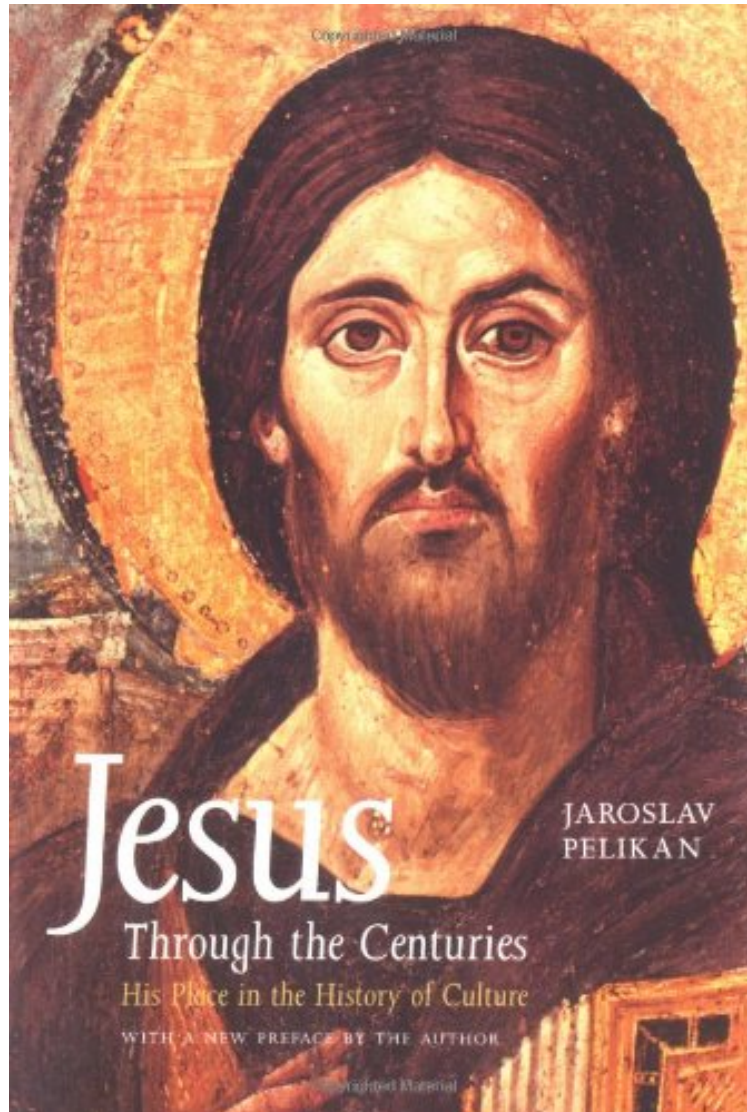


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Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture

Jaroslav Pelikan

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#109478 in Books 1999-11-10Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.26 x .82 x 5.44l, .81 #File Name: 0300079877304 pages | File size: 20.Mb

Jaroslav Pelikan : Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely SuperbBy Richard B. SchwartzThis is a lovely book, the predecessor to JPs similar book on Mary. In each case his focus is historical and cultural, not theological (though he is, of course, the dean of church historians and knows the theology intimately). Put in another way, the books are descriptive, not hortatory or attempts at proselytization. In Jesus Through The Centuries, JP examines the multiple

