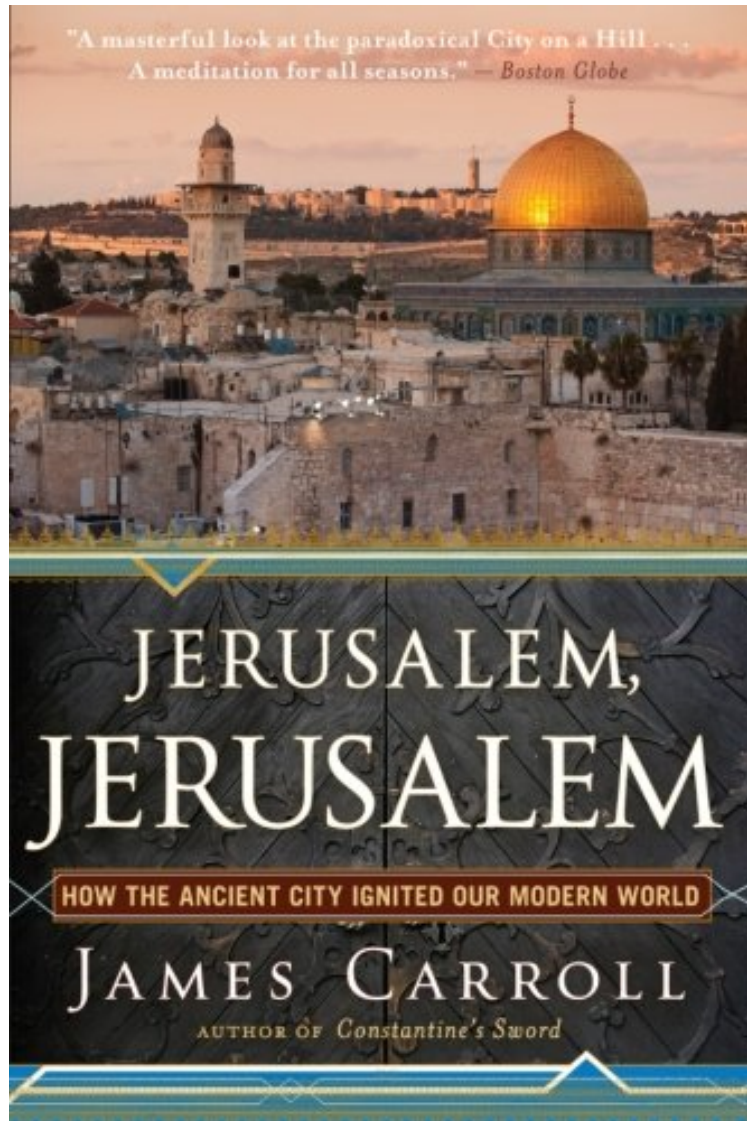


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Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World

James Carroll

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James Carroll : Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World:

17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Jerusalem, JerusalemBy Sally K. SeverinoJames Carroll is his remarkable best with this sobering, yet hopeful, book about how violence becomes interwoven in religion and politics.

He uses the city of Jerusalem - the origin of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - to trace both literally and symbolically the flow of violence in the world even today. He draws upon the insights of two men who have enriched our understanding of violence - Rene Girard and Gil Bailie. In particular, these two men have clarified the role of sacrificial killing and the role of the victim in recurring violence. The sobering aspect of "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" brings home the reality that violence is escaping our control and threatening our human existence. The hopeful aspect of "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" is its call to wake up and change before it is too late. The first step in waking up is to understand how heavenly Jerusalem defines our twenty-first century imagination. An understanding of James Carroll's insights provides this for its readers. The book is not for the faint of heart! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Stunning. Wise revelation, faithful student of history, articulate and empowering. By Ann K. Werner This is the second of James Carroll's works that I've been honored to read. Oh, they are not for the faint of heart, for sure. But, wow, I feel so much wiser, better informed, and grounded in my beliefs. I'll admit that it's a tough read, but deeply satisfying and so worth the time and effort. If it weren't for my Kindle it would have taken me much longer. I remain grateful for the dictionary and the highlighting tools. Even so, I can't be sure I've done justice to his ideas by the ones I've singled out to revisit. Sometimes I just had to bookmark whole sections to go back to. I had asked a Muslim friend to read it too and discuss it with me. How I'd love to have a multicultural, mixed religious group with whom to share reflections. Thank you, James Carroll. What a gift this is. How very gifted you are. I couldn't say this to Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I MUST say it to you. I've bookmarked your website, too. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth the time By Michael Beer Wonderful and enlightening book. Gives great insight about the history.

