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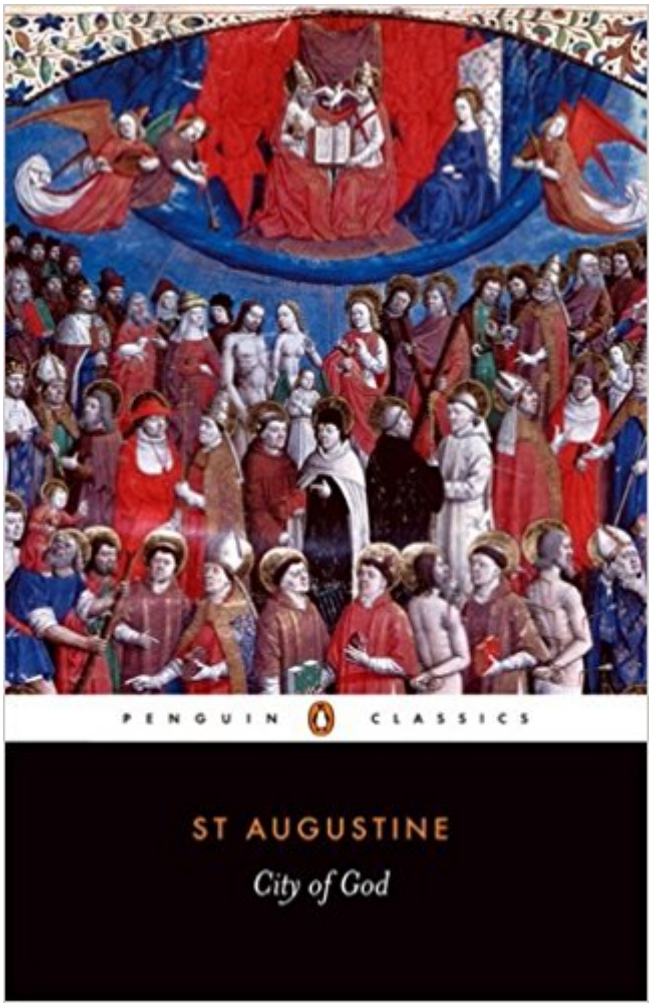
City Of God (Penguin Classics)



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Synopsis

St Augustine, bishop of Hippo, was one of the central figures in the history of Christianity, and City of God is one of his greatest theological works. Written as an eloquent defence of the faith at a time when the Roman Empire was on the brink of collapse, it examines the ancient pagan religions of Rome, the arguments of the Greek philosophers and the revelations of the Bible. Pointing the way forward to a citizenship that transcends the best political experiences of the world and offers citizenship that will last for eternity, City of God is one of the most influential documents in the development of Christianity.For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700Â titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust theÂ series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-dateÂ translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 1184 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Reprint edition (January 6, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140448942

ISBN-13: 978-0140448948

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 2 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Although I am normally a quick reader, it has taken me about six months to finish The City of God. At times I was frustrated, and believed that the book was imbued with a generative power, and grew longer the further I read.And yet I am a little sad to have finished it, for no matter what was going on in my life, like Scripture, the City of God had relevance. How to summarize such a monumental work?First of all, I do not concur with the dimishment of the early parts of the work. While Books 1

through X are indeed more clearly tied to the dissolving Roman world, it is extremely helpful for us to get our minds into a time when pagans were more than countercultural "post-Christian" teenage losers. Augustine’s vivid arguments against the pagan "theology" are incisive. More notably, they bring into focus a world that was both ultra-rational in the Platonic/Aristotilean tradition, and "superstitious" in its belief in household gods, demons, curses, and magic. That both a very advanced science and such beliefs could coexist is a lesson to us in our secularized, smug modern world.The temporal proximity of Augustine to Christ and the Apostles brings another level of clarity. While Augustine emphasized that "none shall know the day nor hour," it is clear that there is an apocolyptic undercurrent in the Christian society he inhabits. The urgency of Christian life seems to me to have diminished.Particularly striking are Augustine’s arguments against those "tender-hearted Christians" who hold various levels of Salvation for even the most depraved. In our world of ecumenical outreach, guitar-Mass hippy communalism, Augustine’s defense of the limited Salvation is a necessary wake-up call.

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