



Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith

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Christians should not have an inferiority complex regarding the academic or intellectual integrity of their faith and should understand that Christian faith is also a rational faith. Faith and Reason has two major purposes. First, it is designed to introduce readers to the more important questions that link philosophy and religion. It explores philosophical questions. It is also written for pastors, Christian workers, and educated laypeople who want to know how to defend the Christian faith. The book includes discussion questions.

Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith Details

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Brian Watson says

This book is a cross between a work of apologetics and a book on the philosophy of religion. For that reason, it's different from most apologetics books, which might make it worth your reading. The six parts of the book are on worldviews, the rationality of religious belief, arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, miracles, and concluding matters.

The section on worldviews is solid. The material devoted to the rationality of belief is quite good. He critiques non-Christian evidentialism (or empiricism) and presents Alvin Plantinga's early views on what has become known as Reformed epistemology. The section on arguments for God's existence isn't as good, in my opinion. For those, go to Douglas Groothuis, or perhaps J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig. His discussion of the problem of evil is philosophical and covers some good ground, but I wish he had presented a Reformed view (not relying on Plantinga's free will argument). The rest of the book is solid.

Nash does a good job of making some complex material relatively clear. Though the book may no longer be in print, it's worth tracking down a copy. It's now thirty years old, so the discussion might feel a bit dated for those who keep track of developments in the philosophy of religion and apologetics, but it's still a good read.

Dave Courtney says

It's a book that is used commonly in academic classes on philosophy and religion. He has centralized a large degree of his writings toward issues of faith and reason and differing world views. His effort Faith and Reason, although at this point deserving of an update, is a leading resource in encouraging thought and dialogue to some of the many problematic areas and popular issues of contention that comes with a Christian world view in particular.

A leading premise that Nash looks to defend is that, despite some areas of tension, one of the often overlooked components of arguments against a reasonable faith is the ability to join Christian thought with academic and intellectual credibility. This issue arguably has found its way to the forefront in an even greater degree today. Interestingly enough, CT magazine recently dedicated its cover story to this very issue, in fact looking at the plight of the Christian college and university and the hope of a resurgence. The assertions of the teachers and scholars that make up these schools across North America demand that the Christian college is in fact one of the few places that true academic religious study can happen well and with true credibility and freedom of thought. One of the main reasons they cite is that while religious study must remain objective, true objectivity happens best from within the experience itself. Similarly, what defines the foundation of "Faith and Reason" is the acceptance that one can both raise in to question and believe at the same time, and that true belief is both a result of experience and intellectual work.

It is unlikely that a book like this will sway a skeptic. The truth is that it is near impossible for anyone to be truly objective, no matter which side they find themselves on. We all come bearing both the life experience that has shaped and influenced our personal journey. But this is the journey that Nash brings us on, to say that the experience that leads our conviction can be married to proper discourse. Too often arguments set against the Christian faith subject it to the inability to approach the truth objectively. And that is an unfair

assertion. True objectively is always subjected, to a certain degree, to our experience. And further, it may be that the inability to accept that all opinion founds itself on this same truth is perhaps the biggest fault in most objections to the faith.

Faith and Reason is a great resource for those who desire to gain some insight to how to marry an intellectual component of our faith in an appropriate fashion. And it should lead us and free us up to do this unapologetically (despite the words of some who would suggest we must apologize for giving any worth to our experience). It works to give answers where it can as a discourse, but also leaves it open ended where some of the tension of faith remains. And we can be okay with that. Some of the best work is in it's dealings with the problem of evil and suffering, and there is enough here that should help give weight to a struggling belief.

Adam Anderson says

Good philosophical treatment of Christianity. Would like to read more like this.

Jason says

This book had some strengths and weaknesses. The strongest part of the book was the part that dealt with the problem of evil and suffering in the world. His explanation was the best I have seen yet. I also agreed with position regarding inductive versus deductive arguments. The part on miracles was not strong. I disliked the emphasis he placed on personal religious experience which, I think is too subjective to be of much value.

Bob Wolniak says

Classic text I had in my Apologetics class, especially helpful to me on the problem of evil (deductive, inductive, gratuitous).

Cynthia says

It explains faith and reason in philosophical terms and has enhanced my ability to understand those terms. He explains philosophical terms as he goes so that you don't have to guess or be frustrated at what "conditional" and "necessary" mean when philosophy uses them. He notes philosophical objections to faith by a range of philosophers and explains their (sometimes obscure) meaning before addressing his counter argument.

