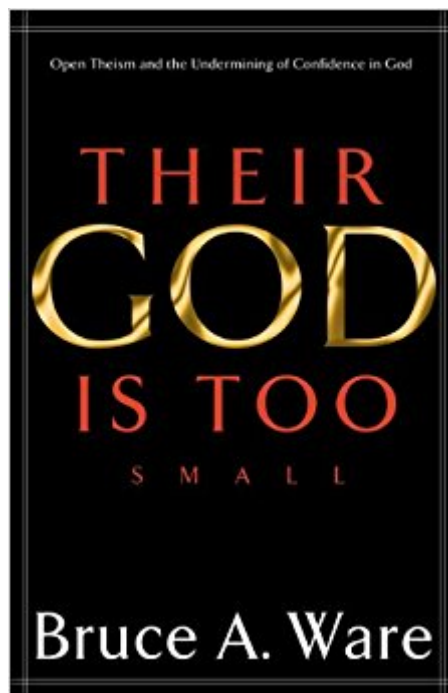




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Their God Is Too Small: Open Theism And The Undermining Of Confidence In God



Synopsis

Can you trust a "God" who can't know the future? A new theology is trickling down from the lofty halls of academia to the pews of evangelical churches. Called open theism, this novel view of God denies that he fully knows the future and insists that he takes risks by giving humans wide-ranging freedom. This view has disastrous consequences for the everyday faith of ordinary Christians, consequences you can't afford to ignore. *Their God Is Too Small* explains some of the beliefs of open theism and shows their practical implications. Using biblical truth and personal anecdotes, Bruce Ware demonstrates how open theism undermines trust in God for everyday life, particularly in the midst of suffering. This is no dry academic discourse; if you care about God's glory and your confidence in him, then this book is for you because it concerns the everyday issues of faith.

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Customer Reviews

"With unassailable logic, compelling exposition, and captivating real-life implications, Ware convincingly demonstrates the theological barrenness of open theism by exposing its major biblical deficiencies." — John MacArthur, Pastor, Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California
"Open theism supports its reducing of God's sovereignty by denying his full knowledge of the future. If any doubt remains as to whether this falls short of the Bible's teaching and waters down Christian faith and hope, Bruce Ware's pastoral reasoning will surely dispel it." — J. I. Packer, Board of Governors' Professor of Theology, Regent College
"Their God Is Too Small effectively exposes the diminished God of open theism, and in so doing provides pastors with a

powerful tool to foster genuine faith in the sovereign, wise, and trustworthy God of the Bible." — C. J. Mahaney, Sovereign Grace Ministries "Confusion about God inevitably leads to confusion about life. Thankfully, Bruce Ware keeps our heads and hearts on track toward an accurate knowledge of God against the backdrop of prevalent distortions." — Joseph M. Stowell, President, Cornerstone University

This is a well-written and easy-to-read treatise on the foreknowledge of God, specifically as it relates to open theism (the idea that God cannot know the future because the future is open, hasn't happened yet, and is, therefore, unknowable). Ware's argues clearly and well. I'm not sure if this will be so helpful to someone come from the Open Theism point of view--he talks of "them" and "their God" being too small, so it seems his real audience are those who wish to buttress their faith in our omniscient God and learn how to converse with open theistic friends.

'The God of open theism is too small, simply because he is less than the majestic, fully knowing, altogether wise of the Bible.' So Bruce Ware convincingly opens up from the Bible God's breath-taking comprehensive knowledge of all things present and future, his unstoppable power in all things great or small and that he indeed ensures that all things will work together for good. The author helps us see some of 'the true glory of God and be compelled to bow before his majestic greatness, and not be lured by a fashionable human like deity that belittles both God and the faith he wishes to elicit from his people.' The pages of this comparatively short book help us to see the living God who promises that even in suffering 'those who seek the Lord lack no good thing'. Rich food for the mind, a sweet and satisfying taste for the heart.

If you know someone who is being assaulted by an open theism professor or pastor, this is an excellent gift for the student or church member. Well written, with authority, it is readable for the lay person and/or the philosopher. I enjoyed the book as have several college students to whom I gave it as a gift. God bless Bruce Ware for writing this book.

Open Theism, once a doctrine known only to Christian academics, is slowly becoming mainstream among evangelicals. While it continues to be a minority position, it is gaining wider acceptance and several popular Christian authors are teaching it or teaching principles derived from it, even while denying their belief in it. This represents one of the battle-lines of the contemporary church and it is important for Christians to know what this doctrine teaches and be prepared to give a defense of the

traditional view of God. This short book, written by Bruce Ware, sets out to teach believers the basics of what they need to know to defend the traditional doctrines. Put simply, open theism is a doctrine that teaches that God does not fully know the future, for he cannot see what humans will do with the free will He gives them. Therefore, God has taken a great risk in giving us freedom. Of course this contrasts with the biblical teaching of God's omniscience - that He sees and knows everything in the past, present and future - as well as God's omnipotence - that He not only knows these things, but controls them as well. More than just a minor difference in doctrine, open theism threatens some of the beliefs Christians hold most dear. How can we have confidence in a God who does not know what will happen minutes, hours or days from now? How can we trust a God who is constantly making errors in judgment as He guides our lives the best He can, using only the information that He is able to see at the time? Why should we pray to a God who values our opinion as highly as our own? This is not the God of the Bible! As the title of the book tells us, *Their God Is Too Small* introduces the main proponents of open theism, explains the basics of their beliefs and shows the implications of this doctrine. The author concludes that open theism undermines the believer's confidence in God as the One who can be trusted to walk with us through pain and suffering; as the one who gives us a hope for the future. The constant theme is that this God is just far too small to be the God we learn of from the Scriptures. This book, at only 129 pages, serves merely as an introduction to this doctrine, but it serves that purpose well. It is easy to read and understand, even for those who know little about theology. The reader will be left with an accurate depiction of the arguments for and against this doctrine as well as a strong sense of just what is at stake. I am glad to give it my recommendation.

This is a great book on open theism, it's short and to the point which makes it something i would highly recommend.

Bruce A. Ware is professor of Christian theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He wrote in the Introduction to this 2003 book, "From my first exposure to what is called the 'open' view of God, I have wanted to 'set the record straight'... (so that) followers of the true and living God will see the openness deity as an imposter and not the true God he is claimed to be... My longer and more sustained interaction is available in *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism*." He asks how Christ could warn Peter that he would deny him three times before the rooster crowed (Jn 13:38), "If God doesn't know what we will do before we do it"? (Pg. 18) He asserts that it

should be apparent to Bible-believing Christians that "the open view diminishes God's full integrity, wisdom, greatness, goodness, and glory. Their God is just too small." (Pg. 19) He asks rhetorically, "Does Scripture teach that God wonders and guesses what free human persons might do in the future"? He denies this, asserting that the God of the Bible does not face the future, wondering what will happen---"the true God knows and declares the end from the beginning, and he challenges anyone to prove him wrong!" (Pg. 57) This book will have value for persons who don't want to work through Ware's earlier, and more detailed book.

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