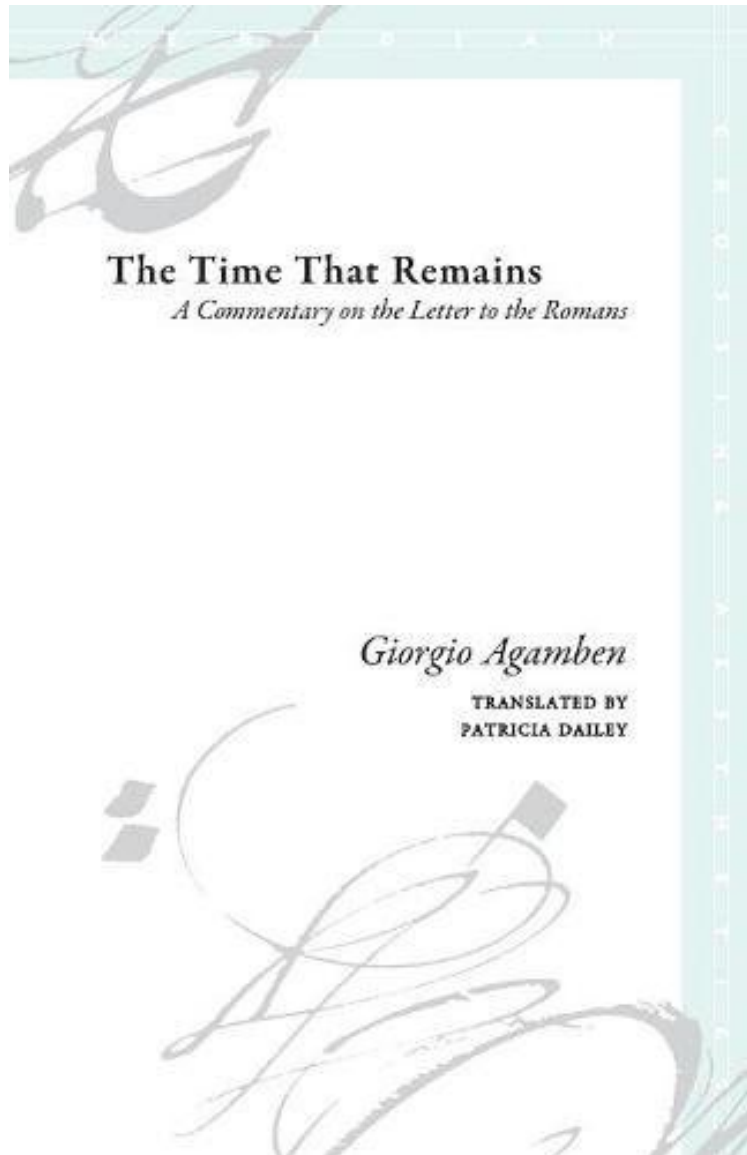


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The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

Giorgio Agamben

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#143068 in Books Giorgio Agamben Patricia Dailey 2005-11-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .60 x 5.50l, .67 #File Name: 0804743835216 pagesThe Time That Remains A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans | File size: 25.Mb

Giorgio Agamben : The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics):

47 of 54 people found the following review helpful. Don't be misled...By Max Gasner
By theory types who don't know anything about philology -- it would be a shame if you didn't read so great a book because of uninformed, hasty criticism. (I refer to the review "Another Book on Paul".) 'Christos' isn't a transliteration but a direct translation of the Hebrew 'Messiah.' 'Dunameis' is a technical term of Aristotle's philosophy (Metaphysics Theta) and the distinction between dunameis as 'power' and dunameis as 'potential' is a central interpretive question both in Aristotle and in Paul - not a straightforward question of translation, since both English words line up with one Greek word. Agamben's philological and philosophical case on this point goes well beyond the title of his collected philosophical essays and cannot be dismissed (or even evaluated) without long engagement with the question in some detail. (Except in some very rarefied sense, then, you just can't say that this is 'poetic licence,' as if it were a vague question of finding the mot juste.) The book is the text of a seminar, and time in seminars is limited - as indeed it is in life - and the kind of reading Agamben undertakes takes a lot of time. That he doesn't move beyond the first line of the epistle shouldn't be allowed to obscure the very important point that this is Agamben's longest, most explicit, and most detailed statement on the central open question of his positive political project: if, as he writes in the introduction to the *Homo Sacer* project, "one ends up identifying with an enemy whose structure one does not understand, and the theory of the State (and in particular of the state of exception, which is to say, of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the transitional phase leading to the stateless society) is the reef on which the revolutions of our century have been shipwrecked," then what is missing is just what this book provides: a theory of the vanguard party and its formation that does not fall prey to the double-binds of the state it hopes to overthrow. You may not like the way Agamben addresses his problems, or the way he writes, but our 'Lacanian' (read: Zizekian) friend's cut-to-the-chase political voluntarism faces no stronger rebuttal than Agamben's work on the structure of law and no stronger alternative than this new book provides.

