, and the history of God's action on individuals, while The City of God is theology framed in the history of humanity, and explaining the action of God in the world.

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Customer Reviews

What can I say? This is a classic. I am so glad I read this before my 30th birthday and before the

2016 US presidential election. It really puts things into perspective. No matter how great I think America is and how much of a superpower it is it does not compare to how long and how great the Roman Empire was. I cannot even begin to imagine how the citizens of Rome must have felt when they heard the news that the barbarian tribes from the north took over Rome in 410AD. This apologetic work from Augustine of Hippo does not only argue that the City of God will overcome the City of Man one day but also teaches one how to engage critics and persuasively convince the reader. Augustine was a Roman through and through but His love for the true Eternal City was always more important. This book gave me an appreciation for how God always has a 'pilgrim people' that He has predestined to fight the good fight. If you are looking for a biblical theology of the City of God throughout all of Scripture then this is a great read for you. It will also give you an appreciation for how the current trend of 'gospel-centered' is not anything new but really old and Augustine was a master at making Christ-centered connections from the OT. For example, on page 971 Augustine skillfully writes, "This is why, as the Lord carried his cross, so Isaac himself carried to the place of sacrifice the wood on which he too was to be placed. Moreover, after the father had been prevented from striking his son, since it was not right that Isaac should be slain, who was the ram whose immolation completed the sacrifice by blood of symbolic significance? Bear in mind that when Abraham saw the ram it was caught by the horns in a thicket. Who, then, was symbolized by that ram but Jesus, crowned with Jewish thorns¹⁵⁰ before he was offered in sacrifice? The book is filled with little nuggets all throughout. Couldn't recommend it more!

The City of God is a classic with very detailed theological thoughts and developments throughout the very long book. Augustine develops the two cities theme with vast information. It was difficult for me to sustain the level of attention for this monumental work throughout. There were ideas from Augustine that I had never heard of in theology or divinity school. For example he ponders and goes through Biblical verses to support his view on the origin of angels in the creation scheme. I am glad that I read through this book in a quick way but admit it would be difficult to carefully read this huge book. Augustine is a remarkable church father. I would suggest reading his confessions or his book on teachings as a starter to Augustine, however.

Now I understand why the writings of Augustine are so popular. Here he paints a clear inspired picture of early days in the Church, and what it meant to be a Christian in those days. He explained in a way I really enjoyed, the thoughts of notable philosophers like Plato, Varro etc & outlining what wisdom was given to them, where some erred with their disjointed acceptance of the plethora of

gods, and finally making the comparison and rightful case for the one true God and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you think you deserve to be talking-about anything-get this book. Augustine is one of the most distinguished men of letters. Just reading his essays shall make you a more studied, disciplined, tried writer and speaker. The objectivity of the author is astounding. He gave his party lifestyle -comparable to contemporary university freshman-for a life of pain, predictability, and ink pens. City of Gods reminds me why it is obvious that this book is a definitive article from the most famous catholic.

Augustine was genuinely interested in every aspect of reality, and his inquiring spirit leads him into many difficult and important issues. In this book, he offers a theological understanding of history. He responds to the criticism that abandoning the worship of the traditional deities of Rome and turning to Christianity had contributed to the fall of Rome. His criticism of traditional Roman religion is powerful and at times amusing. As is well known, he writes about two cities which are in continual conflict, developing alongside one another: the city of God, based on the love of God even to the point of despising self; and the city of man, built on love for self even to the point of despising God. An interesting detail is that we do not know in our present life who belongs to each city. People who today are externally following God's law may one day abandon that way, and be separated from him forever. Others may seem far from him, but they may eventually find their way close to him, as happened to Augustine himself.

I've done considerable reading in what would be classed as "Great Christian Literature" but thought Augustine would turn out to be boring. Absolutely Not Boring. He's funny, razor sharp, and has allegorical insights which are wonderful. His analyses of the progress of the City of God and the City of Earth are splendid...how come churches don't talk about this stuff? For instance... did you know that when the visigoths sacked Rome, they spared the lives of all who claimed to be Christians and took refuge in a Christian place of worship? I didn't. Do you know why? I didn't... the visigoths were Christians (of the Arian sect). Now I'll bet they never told you that. Now, you've got to like reading, it's 2 inches thick with no "pop-ups" ... I loved reading this.

This book dives into so much theology from a 5th century theology which is the father of early Christian thought that just gives of himself to make sure that his legacy and thoughts were kept and

preserved. This book is transformational and will give insight into what many of us believe today and why. Answers to questions that we typically just don't know where to find. It is tough, but well worth it. Much like vegetables in your diet!

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