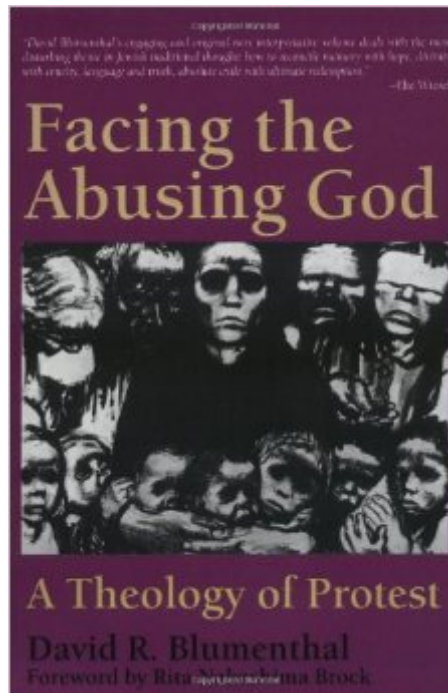


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Facing The Abusing God: A Theology Of Protest



Synopsis

In this powerful book, David Blumenthal maintains that having faith in a post-Holocaust world means admitting that while God is often loving and kind, fair and merciful, God is also capable of acts so unjust they can only be described as abusive. Grounding his argument in Scripture and in the experience of Holocaust survivors and of survivors of child abuse, Blumenthal grapples with how to face a God who has worked "wondrously through us" and who has worked "aw(e)fully against us." Delving into Jewish literary and theological traditions, the author articulates a theology of protest which accepts God as God is, yet defends the innocence of those who are utterly victimized.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is, bar none, the most uncompromisingly and unflinchingly honest work of theology I have read in 35+ years of studying the subject. Blumenthal's proximate subject is the Holocaust, but his ultimate subject is holocaust-as-such, not only **the** Holocaust -- in particular, those experiences of holocaust, personal and individual as well as historical and communal, in which God's tendency to abuse His/Her children are nakedly manifest. Most moving of all, in terms of individual holocaust, are the comments of one of Blumenthal's colleagues at Emory Univ, herself a survivor of the holocaust of childhood sexual abuse, who was given the MS for evaluation and comment. Christian theologians, this writer included, would do well to ponder a conclusion Blumenthal never states explicitly, but which is inescapably latent in his text: for a holocaust survivor, the only authentic and honest mode of theological discourse is the rhetoric of deliberate blasphemy. Perhaps respect for God ends where the experience of holocaust begins. If this book, and that possibility raised thereby,

does not keep you awake nights, then take warning: your soul may quite possibly be dead.

Blumenthal has written a wonderful, but challenging book on the nature of God in light of the Holocaust and the human experience of divine abandonment. He also invites a Christian theologian a chance to interact with his ideas and thoughts. You may not agree with him in the end, but rarely are you going to find a book that so thoroughly challenges the traditional notions of who God is while remaining very true to tradition.

This is an extremely important contribution to theology. It is an honest appraisal of what at times seems best described as divine 'abuse'. If Blumenthal is at all in the right here, and he most certainly is not entirely misguided, then Perfect Being Theology has some improvements to make! It must be said, though, that there are some slightly quirky features of this volume. First, the use of the hyphen---almost a theological statement itself---needs explanation. Second, the analyses by his colleagues might have been more balanced. Blumenthal is rather annoyingly too-PC here; his attempt at gender egalitarianism comes off as a bit over-the-top at times. An analysis from a male perspective would be a helpful contribution in a revised edition.

I love to hate this book. Every page was painful and frustrating. I use examples from his commentary on Biblical texts every so often. I reference his book as a "what not to do/read" when teaching frequently. The author dedicates his book to Survivors of the Holocaust and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. Survivors Should Never Read This. I don't believe God executes Justice on Earth. If your friend was married to the Abusing God described by this author, you would tell her to run and never look back. How can anyone responsibly teach this theology?! How can anyone encourage people to "stay with" an Abusing God?! If you have to read it, please borrow it from the library. Don't buy it.

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