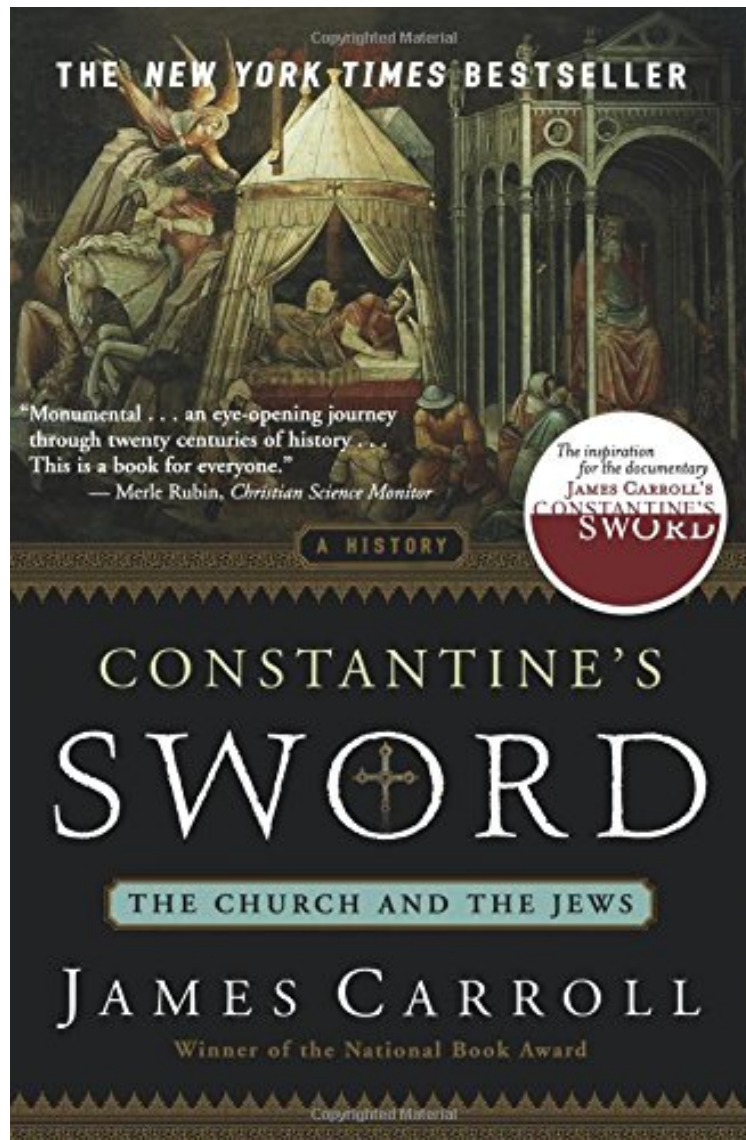


(Ebook pdf) Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History

Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History

James Carroll

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James Carroll : Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. It would have been an easy 5 star rating with a more reader friendly styleBy P MDifficult read but well worth the effort , Carroll seems impressed with vocabulary and his approach to answers much self directed towards his desired conclusions. However, his style and factual dialogue definitely

command inner thought and conscious review of one's personal religious focus. Additionally, I found his explanation of the impact of the cross on all religions eye opening. It would have been an easy 5 star rating with a more reader friendly style.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Carroll's personal experiences make this superb book come alive

By Samuel A. Cohen

It starts from a minor, though emotionally divisive event, the erection, by the Carmelite order, of a cross at Auschwitz. The cross was to the memory of Edith Stein, a convert to Catholicism who was executed in Auschwitz, along with hundreds of thousands of Jews. To understand why this event caused such anguish, Carroll takes us on a 2000-year journey from Jesus through the Roman empire, the dark ages, the middle ages, to today. Carroll presents details of the Catholic Churches involvement in pogroms, the Crusades, forced conversions, the Inquisition, purity of blood, ghettos, expulsions, more pogroms, Bismarck, Nazi's, more ghettos, and the Holocaust. All this told by an active Catholic, a former priest and a civil rights worker, whose father was a major figure in the US military intelligence and whose mother was a devout Catholic.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Indoctrinated Anti-Semitism Post Nicea's 4 Argumentative Meetings

By Al Sundel

Constantine became emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire partly through marriage; he attacked the Western half and killed all other possible heirs to any part of the Empire, including a boy. It was a time when Jewish-Christian sects had splintered into many divisive factions over the course of 300 years. Also, barbarian hordes rimmed the Empire, some blending partial new-sect ideas into their pagan ones. Their main heritage pagan symbol was a stylized cross probably more prevalent among them in the East as icon than it was among the Jewish-Christians in the West.

Constantine claimed he saw a vision of a stylized cross that held meaning for both these enlarging populations in southern Europe that he needed to tame. He called the Council of Nicea to meld all Jewish-Christian sects into one. Some invitees never showed up, resisting him. It took 4 no-doubt raucous meetings for the majority to separate themselves further from Judaism, which had given the Roman Empire more trouble than any other people or ideology (cf Hadrian's Holocaust). Nicea 4 retained most of the Hebrew Bible, against the wishes of the Marcionites. They separated Easter from Passover, proclaimed Sunday the Sabbath rather than Saturday (named after the sun, which Constantine worshipped), proscribed Jews as secondary citizens to Christians, may have declared Jewish-Christian synagogues churches, or the change had begun earlier and he solidified it. Constantine himself never became a practicing Christian, although his mother was a Jewish-Christian of possible semi-Pauline leaning that the Ebionites, among others, contested.

