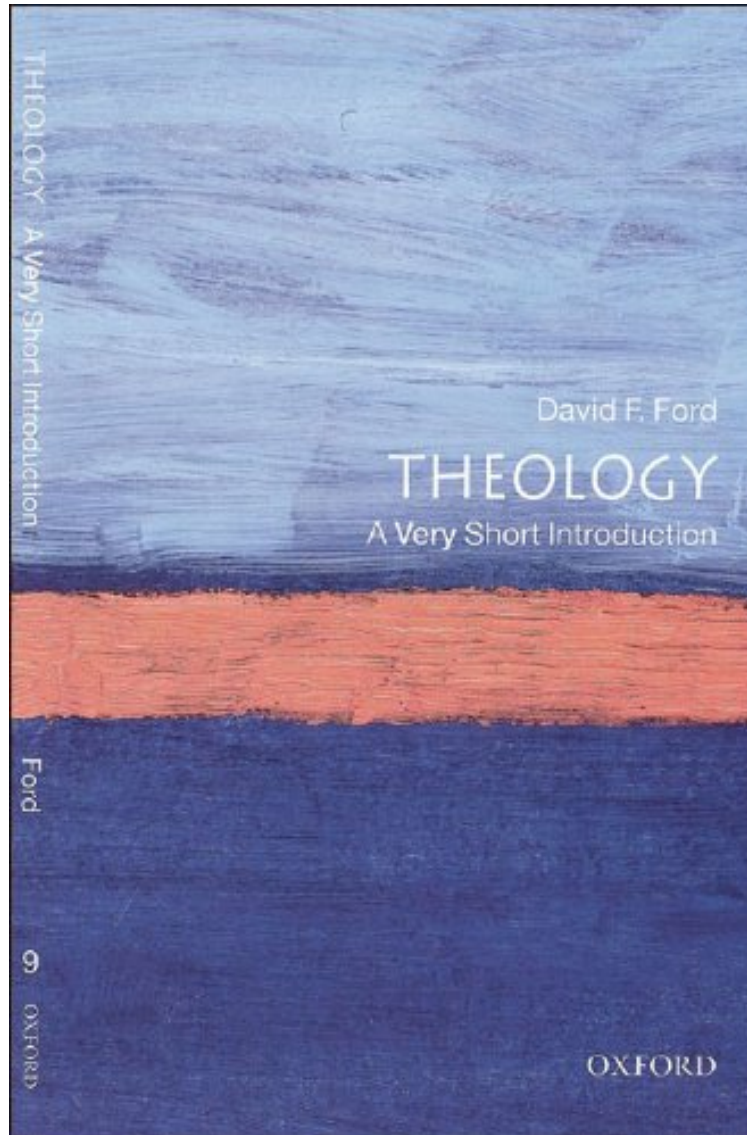


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## Theology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Von David Ford

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**Von David Ford : Theology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Theology on the quick...Von FrKurt MessickPart of a series by Oxford University Press, this book, 'Theology: A Very Short Introduction', by David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, follows the same

format as other texts in the Very Short Introduction series -- it has fewer than 200 pages, is well indexed, has a useful listing of further readings, accessible and enjoyable narrative, and captures the essence in a very short space the major points of its topic. There are probably nearing 100 volumes in this Very Short Introduction series (making it, ironically, not a Very Short series), but among those that I have read, this text stands out as being one of the more interesting to me. There are ten chapters grouped according to three major sections: Describing the Field of Theology; Theological Explorations; and Skills, Disciplines and Methods. In the first section, Ford sets the stage by looking at the state of religious and academic institutions generally, before proceeding on to looking at the particular disciplines of religious studies and theology, which contrary to much popular thinking, are not the same thing at all. Ford looks specifically at postmodernism, Karl Rahner, Hans Frei's five types of theology, and general philosophical ideas at play in theological study. In the section on Theological Explorations, for most this is where the heart of the matter lies. Various key components of systematic theological thinking are explored - the doctrine of God, the idea of ethics and morality (particularly as it has to do with worship and God), the problem of evil, basic Christological issues, and the idea of salvation. Ford does not confine his text to one particular view, but gives a sampling of different ideas, and highlights difficulties and strengths of each view. The final primary section is one that often comes first in many theology texts of this sort - a discourse on method (with apologies to Descartes). Ford looks a bit at the history of the theological enterprise and how others have 'done' theology in the past. He then looks at key tools such as experience, knowledge and wisdom as shapers of theology. Tools such as experience, knowledge and wisdom as shapers of theology. He uses Lonergan's three-level description method for epistemology as an example, and then turns to a nine-fold approach to appropriate knowing of God. The last chapter looks at issues continuing for theology into the third millennium. Theology as a Christian enterprise is 2000 years old, and shows no signs of slowing, although theology in the future will be a very different creature and construct from theology in the past, all the while it must acknowledge its grounding in the events and the methods of the past. Like other books in this Very Short series, there are some useful illustrations and suggestions for further reading, should the Very Short introduction not prove sufficient (and for many, this sample will leave the reader wanting more). I cannot speak too highly of this series.

