

Letters From a Skeptic

Overview and Outline

Overview

Many in today's world are skeptical of Christianity. Non-believers attempt to define God in terms of what they see and hear around them, posing questions such as "Why has Christianity done so much harm?", "Why does God create earthquakes and famines?", "Why did God let my sister die?", "Isn't the Bible full of contradictions?", and "What makes you think your religion is the right one?" By examining a three-year written dialog between a Christian son and his 70 year old unbelieving father, this class will examine these and other "tough" questions in light of what the Bible says, strengthening your own faith and giving you more confidence to "*give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*" (1 Pet 3:15)

This study are based on the excellent book of the same name ("Letters from a Skeptic," 2nd Ed., 2008) by Dr. Gregory Boyd (the son) and Edward Boyd (the father).

Outline

Lesson 1:

- Introduction and "The Invitation"
- "Why has Christianity done so much harm?" (correspondence 1)

Lesson 2:

- "Why is the world so full of suffering?" (correspondence 2)
- "Is the risk of freedom worth all the suffering?" (correspondence 3)

Lesson 3:

- "Why does God create earthquakes and famines?" (correspondence 5)
- "Why did God create Satan?" (correspondence 6)

Lessons 4-5:

- "Is your God all-powerful?" (correspondence 7)
- "Why didn't God spare your mother?" (correspondence 10)

Lessons 6-7:

- "Why trust the gospel accounts?" (correspondence 13)
- "Aren't the gospels full of contradictions?" (correspondence 14)
- "Who wrote the gospels and when?" (correspondence 15)

Lesson 8:

- "How can you believe that a man rose from the dead?" (correspondence 16)
- "How can you believe that a man was God?" (correspondence 17)

Lesson 9:

- "Why does God make believing in Him so difficult?" (correspondence 18)
- "Why do you think the Bible is inspired?" (correspondence 19)

Lesson 10:

- "Isn't the Bible full of myths and God's vengeance?" (correspondence 20)
- "Why are there so many interpretations of the Bible?" (correspondence 22)

Lesson 11:

- "Do all non-Christians go to hell?" (correspondence 24)
- "How could an all-loving God torture people in an eternal hell?" (correspondence 25)

Lesson 12:

- "Isn't the Christian life impossible to live?" (correspondence 26)

Lesson 13:

- "How can I be sure it's all true?" (correspondence 29)
- Epilog and Tribute