



Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom

By Peter J. Leithart



Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart

We know that Constantine

- issued the *Edict of Milan* in 313
- outlawed paganism and made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire
- manipulated the Council of Nicea in 325
- exercised absolute authority over the church, co-opting it for the aims of empire

And if Constantine the emperor were not problem enough, we all know that Constantinianism has been very bad for the church. Or do we know these things? Peter Leithart weighs these claims and finds them wanting. And what's more, in focusing on these historical mirages we have failed to notice the true significance of Constantine and Rome baptized. For beneath the surface of this contested story there emerges a deeper narrative of the end of Roman sacrifice--a tectonic shift in the political theology of an empire--and with far-reaching implications. In this probing and informative book Peter Leithart examines the real Constantine, weighs the charges against Constantinianism, and sets the terms for a new conversation about this pivotal emperor and the Christendom that emerged.

[!\[\]\(faf942dc3e59ce8eb64b4ac481eca7e0_img.jpg\) Download Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire a ...pdf](#)

[!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901_img.jpg\) Read Online Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire ...pdf](#)

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom

By Peter J. Leithart

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart

We know that Constantine

- issued the *Edict of Milan* in 313
- outlawed paganism and made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire
- manipulated the Council of Nicea in 325
- exercised absolute authority over the church, co-opting it for the aims of empire

And if Constantine the emperor were not problem enough, we all know that Constantinianism has been very bad for the church. Or do we know these things? Peter Leithart weighs these claims and finds them wanting. And what's more, in focusing on these historical mirages we have failed to notice the true significance of Constantine and Rome baptized. For beneath the surface of this contested story there emerges a deeper narrative of the end of Roman sacrifice--a tectonic shift in the political theology of an empire--and with far-reaching implications. In this probing and informative book Peter Leithart examines the real Constantine, weighs the charges against Constantinianism, and sets the terms for a new conversation about this pivotal emperor and the Christendom that emerged.

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #801237 in Books
- Brand: InterVarsity Press
- Published on: 2010-10-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.10" w x 6.00" l, 1.25 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 373 pages

 [Download Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire a ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* By Peter J. Leithart

Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Leithart (*Deep Exegesis*), a pastor who teaches at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho, takes aim at the received wisdom that Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire was a political co-optation that made the church the creature and justification of the imperial state. He reads the original ancient, the seminal secondary, and lots of other sources to contend that Constantine was a believer and a conciliator who sought theological agreement for the political stability it brought. Contra the influential interpretation of Anabaptist theologian John Howard Yoder, Leithart maintains that when Constantine is understood in historical context, his disestablishment of pagan religion opens a place for a Christian understanding of sacrifice and of the significance of the kingdom of God. His provocative view deserves examination. Besides his peers, general readers with a close knowledge of early church history will appreciate his well-supported argument, and anybody whose understanding of early church history comes from *The Da Vinci Code* needs to read this. (Nov.)

(c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Review

". . . this work should serve as a welcome redress of the often one-sided debate regarding Constantine and Constantinianism." (Britton W. Norvell, *Restoration Quarterly*, 55:1 (2013))

"This book is a must read for anyone assaying to deal with Constantine in the foreseeable future; it is a valuable correction of the tendentious views that frame the first Christian emperor. Leithart's work is a welcome contribution to Constantine scholarship and should find its place in responsible library collections. Scholars will want to get their own copy, and many classes will be enriched by the addition of this book to the list of required readings." (James R. Payton, Jr., *Calvin Theological Journal*, November 2012)

"In *Defending Constantine* [Leithart] has done the historian, theologian, church leader, and layman a great service by providing an enjoyably readable historical-theological-conceptual look at this critical era of church history." (Michael Philliber, *Touchstone*, January/February 2012)

"*Defending Constantine* demonstrates the enduring relevance of the "Constantinian moment" of the fourth century. While recent scholarship has focused mainly on the negative results, Leithart swings the pendulum back, reminding us of all the good that God brought about from this contested period of history." (Trevin Wax, *Christianity Today*, March 2011)

"Here is an excellent scholarly and fair treatment of Constantine." (*Christian News*, November 15, 2010)

"This erudite work will be of interest to academic seminarians and theologians, as well as those seeking a historically sound Christian interpretation of Constantine." (Matthew Connor Sullivan, *Library Journal*, December 2010)

"Leithart has written an important book that does more than help us to better understand the complex human being who bore the name of Constantine. . . As a pacifist I could not want a better conversation partner than Peter Leithart." (Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Century*, October 19, 2010)

