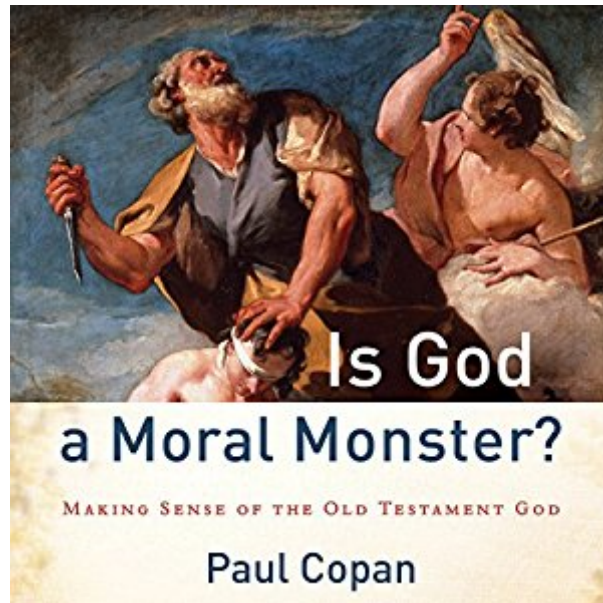


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Is God A Moral Monster?: Making Sense Of The Old Testament God



Synopsis

Leading apologetics writer with a proven track record tackles the most difficult Old Testament passages and topics, helping listeners to reconcile the God of righteousness with the God of love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins writes: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." In short, God is a "moral monster." Paul Copan begs to differ with Dawkins' evaluation of the Old Testament God, not to mention the similar critiques of other New Atheists--e.g., Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens. In *Is God a Moral Monster?* he uses these critiques as "a springboard to clarify and iron out misunderstandings and misrepresentations." More than that, he essays to defend the justice of God, properly understood and correctly presented. Copan divides his work into four sections. Part 1 identifies the New Atheists and outlines their critique of God. Part 2 responds to critiques of God's character that revolve around his desire for the praise of his people, his "jealousy" for their fidelity, and his command to Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Part 3 tackles what Dawkins calls the Bible's "ubiquitous weirdness" and those passages he sees as morally monstrous. This section, the book's longest, deals with kosher laws, criminal punishments, relationships between the sexes, slavery, the killing of the Canaanites particularly, and the so-called

"religious roots" of violence generally.

I can see why atheists have problems with the Old Testament. I personally read it fairly recently and was shocked, horrified in places and very troubled about how God came across as jealous and angry. This was surely not the God of the New Testament at all was he? Isn't God the source of all love? Isn't he love itself? To add to this I see a contrast between Jesus loving his enemies and God seemingly leading the Israelites to destroy their enemies. Jesus claimed that those who had seen him had seen the Father. For some reason it is difficult to think of God and Jesus being the same person when you compare the Old Testament God to Christ. In "Is God a Moral Monster?" Paul Copan answers many questions and seeks to put Christians minds to rest. He explains why atheists are not entirely correct in their assumptions and dissects each of their attacks in creative ways. Even though Paul Copan tries to explain away many details I still felt troubled. Some of the things he discusses like slavery did however make complete sense. Slaves in America were totally different than slaves in biblical times. At least in most cases it seemed to be a more voluntary arrangement by those seeking money to provide for their families, etc. Could this explain why Jesus did not speak out against slavery? Paul Copan also attempts to explain genocide, the treatment of women, holy wars, religious laws and customs, God testing Abraham, barbarism, polygamy, religion and violence and finally morality without God. When Paul Copan describes Jewish laws and then the laws of neighboring nations the Jewish people actually look pretty good and seem to be more humane. However stoning someone to death still seems pretty brutal to me.

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