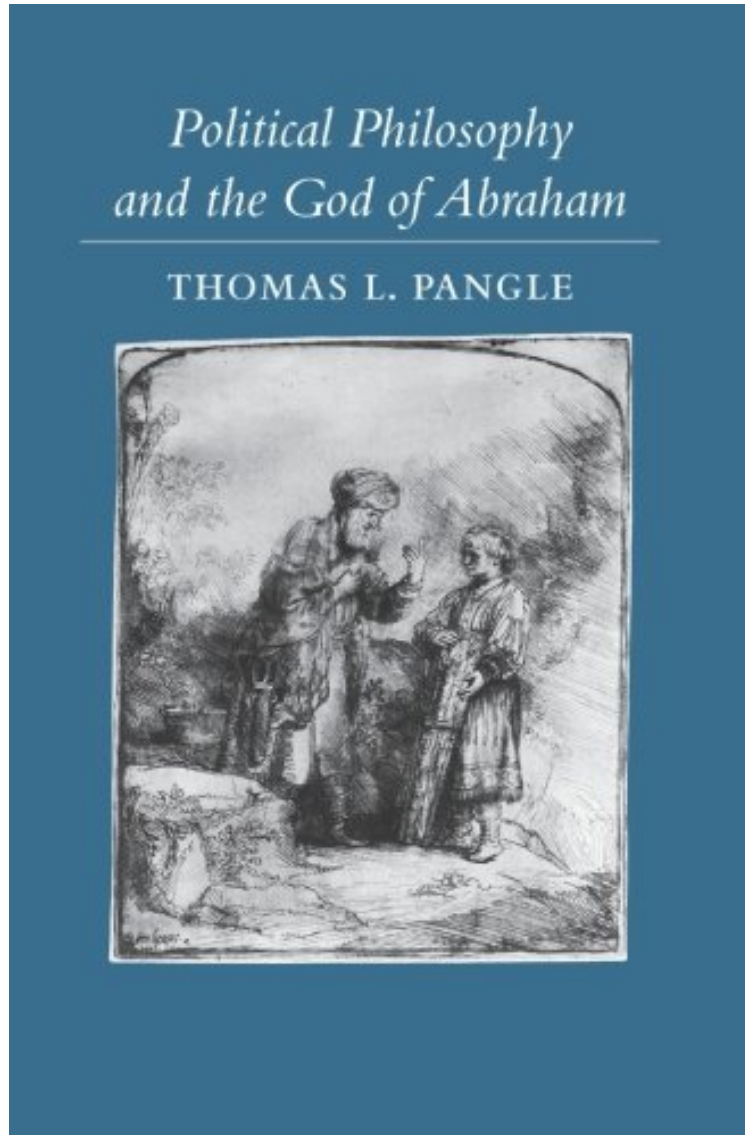


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Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham

Thomas L. Pangle

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Thomas L. Pangle : Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Political Philosophy and the God of Abraham:

10 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A Difficult Read but Thought Provoking By A Customer First of all, this book is about philosophy and theology, not about politics. By the term "Political Philosophy" the author means "Political" in terms of how men organize their belief systems. Specifically, the author cites a number of theologians, both modern (Karl Barth, Soren Kirkegard, Milton) and ancient (Socrates, Plato, St. Augustine, Maimonedes). Second,

what this book is about: the author examines the text of Genesis from the beginning through the life of Abraham. I can imagine a follow-up book that examines the rest of the Pentateuch through the life of Moses. A primary concern of the author is the relationship between God and Man, especially regarding the nature of man as a sinful being, and his need to perform sacrifice to God. A secondary major theme is the nature of dialogue between individual men (Adam, Cain, Noah his sons, and most importantly Abraham) and God. This book is thoroughly researched and annotated. The actual text is 184 pages, and the remaining about 1/3 of the book is citations and short excerpts and explanations of the various philosophers that Pangle has referred to in the body of the text. A serious student could use the citations as a reading list. My primary disagreement with Pangle's book, is that I believe, the two main contributions Abraham's experience with God gave to mankind's philosophy and theology were 1) there is But THE One God, and 2) the end of Human Sacrifice as a propitiation of that God. Pangle ultimately is more concerned with the concept of Justice. I read all of this book once, and several sections twice. In some discussions the author's main point gets lost in the heavy citation and quotations. Also, the author's own (theological) bias with regard to the need and requirement of sacrifice as expressed in Genesis seems to color the discussion. However, I am not a theologian or philosopher, nor do I have the extensive sources at hand that Pangle does, and my Hebrew and Latin skills date from high school coursework in the late 60's. Still, this book is worth reading as it will encourage the reader to examine his own understandings and force him to at least think about he/she would defend them. The exposure to the writings of Milton, St. Augustine, Socrates, etc are certainly worth the price of time and effort to read this book. 11 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Challenging, Rewarding Book By A Customer An extremely learned, thoughtful study of the book of Genesis up to and including the binding of Isaac. Boasts an impressive command of commentaries ancient, medieval, and modern on the text. Highly recommended.

In this book noted scholar Thomas L. Pangle brings back a lost and crucial dimension of political theory: the mutually illuminating encounter between skeptically rationalist political philosophy and faith-based political theology guided ultimately by the authority of the Bible. Focusing on the chapters of Genesis in which the foundation of the Bible is laid, Pangle provides an interpretive reading illuminated by the questions and concerns of the Socratic tradition and its medieval heirs in the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic worlds. He brings into contrast the rival interpretive framework set by the biblical criticism of the modern rationalists Hobbes and Spinoza, along with their heirs from Locke to Hegel. The full meaning of these diverse philosophic responses to the Bible is clarified through a dialogue with hermeneutic discussions by leading political theologians in the Judaic, Muslim, and Christian traditions, from Josephus and Augustine to our day. Profound and subtle in its argument, this book will be of interest not only to students and scholars of politics, philosophy, and religion but also to thoughtful readers in every walk of life who seek to deepen their understanding of the perplexing relationship between religious faith and philosophic reason.