Although its focus is in proving that Christianity is true in a philosophical sense, it is useful for all who are interested in the presumed battle between faith and reason in every religion. Nash shows philosophically why this is not the case.

Since I am a new philosophical student, I might actually read it again in the next year to pick up what I didn't understand in the first read.

Benjamin Glaser says

This book was good but borrowed heavily from his other books, sometimes liberally quoting from them. You are just as well to read the other books.

Perry says

Just one paragraph in this book about the foundational assumption that our senses are reliable completely disarms the nontheists in precisely the place where they believe they have most advantage.

Rodney Harvill says

I read this book as part of listening to a lecture series Ronald Nash gave on apologetics in the 2001. My review will reflect observations on the book and some points that Dr. Nash made in his lecture series thirteen years after this book was published. Since I read this book as part of an effort to understand apologetics, I am not an expert, and my review will also consider how well he communicated some of the arcane topics.

The major sections of the book are:

- The Christian world-view
- The rationality of religious belief
- Arguments for God's existence
- The problem of evil
- Miracles

Some points made by Dr. Nash that stood out to me include:

- There are two general types of apologetics, positive and negative, corresponding to playing offense or defense, respectively. When engaging in positive apologetics, the theist carries the burden of proof. On the contrary, when engaging in negative apologetics, such as when parrying a challenge to his beliefs, the theist does not hold the burden of proof; he merely needs to demonstrate that his beliefs are more plausible than the challenge to them.
- Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is plausibility. Some arguments, no matter how strong they are, will not work on some people. Someone's rejection of an argument for God's existence, for example, is not in and of itself an indication that the argument is weak. The person may not be disposed to believe in God or even want to. In such a case, he may well reject a decent argument out of hand. Someone else may well accept the plausibility of the argument. Let the argument stand on its merits.
- The section of the book that Dr. Nash would have revised if he could would have been the arguments for God's existence. This observation comes from his lectures. He already was uncomfortable with the deductive use of the cosmological and teleological arguments. For example, the cosmological argument starts with premises about a finite world and makes a conclusion about an infinite Creator. For an argument to be logically valid, the conclusion must flow from the premises, and the cosmological argument doesn't achieve this. For reasons like this, he is a proponent of the use of inductive arguments for God's existence. As noted

above, Dr. Nash would have rewritten this section if he could have done so. The book predates certain scientific discoveries and schools of thought, such as intelligent design, that have apologetic value. In fact, he utilizes this new information in his philosophy textbook *Life's Ultimate Questions*.

Some additional observations I have include:

- Throughout the book, Dr. Nash draws attention to various objections to theism relevant to the material. He refutes them, but he doesn't dismiss them out of hand. He even goes so far as to note objections that are particularly strong.
- I really appreciated his section on the problem of evil. Dr. Nash did a good job of explaining concepts and defining terms. I read Norman Geisler's book on the problem of evil about a year ago, and he went straight into a theodicy defense without bothering to explain what theodicy was. It wasn't until I read *Faith and Reason* that I understood just what Dr. Geisler was doing.

Faith and Reason does not make its reader an expert, but it does a decent job of explaining apologetic concepts to a novice such as myself.

David says

This was the book we used in our seminary apologetics class. Overall it is very helpful.

Christian says

The other reviews already say enough about the qualities of the book, which in my humble opinion is an excellent read.

What I wish to add that the Reformed Theological Seminary has put a whole apologetics lecture course on iTunes by Nash, which is also excellent. And thus in addition to the book you can listen to a wonderful audio exposition and commentary of the material with some very enjoyable jokes by the man himself !

Bud Hewlett says

One of the best.

Daniel Alvers says

Good book... Caused me to think a lot... Good clarity on some good ole arguments that are continually fought over... This book was good at taking those arguments to the next level.(teleological cosmological etc) It dealt with the problem of evil on several levels. The book talked about the importance of the noetic structure or worldview. I did have some questions though... Very good book if you are into philosophy and deep thinking. If you like to ask the question "why?" or if you are entertained by solid discussions on rational faith, get this book. This book's main idea is to leave naturalism ugly dead and naked in the street of rationality. It demonstrated much of self refuting claims of naturalism. It explained clearly why naturalists

can't think outside the box. I think in many ways it was a success. Hume got a spanking just like he deserves... Dumb Hume... I wish he would have used my new favorite argument. Naturalists can't account even for the existence of numbers because they can't show you a number. They honestly can't count to one. They can show things that correspond to the number one but they can't show you a number one. So how do you know number one exists, naturalist? So anyways good book for you atheolgians out there.