James Carroll, an ex-priest, explores these landmark anti-Semitic events that increased over the ages as de-Judaizing indoctrination. He omits the bitter effect the Roman-Jewish wars had on Rome, Roman cultural cruelty and Hadrian's Holocaust. He focuses on Constantinian deJudaizing and how it insidiously grew into indoctrinated hate thy neighbor, then ghettos and then Hitlerian rant and mass murder. This book is the most informative and panoramic of a progressive movement among Christian clergy to exercise free inquiry and opinion about the Church and its relations with the Jews (which have improved enormously from just such criticism). For that, and its patient and civil presentation, this book deserves 5 stars. It is a book of conscience. --As for Eusebius, cited by one reviewer, he was Constantine's Goebbels, a propagandist more than a real historian. The known facts of Nicea and its aftermath speak for themselves.--Al Sundel

In a bold and moving book that is sure to spark heated debate, the novelist and cultural critic James Carroll maps the profoundly troubling two-thousand-year course of the Church's battle against Judaism and faces the crisis of faith it has provoked in his own life as a Catholic. More than a chronicle of religion, this dark history is the central tragedy of Western civilization, its fault lines reaching deep into our culture. The Church's failure to protest the Holocaust the infamous silence of Pius XII is only part of the story: the death camps, Carroll shows, are the culmination of a long, entrenched tradition of anti-Judaism. From Gospel accounts of the death of Jesus on the cross, to Constantine's transformation of the cross into a sword, to the rise of blood libels, scapegoating, and modern anti-Semitism, Carroll reconstructs the dramatic story of the Church's conflict not only with Jews but with itself. Yet in tracing the arc of this narrative, he implicitly affirms that it did not necessarily have to be so. There were roads not taken, heroes forgotten; new roads can be taken yet. Demanding that the Church finally face this past in full, Carroll calls for a fundamental rethinking of the deepest questions of Christian faith. Only then can Christians, Jews, and all who carry the burden of this history begin to forge a new future. Drawing on his well-known talents as a storyteller and memoirist, and weaving historical research through an intensely personal examination of conscience, Carroll has created a work of singular power and urgency. *Constantine's Sword* is a brave and affecting reckoning with difficult truths that will touch every reader.

.com *Constantine's Sword* is a sprawling work of history, theology, and personal confession by James Carroll (the author of *An American Requiem*, among many others). Carroll begins his landmark project by describing contemporary Catholic remembrances of the Holocaust and the Church's intolerable legacy of hostility towards Jews. He then surveys Catholic anti-Judaism beginning with the New Testament and proceeding through the early Church, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Enlightenment, and World War II, before concluding with "A Call for Vatican III," a Church council that would make meaningful repentance for an entrenched tradition of hatred. Carroll's prescriptions

for repentance, continued in a powerful epilogue, are bracingly concrete: "there is no apology for Holy Week preaching that prompted pogroms until Holy Week liturgies, sermons, and readings have been purged of the anti-Jewish slanders that sent the mobs rushing out of church.... Forgiveness for the sin of anti-Semitism presumes a promise to dismantle all that makes it possible." Carroll's personal reflections as an American Catholic infuse his historical narrative, and although his reflections are sometimes unnecessarily detailed, they are admirable for the principle they express: "I find myself unable to accuse my Church of any sin that I cannot equally accuse myself of," he writes. Carroll's judgments on the Church are rightly harsh, even agonizing. And yet his vision for a future rapprochement between Christians and Jews is hopeful, in part because he personally has come to understand the deep connections between Israel and the Church: "Jesus offers me, a non-Jew, access to the biblical hope that was his birthright as a son of Israel." --Michael Joseph Gross

From Publishers Weekly

Part history, part memoir, this hefty tome by novelist Carroll (*Mortal Friends*, etc.) traces the record of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the Catholic Church, suggesting that centuries of animus culminated in the Holocaust. Carroll also traces the development of his own thinking about Judaism: as a Catholic seminarian, he knew no Jews and little about Judaism, except what he learned in classrooms, i.e., that Judaism had been superseded by Christ's new covenant. As a young priest at Boston U (which his colleagues disparagingly referred to as B-Jew, since so many Jews were enrolled), Carroll began to spend time with rabbis and Jewish students whose political and social commitments he found congenial. Eventually he left the priesthood; his increased discomfort with the Church's attitudes toward Judaism played no small part in that decision. But this book is more than guilty Catholic breast-beating. It also offers a sweeping look at instances of anti-Jewish sentiment throughout European history, from the blood libel to the Dreyfus affair, from the Inquisition to Auschwitz. Carroll offers fresh, provocative analysis, as in his discussion of the idea that the God of the Jews is a judgmental God concerned with law, whereas Jesus is about love. A foundation of much anti-Semitism. Carroll argues that Jesus' emphasis on love was his most Jewish attribute. Carroll makes these incisive arguments in his characteristically vigorous prose; fans of *An American Requiem*, his National Book Award-winning memoir, won't be disappointed. This magisterial work will satisfy Jewish and Christian readers alike, challenging both to a renewed conversation with one another. (Jan.)

Forecast: A Book-of-the-Month Club alternate selection, this book has a built-in market among Jewish and Catholic readers. Carroll is a columnist for the *Boston Globe*, so he has a dedicated readership there that will be boosted further by publicity appearances in that city and around the country. Two major events in the Boston area will kick off the book's publicity: a symposium at Brandeis and one at Harvard Divinity School, both featuring a discussion of the book by leading religious scholars. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

A National Book Award winner on Christianity's dark side

Aits anti-Semitism. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.