2 von 4 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing Von Moritz Huhn Ford has decided to focus discussions through Christian theology. Why? Because, among other things, Christianity is the largest of the world religions. Does something get more true because many people are believing it? Christian theology is Ford's own academic specialty. Thus he is an expert on the matter which means that his word counts. So what does he have to say? What is 'theology': "theology deals with questions of meaning, truth, beauty, and practice raised in relation to religions". So truth is important. That is true! What about truth of existence (in some reality): "it must be clear that there is no simple criterion for what is real or not.". There goes strong evidence. Is theology important: "it is hard to find a discipline [an academic one] that does not somehow relate to theology and the religions" and even better: "...extraordinary importance of the religions...". Now we have delusions of grandeur. Who and what is the enemy: "postmodern critiques have tended to be extreme and their suspicion has tended towards nihilism" and even better: "...the oppressive possibilities of types of rationality which have confidently (and often arrogantly) dominated large areas of modern life." There goes rational argument. Always pick a straw man to kill. Theology is in good company: "Philosophy, theology, and other areas of thought have also contributed to a mood of radical suspicion directed at any way of making overall sense of life.". Only religion did burn people (e.g., Giordano Bruno in 1600). Always be tangible: "there have also been extraordinary achievements when intelligent faith, deep learning, and imaginative wisdom have come together.". No example is given. The expression 'intelligent faith' appears a lot - what is the difference to ordinary faith? What is the content of Christian theology: "the major areas of doctrine - God, creation, human being, sin, Jesus Christ, salvation, Holy Spirit, church, ethics, the Kingdom of God.". The stage is set. What is God: Ford's most general working definition of the divine is 'what is worshipped'. This encompasses a lot. Some big No-No: "never conceive of God without taking all the dimensions of the Trinity into account... Beware of relating to God in ways which ignore one or more of these dimensions." and even better: "the Christian meaning of God as Trinity does make some sort of sense - even as it challenges other frameworks and worldviews". Substitute rationality for 'frameworks' and 'naturalism' for 'worldviews'. You trust these systems in everyday life - why give it up for a dogma? Always be elusive: "You can never take it for granted that you know the meaning of the word 'God'" and even better: "if you think you have finally caught God in a definition then you can be sure that what you have caught is not this God... The one who seeks God does not have any neutral criterion or any overview of the evidence. God is the ultimate framework and has the sole overview." There stamps the foot on the floor. How does faith spread: "usually people who believe in God have come into that belief through knowing other people who believe. This makes sense: the first candidate for examination should be one who has come through many centuries of discussion and selectivity." Astrology is still with us, too. Trust is a good thing: "Christianity is a faith that trusts in the basic reliability of certain witnesses... Yet there has also been a strong tradition of insistence that the form of security appropriate to this God is trusting other people's word." and even better: "The mainstream position has never been that every detail of the biblical records need to be precisely accurate - if that had been so, the New Testament, with its very different and in places contradictory accounts could never have been accepted as normative." So you have to trust the word of people which is proven to be not reliable. Why? Ford's

promise is: "this book introduces theology by doing it". Look at the quotes above, save your money and spare your time. Am I biased? Yes, I am.

**Kurzbeschreibung**This Very Short Introduction provides both believers and non-believers with a balanced survey of the central questions of contemporary theology. David Ford's interrogative approach draws the reader into considering the principles underlying religious belief, including the centrality of salvation to most major religions, the concept of God in ancient, modern, and postmodern contexts, the challenge posed to theology by prayer and worship, and the issue of sin and evil. He also probes the nature of experience, knowledge, and wisdom in theology, and discusses what is involved in interpreting theological texts today.

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**Synopsis** This is an introduction to the multifaceted subject of academic theology. Its basic approach is interrogative, raising key questions so as to lead into a range of selected topics such as knowledge, community, salvation, God, prayer and evil. The integrating idea is that of the quest for wisdom and there is a postscript looking forward to theology in the next century.