



That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith

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In our relativistic society, Christians more than ever are bombarded by tough questions about their faith. Author Paul Copan has observed that many of these questions emerge as "anti-truth claims" that are part of today's skeptical mind-set.

Christians defending their faith often hear slogans and questions such as:

Ž It's all relative

Ž Everything is one with the Divine; all else is illusion

Ž The Gospels contradict each other

Ž Why would a good God create hell?

This book provides incisive answers to slogans related to truth and reality; theism, pantheism/Eastern religion, and naturalism; and doctrinal issues such as the incarnation and truth of Scripture. Each of the twenty-two chapters provides succinct answers and summary points for countering the arguments.

Copan's book is accessible for all Christians who want to defend the plausibility of Christianity in the marketplace of ideas. It also includes helpful summary sections, additional resources, and additional documentation in the endnotes for review and discussion.

That's Just Your Interpretation: Responding to Skeptics Who Challenge Your Faith **Details**

Date : Published November 1st 2001 by Baker Books

ISBN :

Author : Paul Copan

Format : Kindle Edition 240 pages

Genre : Christian, Religion, Faith, Nonfiction

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David says

I wish there was a half star option here because this book is slightly better than most of my 3 star books but not as good as some of the 4 star books. Copan takes some interesting views regarding matters of doctrine but his first section in the book on relativism makes up for it.

Justin says

There are a few swings and misses here, but Copan's clarity makes it a useful read, particularly his chapter on the Trinity.

Sue Warren says

lots of important questions to look at and consider.

Ron W. says

Copan's book is a much broader text than his other well known publication, "Is God a Moral Monster?" This book is a lot more detailed inasmuch as Copan takes on quite a brave task in tackling both philosophical and theological topics (truth, reality and nature of God and the trinity and so forth) from skepticism through to Christianity. There are a couple of matters which I don't agree with, which Copan seems quite emphatic on and one of them is regarding Genesis 1:29 which states that Adam and Eve were given plant matter (vegetables, fruit) to eat rather than meat. Copan seems to argue that they also ate meat because they were given dominion over birds and fish and so forth. I'm not convinced this is the case as the text is quite clear that humanity was originally vegetarian until the Noahide covenant. Anyway, this is not the place to get bogged down with such petty issues. The book is worth the read if you are interested in apologetics.

Tucker says

I am inclined to disagree with the premise of objective theological and moral truth. The book is structured around several ideas for responding to relativists in conversation. The problem, of course, is that most people are not articulate about meta-ethics, so culling from a list of "things I have heard self-professed relativists say" inevitably results in straw-men arguments. Coming up with a quick response to shut down a half-thought-through one-liner such as "there is no truth" is not the same as responding to a book by John Dewey. Now, the author is aware of some *arguments for* (not just *claims of*) relativism, and he gets an extra star for that (strangely, most people writing on this topic do not bother to research the arguments on the other side). However, he does not fully integrate these arguments into his work.

For example: He tells us that the universe's existence cannot extend infinitely backward into the past; this would be a "logical" impossibility (p. 65). Yet God is eternal (p. 71). He does not explain why God is exempt from the infinity-laws that bind the universe. He confesses that God's infinity is "mind-boggling" and beyond his capacity to understand.

What is the difference between a mind-boggle and a logical impossibility? Why is it possible for God and not for the universe?

His argument goes roughly like this:

1. The universe cannot have existed infinitely into the past.
2. Therefore, the universe had a beginning.
3. Everything that begins has a cause.
4. God caused the universe to exist.
5. If God had a cause, there would be an infinite regress of gods, and that is unacceptable.
6. God existed infinitely into the past.

Why are there different rules for the universe and for God (#1 and #6)? Why is one infinity impossible and the other merely difficult to understand?

The whole point of making *philosophical* arguments about theology is to show that theology *makes sense*. If you are going to conclude that God *doesn't* make sense, why bother with philosophy?

In this instance, the author has displaced a puzzle about the universe onto a being called "God" and then claimed that the puzzle doesn't need to be solved anymore because God plays by a set of rules we can't understand.

The frustrating part is that Copan is aware of the problem with this style of argumentation! He acknowledges that people sometimes displace the universe's mysteries onto God and thereby create infinite regresses such as who-made-God?. Yet he doesn't seem to realize when he is guilty of the same crime, or else he believes he somehow gets away with it.
