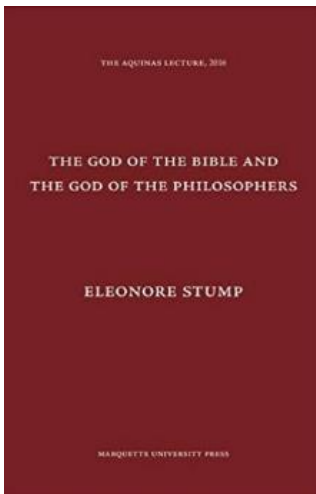


*The God Of The Bible And The God Of The Philosophers*, Eleonore Stump  
The Aquinas Lecture, 2016, Marquette University Press. Reviewed by K. D. Kragen



Aquinas Lectures have met every year since 1937. “Eleonore Stump is the Robert J. Henle Professor of Philosophy at Saint Louis University, where she has taught since 1992. She has published extensively in philosophy of religion, contemporary metaphysics, and medieval philosophy. Her books include her major study *Aquinas* (Routledge, 2003) and her extensive treatment of the problem of evil, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford, 2010). She has given the Gifford Lectures (Aberdeen, 2003), the Wilde lectures (Oxford, 2006), and the Stewart lectures (Princeton, 2009). She is past president of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the American Catholic Philosophical Association, and the American Philosophical Association, Central Division; and she is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.” (Amazon author bio, [amazon.com/gp/product/0874621895/ref=oh\\_aui\\_search\\_detailpage?ie=UTF8&psc=1&pldnSite=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0874621895/ref=oh_aui_search_detailpage?ie=UTF8&psc=1&pldnSite=1))

“It is common among contemporary theologians and philosophers to suppose that the God of the Bible is radically different from the God of the philosophers. The God of the philosophers is generally understood to be the God of classical theism, whose standard divine attributes are those paradigmatically given by the great medieval philosophers of the three monotheisms, Averroes, Maimonides, and Aquinas. Some of the current trend towards open theism among philosophers of religion has its source in the twinned convictions that there is an inconsistency between the descriptions of God given by the Bible and the characterization of God upheld by classical theism, and that the biblical portrayal is greatly preferable to the account of God accepted by classical theism” (p. 11).

“One might say that the God portrayed...in the Hebrew Bible generally is very human. When Genesis says that human beings are made in the image of God, the stories of God in the Hebrew Bible bear out the claim. As the story of Jonah illustrates, the humanity of human persons has its correlative image in the responsive and personally present God of the Hebrew Bible. There is a rich anthropomorphism here that the stories underscore and approve. Something analogous can be said about the representation of God in the New Testament” (p. 14).

“By contrast with these biblical representations of God, to many people the God of classical theism seems unresponsive, unengaged, and entirely inhuman. That is because, on classical theism as it is often interpreted, God is immutable, eternal, and simple, devoid of all potentiality, incapable of any passivity, and inaccessible to human knowledge. So described, the God of classical theism seems very different from the God of the Bible” (p. 18).

In *The God Of The Bible And The God Of The Philosophers*, Eleonore Stump develops a remarkably readable and clear argument against the alleged inconsistency between these two construals of God. Writes Stump, “I will focus on just one proponent of classical theism, namely Aquinas, because it is not possible to cover everything in this brief space and because Aquinas’s work contains the representative classical theism that I know best. I will show that, for Aquinas, who is the most frequently invoked proponent of classical theism, an immutable, eternal, simple God is most certainly the God of the Bible, knowable, accessible, interactive with human beings, and responsive to them” (p. 19).

In under a 100 pages, Stump makes a compelling case for the following thesis: “For Aquinas, there is no inconsistency between the God of classical theism and the God of the Bible, not because the God of the Bible really is the frozen and remote deity some people take the God of classical theism to be, but because the God of classical theism really is the personal biblical God.” (p. 19).