Provocative . . . the book brims with splendid insights. Los Angeles Times Jerusalem: the ancient City on a Hill, a place central to three major religions, a transcendent fantasy that ignites religious fervor unlike anywhere else on earth. James Carroll's urgent, masterly Jerusalem, Jerusalem uncovers the history of the city and explores how it came to define culture in both the Middle East and America. Carroll shows how the New World was shaped by obsessions with Jerusalem, from Christopher Columbus's search for a westward route to the city, to the fascination felt by American presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan. Heavenly Jerusalem defines the American imagination and always the earthly city smolders. Jerusalem fever, inextricably tied to Christian fervor, is the deadly unnamed third party to the Israeli-Palestinian wars. Understanding this fever is the key that unlocks world history, and the diagnosis that gives us our best chance to reimagine peace. I dare you to read this book and see Jerusalem, or yourself, the same way. Bernard Avishai, author of The Hebrew Republic "So provocative and illuminating that it should not be overlooked by anyone who cares about the future of Jerusalem." Jewish Journal

.com A Q A With Author James Carroll Q: How did you become so personally invested in Jerusalem? A: When I was young, I was a Catholic priest. After the turmoil of the Sixties, as I began to lose my grip on the priesthood, I needed to retreat to a place of spiritual and emotional sustenance. I spent a summer in a monastery on the edge of Jerusalem, overlooking the hills of the Judean desert. In my time there, and especially during endless forays in the city itself, I encountered a new depth of faith. Jerusalem's ancient resonance steadied me - not so much its traditional shrines, but its character as a place in which humans had transcended themselves age in and age out. It may seem odd to say so, but I came of age in Jerusalem. The figure of Jesus was quite real to me. I was able both to make the momentous decision to leave the priesthood, and to claim my Catholic faith in a new way. Of course, I was shocked by the contentions of Jerusalem, but those too were to the point. Where better for a young man in turmoil to find himself than in a place that is and has always been defined by turmoil? Q: How did your work on anti-Semitism in Constantines Sword influence your perceptions of Jerusalem? A: The Israelis and the Palestinians are trapped in a corner - but it's not a corner of their own making. One of its walls is the long history of anti-Semitism that took root in Western civilization. Christian theology almost from the start assumes that Jews are to be exiled from the Jewish homeland. Christians take that exile - the so-called wandering Jew - as a proof of the claims that Jews reject. The collective, if unconscious, psyche of European culture is stamped with this denigration of Jews, tied to Jewish absence from Jerusalem. This accounts for much of the ambivalence about the Jewish return to Israel in 1948 (The Vatican, for example, did not recognize the state until 1994). It also accounts for a broad readiness to hold the State of Israel to higher standards of human rights than other states. Criticism of Israeli policies toward Palestinians is not anti-Semitism, but Israel's continuing vulnerability is at least in part explained by a widespread visceral uneasiness with Jews at home in Jerusalem. Q: What is the second wall of the corner trapping Israelis and Palestinians? A: Well, of course, it is colonialism. Just as Jews are still somehow at the mercy of deep history, so are Arabs. In their case, it is the history of racist, European contempt for colonized people. It is wrong to equate Zionism with colonialism, but Palestinians have every reason to regard their situation as an unjust consequence of 19th and 20th century imperial intrusions. The British method of colonial domination depended on stirring up local conflicts, whether in Ireland, India, or Palestine. That method still casts a shadow over Jerusalem, where seeds of Jewish-Arab conflict were so efficiently planted by the colonizers. In fact, the British decimated Palestinian civic and cultural institutions well before Israelis came to power. European anti-Semitism and colonialism have left a crippling legacy that amounts to a