ways in which Jesus has been seen, conceptualized, viewed and worshipped--for example: as a Jewish rabbi, as the Light of the Gentiles, the King of Kings, Son of Man, the Prince of Peace and the Liberator. The final chapter The Man Who Belongs to the World is particularly interesting. Despite Renan, Strauss and the so-called higher criticism; despite the search for the historical Jesus; despite the weakened position of the institutional Church; despite the secularism, the skepticism, the agnosticism and the seeming indifference of modernism, Jesus remains, transcending institutions, transcending disputes over dogma. In Father Ted Hesburgh's jacket blurb, Jesus now belongs to the whole of humanity, far beyond the reach of the organized Church and ecclesial theology. I find this encouraging. The scholarship is magisterial, as is JP's facility with multiple languages, but he writes in a very accessible style and does not lard the book with footnotes and recondite references. This is a book for all readers interested in Jesus' place in the history of culture. It is organized (roughly) chronologically, but the individual chapters are thematic, so JP is not rigidly constrained and is free to expand on his subject in any way that seems relevant. As in the book on Mary, he draws heavily on art and iconography and, to a lesser degree, music (on which he is quite expert). Bottom line: this is a beautiful read on a very important subject, done by the leading scholar of church history of the 20th century. To repeat something I said in my review of JP's book on Mary, those who had the privilege of knowing Jary will attest to the fact that he often spoke in the street vernacular (not in any crude way, but in a down-to-earth one). Thus, he is sometimes given to popular references and popular expressions which also make the book attractive and accessible to general readers. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Pelikan at his Best By Ronald C. Payne This book is filled with chapters describing Jesus' place in the history of culture throughout the last twenty centuries. It is simply a classic in that one can see the origin of ideas about Jesus in various historical periods and how they've shaped how we view him today. He quotes just enough from primary sources to communicate the essential view of Jesus popular at various points in time. Personally, my favorite images are from the earliest centuries where Jesus was seen as the light to the Gentiles, the turning point of history and the cosmic Christ. Re-reading the passages I've highlighted not only informs me of the history of thinking about Jesus but helps open a skeptical hardened heart to the wonder of Christ throughout the ages. For if one has reason to believe that he was who he claimed to be than such a history is not merely academic but becomes inspirational. Pelikan answers a lot of questions about how Jesus has been thought of while at the same time creating a yearning to learn more about this man, who he was and what he was about. Christ's connection to Western culture from antiquity up until the modern day with Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. is astonishing and fascinating. Pelikan, at least in this work, is succinct, clear and penetrating. This was a pure joy to read and I am getting goosebumps just looking over it yet again. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Toad Haul A very "matter of fact" version of the life of one of the most influential individuals in history.

One of the most highly regarded works of intellectual history of the past decade, *Jesus Through the Centuries* is an original and compelling study of the impact of Jesus on cultural, political, social, and economic history. Noted historian and theologian Jaroslav Pelikan reveals how the image of Jesus created by each successive epoch from rabbi in the first century to liberator in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a key to understanding the temper and values of that age. A rich and expansive description of Jesus' impact on the general history of culture. . . . Believers and skeptics alike will find it a sweeping visual and conceptual panorama. John Koenig, front page, *New York Times Book Review* An enlightening and often dramatic story . . . as stimulating as it is informative. John Gross, *New York Times* A gracious little masterpiece. Thomas D'Evelyn, *Christian Science Monitor* A book of uncommon brilliance. Nathan A. Scott, Jr., *Commonweal*

From *Library Journal* Writing for the general reader, eminent church historian Pelikan proposes that, while the figure of Jesus provides the chief continuity in the history of Christianity, each age has depicted him in accordance with its own character. He demonstrates this in 18 brief yet magisterial essays, each describing an image of Jesus and its significance for a period in the history of the church. The gospels present Jesus as a rabbi; understanding Jesus as lord first produced tension between Christianity and the Roman Empire and later fostered the development of a Christian empire; an ascetical understanding of Jesus underlay monasticism; incarnational theology was a factor in the Renaissance, etc. History Book Club main selection. Terrance Callan, NT Studies Dept., Athenaeum of Ohio, Cincinnati Copyright 1985 Reed Business Information, Inc. A celebratory study of Jesus' impact on Western art, thought and culture over the last 2,000 years. -- *New York Times Book* About the Author Jaroslav Pelikan is Sterling Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University. He is the author of more than thirty books, including *The Christian Tradition*, widely acknowledged as the foremost history of its kind, and, more recently, *Mary Through the Centuries*, published by Yale University Press.