



# Who Are We? Critical Reflections and Hopeful Possibilities

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

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A widely respected ethicist finds hope in the Christian view of personhood.

At a time when many despair of culture, this volume offers hope. Jean Bethke Elshtain, one of America's leading public intellectuals, finds amid the tensions and tragedies of our turn-of-the-century society pointers for recovering the life-affirming essence of what it means to be human.

This challenging volume is at once a work of political analysis, cultural criticism, and theological engagement. Elshtain explores the true meaning of personhood, examines the dynamics of both pride and sloth, and exposes the internal and external trappings that easily lead us to forget how to be faithful to something other than ourselves. With the help of Christian exemplars drawn from history and in dialogue with such figures as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Pope John Paul II, she shows the renewing role of faithfulness and hopefulness in contemporary life.

Elshtain suggests that much of what we rightly interpret as troubling presents fascinating opportunities for Christians, who, of all people, are called to live in hope. She particularly highlights certain aspects of youth culture, taking up popular films like *SEVEN* and *TITANIC* and tragedies like the shootings at Columbine High School. What she finds running through all of these are examples of courage and a search for a source of truth and meaning that seems to elude so many.

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### Editorial Review

#### From the Back Cover

At a time when many despair of culture, Elshtain recovers the life-affirming essence of what it means to be human.

Respected Christian ethicist Jean Bethke Elshtain finds in the tensions and tragedies of our turn-of-the-century society hope in the recovery of personhood. She explores the internal and external trappings that so easily lead us to forget how to be faithful to something other than ourselves.

This is a work of political analysis, cultural criticism, and theological engagement. Elshtain suggests that much of what we rightly interpret as troubling presents fascinating interpretive occasions for Christians, who, of all people, are called to live in hope. She highlights in particular certain aspects of youth culture, taking up popular films like "Seven" and "Titanic" and tragedies like the shootings at Columbine High School. What she finds running through all of these are examples of courage and a search for a source of truth and meaning that seems to elude so many.

#### About the Author

Jean Bethke Elshtain is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago. One of today's foremost political theorists and public intellectuals, she is a contributing editor for "The New Republic" and a prolific writer.

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