20 of 33 people found the following review helpful. To make atheists into believers
By Adam J. Waterman
This book is one of the most profoundly moving and important I have ever read. And Giorgio Agamben is perhaps the most ethical and committed intellectual of our times. Not only has he refused teaching appointments in the United States in principled opposition to its imperial chicanery, he has been an outspoken critic of the US-right wing and its attack on Christianity. This book attempts to give Christianity back to the people, to restore its revolutionary potential. American politicians like to claim they believe in Jesus. Jesus does not believe in American politicians.

35 of 71 people found the following review helpful. Another Book on Paul
By Lost Lacanian
Agamben's book is yet another offering in an ever growing list of books on Christian Theology and specifically Saint Paul. What this book endeavors to argue is that Paul was the first in the tradition of thought called Messianism. Agamben claims to give a close reading of Romans in order to theorize what Messianic time meant for Paul. Interestingly, Agamben only offers a "close" reading of the opening line of Romans and then argues that this opening line contains Paul's entire theory of Messianism in it. Of course the argument is flimsy, and Agamben must be aware of this too, because he fills the rest of his book with citations to other Pauline epistles. He, at least, gives the opening line of Romans a word by word reading. But this too leaves much to be desired as he takes poetic license with the words themselves. For example, he argues that an entire Church tradition has been aimed at erasing the word Messiah from Paul's letters thus when Paul writes "Christos," it is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew Messiah. True enough. But then he himself attempts the same feat: for example, he reads the Greek "dunameis" as "potential" rather than the more logical "power." Of course this fits in with another of his books entitled "Potentialities." I suppose Agamben is interested in erasing "power" from the Pauline epistles. After much arguing, Agamben demonstrates the relevance of Paul's messianism by using it to read a poem. If Pauline Messianism is supposed to be important, I would think it should have implications for politics and society, not simply reading a poem. In the end, Agamben's Paul turns out to be some academic who was interested in philology, not in creating the church. This book takes the radicalness out of Paul, just as his other books take the radicalness out of Walter Benjamin. Interestingly, many books are being written on Paul. Each of these books have the same argument: Paul is important for today, and we must read him provocatively, which is code for: read him as if he were not a believer in Jesus. It turns out that all of these books--Agamben's included--are more interested in taking Jesus out of Paul. I am still waiting for the truly provocative book on Paul to come out that would argue: we must read Paul as a fanatic believer in Jesus.

In *The Time That Remains*, Agamben seeks to separate the Pauline texts from the history of the Church that canonized them, thus revealing them to be "the fundamental messianic texts of the West." He argues that Paul's letters are concerned not with the foundation of a new religion but rather with the "messianic" abolition of Jewish law. Situating Paul's texts in the context of early Jewish messianism, this book is part of a growing set of recent critiques devoted to the period when Judaism and Christianity were not yet fully distinct, placing Paul in the context of what has been called "Judaean-Christianity." Agamben's philosophical exploration of the problem of messianism leads to the other major figure discussed in this book, Walter Benjamin. Advancing a claim without precedent in the vast literature on Benjamin, Agamben argues that Benjamin's philosophy of history constitutes a repetition and appropriation of Paul's concept of "remaining time." Through a close reading and comparison of Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" and the Pauline Epistles, Agamben discerns a number of striking and unrecognized parallels between the two

works.

"Agamben, through the close reading of Pauline letter and the comparison of W. Benjamin's philosophy of history, gives us a fruitful key to better understand Western history and civilization. Philosophers and theologians will learn a great deal from reading this book." (Philosophy in /Comptes Rendus philosophiques)"The Time that Remains presents itself as an exegetical seminar on the opening line of the Letter to the Romans ("Paul, called as a slave of Jesus the Messiah, separated as apostle for the announcement of God")... Agamben's insightful close reading of the Pauline corpus sets this book apart from the more free-range grazing over the text modeled by Badiou and iek." (Radical Philosophy)From the Inside FlapIn *The Time That Remains*, Agamben seeks to separate the Pauline texts from the history of the Church that canonized them, thus revealing them to be the fundamental messianic texts of the West. He argues that Paul's letters are concerned not with the foundation of a new religion but rather with the messianic abolition of Jewish law. Situating Paul's texts in the context of early Jewish messianism, this book is part of a growing set of recent critiques devoted to the period when Judaism and Christianity were not yet fully distinct, placing Paul in the context of what has been called Judaeo-Christianity. Agamben's philosophical exploration of the problem of messianism leads to the other major figure discussed in this book, Walter Benjamin. Advancing a claim without precedent in the vast literature on Benjamin, Agamben argues that Benjamin's philosophy of history constitutes a repetition and appropriation of Paul's concept of remaining time. Through a close reading and comparison of Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History* and the Pauline Epistles, Agamben discerns a number of striking and unrecognized parallels between the two works.