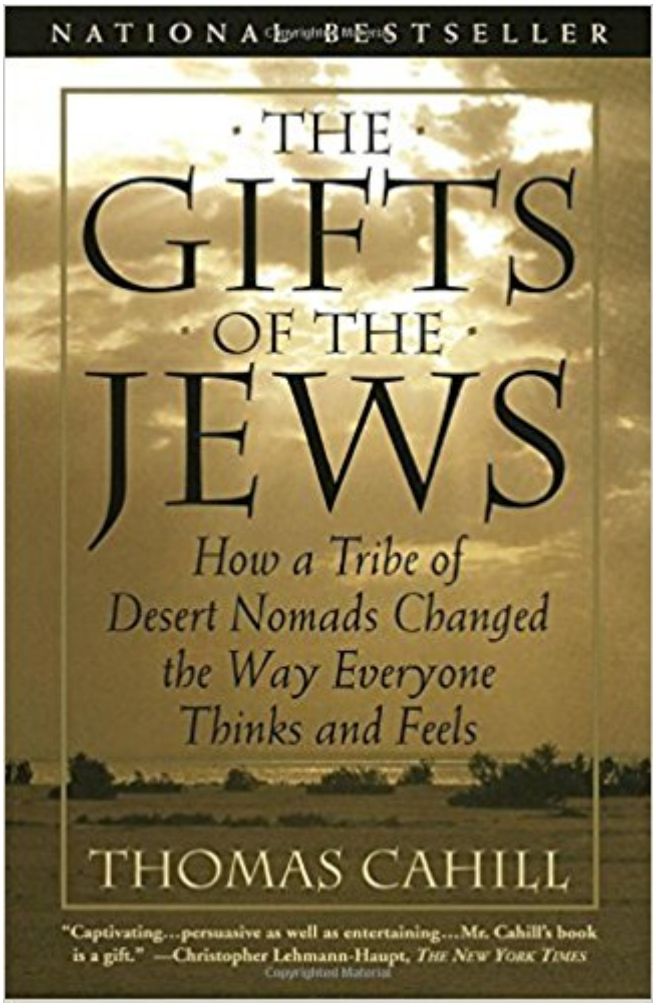
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The Gifts Of The Jews: How A Tribe Of Desert Nomads Changed The Way Everyone Thinks And Feels (Hinges Of History)



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Synopsis

The author of the runaway bestseller How the Irish Saved Civilization has done it again. In The Gifts of the Jews Thomas Cahill takes us on another enchanting journey into history, once again recreating a time when the actions of a small band of people had repercussions that are still felt today.The Gifts of the Jews reveals the critical change that made western civilization possible. Within the matrix of ancient religions and philosophies, life was seen as part of an endless cycle of birth and death; time was like a wheel, spinning ceaselessly. Yet somehow, the ancient Jews began to see time differently. For them, time had a beginning and an end; it was a narrative, whose triumphant conclusion would come in the future. From this insight came a new conception of men and women as individuals with unique destinies--a conception that would inform the Declaration of Independence--and our hopeful belief in progress and the sense that tomorrow can be better than today. As Thomas Cahill narrates this momentous shift, he also explains the real significance of such Biblical figures as Abraham and Sarah, Moses and the Pharaoh, Joshua, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.Full of compelling stories, insights and humor, The Gifts of the Jews is an irresistible exploration of history as fascinating and fun as How the Irish Saved Civilization.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Cahill, author of the bestselling How the Irish Saved Civilization, continues his Hinges of History series with The Gifts of the Jews, a light-handed, popular account of ancient Jewish culture, the culture of the Bible. The book is written from a decidedly modern point of view. Cahill notes, for

instance, that Abraham moved the Jews from Ur to the land of Canaan "to improve their prospects," and that the leering inhabitants of Sodom surrounded Lot’s lodging "like the ghouls in Night of the Living Dead." The Gifts of the Jews nonetheless encourages us to see the Old Testament through ancient eyes--to see its characters not as our contemporaries but as those of Gilgamesh and Amenhotep. Cahill also lingers on often-overlooked books of the Bible, such as Ruth, to discuss changes in ancient sensibility. The result is a fine, speculative, eminently readable work of history. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Cahill argues that the greatest gifts of the Jews are the linear theory of history (vs. the cyclical theory of other ancients), with its implication that life can get better and avoid decline and the idea of the equality and dignity of each individual that culminated in the declaration that "All men are created equal." Other gifts include the concepts of universal brotherhood, peace, and justice. (LJ 3/15/97) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As an Old Catholic priest and seminary instructor, I find it difficult to find decent texts explaining Old Testament context and perspective. This is a good one, in easy- to- understand language. Highly recommended, not only for Christians, but anybody interested in the hows and whys of the early Abrahamic faith.

i have all of the books published by thomas cahill. if you want to know about the subject, read his books

Great non-fiction book on the theological and historical foundations of Christianity. Very informative and written simply and clearly enough that the reader can easily understand what it says without having any experience with the topic.

We do owe so much to the Hebrew people who gave us the 10 Commandments and as a result changed the way we think! Compassion, altruisms, love for God and love for others does not come naturally. This Old Testament people have been faithful to the Word of God and they, as a people, have contributed so much to the world; not only in our view of the world but they have produced doctors, lawyers, scientists-- and the whole world continues to benefit from them.

I come from the southern US with a lot of Celtic ancestors. Both traditions value good story-telling over dotting the is and crossing the ts. Cahill made the Old Testament come alive for me and gave me lots to think about. I had no trouble following his arguments. Didn't always agree with what he said, but I really enjoyed how he said it. I am interested in the speculations of someone who is well informed and has spent time thinking about an important subject. If you like your history freeze-dried and free of original thought, by all means give this book a miss. This book is Mr. Cahill's response to the Old Testament, how he believes it has contributed to our Western world-view, and why he believes it is important to us today.

I enjoyed book one in the series so I thought I give book two a look, and decided to order 3-4. You don't have to read in any order, but I would recommend this book and "how the Irish saved..."

Cahill brings the Old Testament to life and makes the prophets human and credible. Well written, much better prose style than How the Irish Saved Civilization.

Awww yessss....this is a good book. It reads much like a novel, infusing facts in a good narrative of the way people were so long ago. It is a great way to truly understand the context of the stories within the Bible, but especially the Old Testament.

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