third party in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - but that third party is unacknowledged and unidentified. No one who shares in Western civilization has the right to condescend to the Jews and Arabs who are locked in this combat. I wrote this book to name that third party because only then can its power be undone. Q: But how is the rest of the world tied to Jerusalem and its problems? A: TQuite profoundly, although mostly unconsciously. It is not too much to say that the Western imagination - not just Europe now, but also America - took root and flowered in Jerusalem, more even than in Athens, Rome, or any other place. This begins, of course, with the Bible, and with the story of Jesus - Jerusalem is ground zero of Jewish and Christian religion. But across the centuries, the city remained pivotal. At the Crusades, Christendom "lost" Jerusalem to the Muslims, and the Biblical idea of a heavenly Jerusalem took on new force. Jerusalem as fantasy and as dream shaped Europe's idea of itself - and also its adventures and, ultimately, explorations. Christopher Columbus was driven by the idea of reclaiming Jerusalem, but so were the Puritans who came to New England. America understood itself from the start as a new Jerusalem, the "city on a hill." That vision influenced everyone from John Winthrop and Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan and Sarah Palin. Today, a new American Christian nationalism takes its energy from apocalyptic fantasies fixed upon Jerusalem - which plays out even in the ways U.S. foreign policy treats Israel. From Publishers Weekly Starred . "Oh, Jerusalem, how often have I wept for you!" laments the psalmist. And well we should weep. For millennia, Jerusalem has been the meeting point of religion and culture, traditionalism and modernity, and the apparently inevitable violence that erupts over a particular faith's exclusive claim to the city. Carroll, author of the critically acclaimed *Constantine's Sword*, has given us one of the broadest and most balanced accounts in recent years of the city of King David centered on the concept of "sacred violence" as a path to redemption, a vision long engendered by Jerusalem and all that it represents. But he has another agenda to analyze and interpret the intersections of history, theology, philosophy, and popular culture in a way that offers hope of an emerging religion that "celebrate life, not death." Given the long history of violence and death surrounding both the physical Jerusalem and the "imagined" city (e.g., America as a "city on a hill"), is this even possible? The former Catholic priest remains optimistic that humanity will find a way to resolve the conflicts that are so much a part of its story. Conceptually profound, richly detailed, and wonderfully realized, this book brings to life the dynamic story of the divided city. (Mar.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred * Carroll examines the enigma that is Jerusalem the holiest and most blood-soaked spot on earth with insight and candor. He begins at the very beginning: Homo erectus become Homo sapiens become Homo sapiens sapiens. He who knows he knows soon becomes aware of death. Death leads to ritual, and ritual leads to religion. And while various religions flourished all over the ancient world, it was in Jerusalem that God emerged. Not just a god, but God, one who recognizes how both the need for violence and the hatred of violence reside within the human spirit. These conflicting impulses are the subthemes that propel Carroll's story across the ages, through Jerusalem's wreckages and rebirths, as the three Abrahamic religions claim the city as its own. Carroll's writing is so compelling, so beautifully constructed, that, ironically, the book can be a very slow read. There is something on almost every page that makes the reader want to stop and contemplate. For those meeting Jerusalem for the first time, this volume makes a stunning introduction. For others, who have struggled with the city's conundrums, either its symbolic meaning in the history of civilization or its place in the modern world, Carroll's reflections will add clarity if not closure. --Ilene Cooper