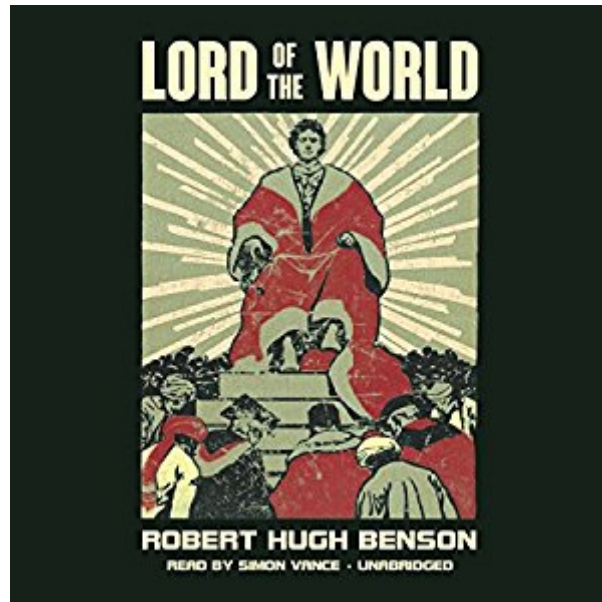


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Lord Of The World



Synopsis

Secular humanism has triumphed. Everything the late Victorians and Edwardians believed would bring human happiness has been achieved: Technology has made it so no one needs to work for a living, the social sciences ensure a smooth-running social order, and, in the name of tolerance, religious beliefs have been uprooted and eliminated except for a single holdout - a largely discredited and rapidly shrinking Catholic Church. Yet people are unhappy. What has been created is a sterile world of crass materialism, a world without spiritual dimension, a world where people daily choose legalized euthanasia over the emptiness of existence. Out of this culture of despair, there arises a charismatic leader: Julian Felsenburgh. Soon the masses are in Felsenburgh's thrall, and he becomes leader of the world. But in their eagerness for change, have the citizens of the world embraced the Antichrist and hastened the end of days? Father Percy Franklin remains a bastion of stability, even as the Catholic Church disintegrates around him. Finally outlawed and driven underground, it is only this small and shrinking church that stands against the "Lord of the World".

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I became interested in reading Lord of the World after I read that it was an early dystopian novel that preceded Brave New World and 1984 and, in some respects, resembled them. In that sense Benson's novel is a fascinating step in the development of a very popular genre. Like the novels that followed it, it portrays a world in which the promise of earthly perfection although popular becomes

for one person at least an all-consuming state that is indifferent to individuals. In what begins as an attempt to form a sort of world government capable of overcoming the divisive nature of religion soon reveals itself as even more intolerant than the religions it replaces. It all begins with the arrival of a mysterious American about whom nothing is known but who is able to captivate large crowds to such a degree that the nations of the world make him the President of the World. It isn't long before the price of world peace becomes the abandonment of religious belief, the acceptance of euthanasia and the annihilation of those who oppose an all-powerful government. As a caution, readers should know that the story is told from the point of view of a catholic priest loyal to his faith. As a result there are many descriptions and references to Catholic liturgy and belief. Any readers who find such things beyond their patience would be advised to stay away from this novel. On an entirely different level, the novel written in 1907 anticipated the future perhaps more clearly than did 1984 or Brave New World. The growth of air travel, the introduction of nuclear weapons, massive legislation limiting all sorts of religious or cultural choices, the totally secular state, globalization, the redistribution of wealth, the end of the supernatural, and the elevation of man as a divine being with its cult-like promotion of an all-wise leader are all here. Perhaps most fascinating is the degree to which this god-like figure called Julian Felsenburgh echoes the whole "we are the one we've been waiting for" vibe associated with Obama's glorification in 2008. As added touches, the novel offers hero-priest figure Percy Franklin, who becomes the pope while being the secular god, Felsenburgh's almost exact double in appearance and an apocalyptic ending. As flawed as it may appear in places, it is nonetheless a great read written by a long-forgotten writer of exceptional imagination.

I wasn't sure what to expect from this novel. Of Msgr. Benson's other works, I have read only "Paradoxes of Catholicism", and that was many, many years ago. That is very good, but it belongs to quite the different genre! I have heard, though, that this novel is a favorite of Pope Francis, and I was looking for some summer reading shorter than Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings", so I decided to go for this and for Shusaku Endo's "Silence" (which I am saving till after Benson's book). I think "Lord of the World" is a very good story. The development of the plot and the characters is downright fascinating. One drawback for non-Catholics might be the use of some Catholic terminology and some references and allusions that might be unfamiliar to them. But, that might be the case, too, even for Catholics nowadays, since this book is already more than 100 years old. (For instance, when the author refers to Father Percy's "office", he's not talking about a room.) Fortunately, the publisher Ex Fontibus Company has added helpful footnotes, and produced a lovely edition. It's a paperback, but it doesn't seem like a paperback... if you know what I mean. ISBN-13:

978-1507790502. I have been reading a chapter a day, though I skip a day now and then, and I'm about half way through the book. As one reads, one sees more and more a reflection, or hears an echo, of ideas from the biblical Book of Revelation. So, I highly recommend "Lord of the World". It's a story told with subtlety and nuance, and with brilliant foresight in general if not in particulars, from Msgr. Benson's great heart, good head, and deep soul.

I saw a lot of 5 stars for this book, which is why I got it. I got what the story was about, the anti-christ and society and the church but I guess everyone with the 5 stars is smarter than I am. I found it difficult to read and strangely put together. I kept getting lost in many of the different descriptions. I realize it was written in 1906 and for many the writing style was different back then and I kept that in mind but for me it never got better or easier to read. I stuck with it wondering how he was going to end it as I know what the Bible says and what will happen but I was disappointed. I would say read the 5 star ones and decide for yourself. It isn't a book I will re-read.

I learned that this book was written originally in 1905 and was surprised that the author of that time would be so "familiar" with our time, a century later! It was quite interesting to see the relevance to today's world and how forces of evil are straining to control all people. There is a seeming parallel with the end times which can be earth shattering.

This eerie, prophetic, and apocalyptic novel was written in 1907 and yet it depicts today's world to perfection from the slavery of political correctness to people being controlled by populist politicians. This situation is the advent of the reign of the Anti-Christ and the End of the World. Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis - who represent a procedural anomaly within the Church themselves - strongly recommend reading this short book. An eye opener. Highly recommendable.

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