"For a generation that thinks it approves of those who challenge the conventional wisdom, it can come as

quite a shock when someone actually does it. In this book, Peter Leithart takes up the daunting challenge of defending Constantine, and he does it with biblical grace, deep wisdom, profound learning and scholarship that has let the clutch out. This is a magnificent book." (Douglas Wilson, senior fellow of theology, New Saint Andrews College, Idaho)

"An excellent writer with a flair for the dramatic, Peter Leithart is also one of the most incisive current thinkers on questions of theology and politics. In this book, Leithart helpfully complicates Christian history, and thereby helps theologians recover the riches of more than a millennium of Christian life too easily dismissed as 'Constantinian.' If the Holy Spirit did not simply go on holiday during that period, we must find ways to appreciate Christendom. Any worthwhile political theology today cannot fail to take Leithart's argument seriously." (William T. Cavanaugh, Research Professor, Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology, DePaul University, Chicago)

"There have been of late a splurge of populist history books damning Constantine the Great as the villain of the piece. Almost without exception they have drawn their picture of this most complex and complicated of late-antique Roman emperors from secondhand, clichéd and hackneyed books of an older generation, adding their own clichés in the process. Constantine has been sketched luridly, as the man who corrupted Christianity either by financial or military means. At long last we have here, in Peter Leithart, a writer who knows how to tell a lively story but is also no mean shakes as a scholarly historian. This intelligent and sensitive treatment of one of the great military emperors of Rome is a trustworthy entrée into Roman history that loses none of the romance and rambunctiousness of the events of the era of the civil war, but which also explains why Constantine matters: why he was important to the ancient world, why he matters to the development of Christianity (a catalyst in its movement from small sect to world-embracing cultural force). It does not whitewash or damn on the basis of a preset ideology, but it certainly does explain why Constantine gained from the Christians the epithet 'The Great.' For setting the record straight, and for providing a sense of the complicated lay of the land, this book comes most highly recommended." (John A. McGuckin, Columbia University)

"Too many people, for far too long, have been able to murmur the awful word *Constantine*, knowing that the shudder it produces will absolve them from the need to think through how the church and the powers of the world actually relate, let alone construct a coherent historical or theological argument on the subject. Peter Leithart challenges all this, and forces us to face the question of what Constantine's settlement actually was, and meant. Few will agree with everything he says. All will benefit enormously from this challenge to easygoing received 'wisdom.'" (N. T. Wright, University of St. Andrews, Scotland)

About the Author

Peter J. Leithart (PhD, University of Cambridge) is president of Theopolis Institute and an adjunct senior fellow of theology at New Saint Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho. He is the author of many books including *Defending Constantine*, *Traces of the Trinity* and *Gratitude: An Intellectual History*. He is a blog writer and columnist for firstthings.com, and he has published articles in many periodicals, both popular and academic. Ordained in the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), Leithart pastored Reformed Heritage Presbyterian Church (now Trinity Presbyterian Church) in Birmingham, Alabama, and Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow, Idaho. He and his wife Noel have ten children and seven grandchildren.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rosemary Taylor:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what yours problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to perform others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. The doctor has to answer that question simply because just their can do this. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom to read.

Carol Berry:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive right now, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of often the crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a reserve your ability to survive raise then having chance to remain than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this particular Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom book as beginning and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

David Conte:

Beside that Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom in your phone, it could give you a way to get nearer to the new knowledge or data. The information and the knowledge you can got here is fresh from oven so don't be worry if you feel like an older people live in narrow village. It is good thing to have Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom because this book offers for you readable information. Do you often have book but you do not get what it's all about. Oh come on, that wil happen if you have this within your hand. The Enjoyable blend here cannot be questionable, just like treasuring beautiful island. Techniques you still want to miss it? Find this book along with read it from currently!

Shawn Clay:

What is your hobby? Have you heard this question when you got students? We believe that that issue was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, All people has different hobby. So you know that little person like reading or as reading through become their hobby. You have to know that reading is very important along with book as to be the point. Book is important thing to increase you knowledge, except your own teacher or lecturer. You find good news or update regarding something by book. Many kinds of books that can you choose to use be your object. One of them is niagra Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom.

**Download and Read Online Defending Constantine: The Twilight of
an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart
#4F2A90MZINL**

Read Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart for online ebook

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart books to read online.

Online Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart ebook PDF download

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart Doc

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart Mobipocket

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom By Peter J. Leithart EPub