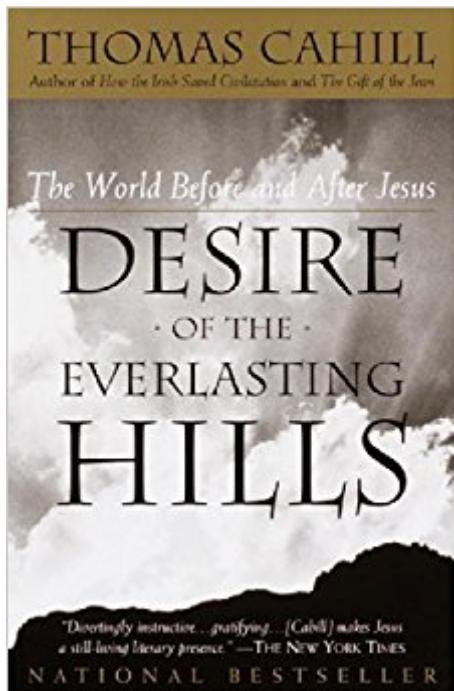


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Desire Of The Everlasting Hills: The World Before And After Jesus (Hinges Of History)



Synopsis

From the bestselling author of *How the Irish Saved Civilization* and *The Gifts of the Jews*, his most compelling historical narrative yet. How did an obscure rabbi from a backwater of the Roman Empire come to be the central figure in Western Civilization? Did his influence in fact change the world? These are the questions Thomas Cahill addresses in his subtle and engaging investigation into the life and times of Jesus. Cahill shows us Jesus from his birth to his execution through the eyes of those who knew him and in the context of his time: "a time when the Jews were struggling to maintain their beliefs under overlords who imposed their worldview on their subjects. Here is Jesus the loving friend, itinerate preacher, and quiet revolutionary, whose words and actions inspired his followers to journey throughout the Roman world and speak the truth he instilled: "in the face of the greatest defeat: Jesus' crucifixion as a common criminal. Daring, provocative, and stunningly original, Cahill's interpretation will both delight and surprise.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Cahill's "Desire of the Everlasting Hills" is an engaging but somewhat disappointing work. In short, Cahill's discussion of the "world before" Jesus is more carefully considered than that of the "world after," with the author's treatment of the person of Jesus himself being an equivocation. Was Jesus merely human or was he both human and divine? I wouldn't have minded a clear argument for either position, but Cahill's narrative seems to hedge between the two. "Desire" sees Jesus as a radical visionary, to be sure, but does not have the courage to either affirm or deny the element of

transcendence in the Gospel accounts. Ultimately, though hints of possible transcendence abound, the person of Jesus is reduced to what nearly everyone can affirm (that Jesus was a "great moral teacher"), and when I finished the middle chapters of the book I found myself asking "is that all?" It is true that during Cahill's later discussion of the "world after" Jesus, Paul is described as someone who unquestionably viewed Jesus as divine, but here Cahill fails to make a definitive connection between Paul's theology and the historical figure of Jesus. And the further the book proceeds into the "world after," the more selective Cahill's scholarly sources become, a selection seeming to support a mostly negative bias regarding the institutional Church. This is especially apparent in his discussion of John's Gospel, which is impugned as being anti-Semitic, and is posited to be the primary inspiration for later anti-Semitism in the history of Christianity. Still, there is much to admire in this work. As I have said, I found the book to be engaging.

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