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THE APOCALYPSE
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The Apocalypse, or the Book of Revelation, is the last book of the New Testament and the point of departure for an immense inquiry into the Christianization of the Roman Empire.

Resolutely faithful to their historical approach and to their cinematographic writing, this collection question 50 scholars from the four corners of the globe on the creation of a new religion. They take us on a journey from the late 1st century of the current era to Saint Augustine’s City of God, in the early 5th century. How and why was it possible for the expectation of the imminent End of Time among a tiny sect of Jewish disciples of Jesus-in just over three hundred years-to end up being the official and only religion of the Roman Empire, a crucial turning point in western civilization?

LIST OF EPISODES

01 - THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN
03 - THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS
05 - THE NEW COVENANT
07 - AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS
09 - THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA
11 - CHRISTIANITY YEAR ZERO
02 - THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME
04 - THE INHERITANCE BATTLE
06 - THE GREAT HERESY
08 - THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE
10 - THE CITY OF GOD
12 - AFTER THE APOCALYPSE

01 - THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

What does the term “Apocalypse” mean? Who is the author of the Book of Revelation, said to be by John of Patmos?

When was it written? In what historical context? What was the Christians’ relationship to the Empire at the time? How did the different Christian groups get along together? What is hidden behind the mysterious “synagogue of Satan”?
02 - THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME

With Jesus crucified for being king of the Jews around the year 30 in Jerusalem, how was Christianity able to become the religion of the Roman Empire?

Where does the name "Christians" come from? Why did Nero accuse the Christians of setting fire to Rome in 64? Were they the real culprits or wrongly accused? Why is Revelations the most anti-Roman text in the whole New Testament?

03 - THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS

What problems do the Christians cause for the Romans in the early 2nd century?

What is the Christians' attitude when they are arrested? Why does Ignatius of Antioch ask to be torn apart by beasts? What is the difference between Jewish martyrs and Christian martyrs? Can the martyrdom stories be considered a kind of pornography? What is the historical interest of these accounts? Should they be read as the earliest Christian propaganda?

04 - THE INHERITANCE BATTLE

How do the Pagans see the Christians? Why is there such a mutual lack of understanding?

What purpose do the apologies sent to the emperors serve? Why does Justin engage in a dialogue with the Jew Trypho around 160? Does the Christian interpretation of the Bible render the Jewish interpretation obsolete? Are the Christians "the True Israel"?
05 - THE NEW COVENANT

Why, from the 2nd century on, do the Christians feel the need to constitute a specifically Christian body of literature?

Why is there a New Testament? What are the criteria that make it possible to separate what is orthodox from what is heretical? What is the crucial role Marcion plays around 140? Why does he imagine there being a Christian God and a Jewish God?

06 - THE GREAT HERESY

Why have certain forms of Christianity disappeared? How can gnosis be defined?

Does it contain secret revelations on the order of the universe? Why is it so hard to find traces of this movement that was widespread throughout the Empire? Did gnosis pose a serious threat to the Church?

07 - AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS

How does Christianity gain ground in the Empire? Why do Pagan intellectuals fight against Christianity?

Where does monotheism stand in the 3rd century? Why do the emperors Decius and Valerian suddenly begin persecuting Christians? How can they avoid being put to death? What are Diocletian’s reasons for starting “the Great Persecution”?
08 - THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE

How and why did the emperor Constantine convert to Christianity during the Battle at the Milvian Bridge in 312?

Was it a sincere personal decision or politically motivated? What were the advantages of converting? Though he chose Christianity, did Constantine continue to believe in the Sun God? Was the covenant between the Church and the Empire inevitable?

09 - THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Was Constantine truly a Christian? Why does he keep a close watch over internal Church affairs?

Why does Constantine order the Council of Nicaea to be held? Who attends the Council? What issues are debated? Is there a divine hierarchy between the Father and the Son? How was this theological problem solved? Are echoes of Nicaea still perceptible today?

10 - THE CITY OF GOD

What advantages do the Christians benefit from by allying themselves with Roman power?

What are the consequences of Theodosius’s decision in the late 4th century to make Christianity the state religion of the Empire? Why is the sacking of Rome in 410 an unfathomable catastrophe?
11 - CHRISTIANITY YEAR ZERO

When can the beginning of Christianity be dated?

Should it be when Jesus is born? When he dies? When a mixed community of Jews and Pagans is created? At the time of Constantine's conversion? When Theodosius decrees Christianity to be the Empire's official religion? Or at another date? What measures does Theodosius take to impose Christianity? Do the Pagans accept the new religion? Who are the Christians' main enemies: Jews or heretics?

12 - AFTER THE APOCALYPSE

How has a tiny Jewish sect that was turned toward Israel and living in the expectation of the End of Time become the religion of the West?

Why does the phrase Alfred Loisy wrote a century ago, "Jesus announced the Kingdom and was the Church that came," still create uproar? Why is it that the Jewish origin of Christianity is still unacceptable to many?
THEMATIC INDEX

APOCALYPSE (THE).......................................................................................................................... 3
01 - THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN........................................................................................................... 3
02 - THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME............................................................................................................ 4
03 - THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS ........................................................................................................... 4
04 - THE INHERITANCE BATTLE.......................................................................................................... 4
05 - THE NEW COVENANT .................................................................................................................. 5
06 - THE GREAT HERESY................................................................................................................... 5
07 - AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS......................................................................................................... 5
08 - THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE......................................................................................... 6
09 - THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA............................................................................................................ 6
10 - THE CITY OF GOD...................................................................................................................... 6
11 - CHRISTIANITY YEAR ZERO......................................................................................................... 7
12 - AFTER THE APOCALYPSE........................................................................................................... 7

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

01 - THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN........................................................................................................... 3
02 - THE GREAT FIRE OF ROME............................................................................................................ 4
03 - THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS ........................................................................................................... 4
04 - THE INHERITANCE BATTLE.......................................................................................................... 4
05 - THE NEW COVENANT .................................................................................................................. 5
06 - THE GREAT HERESY................................................................................................................... 5
07 - AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS......................................................................................................... 5
08 - THE CONVERSION OF CONSTANTINE......................................................................................... 6
09 - THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA............................................................................................................ 6
10 - THE CITY OF GOD...................................................................................................................... 6
11 - CHRISTIANITY YEAR ZERO......................................................................................................... 7
12 - AFTER THE APOCALYPSE........................................................................................................... 7
APOCALYPSE (THE).......................................................................................................................... 3
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