



# A word on the Word

*A monthly series on the Bible by Carrie Boren, Missioner for Evangelism*

From time to time, someone will say to me, “Why should I bother with the Bible? As a Christian, I worship Jesus Christ, not a book written long ago. I know Christ through the sacraments, worship, prayer, and attending church. I don’t really need the Bible.”

Of course, as Christians, we do not worship a book. We worship the Word of God revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Yet, the Bible is the primary way we come to know Jesus Christ, God, and God’s saving plan for us. As St. Jerome noted, “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”

The Bible is a vital lifeline for Christian growth. *The Book of Common Prayer* states, “The Bible contains all things necessary for salvation.” It is not merely an ancient document to consult from time to time. It is a living and breathing word to us today. As the writer to the Hebrews notes, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

There are multitudes of reasons to read the Bible. I would like to highlight a few.

***The Bible is God’s word to us.*** Paul writes in his letter to Timothy, “All Scripture is God breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). Through reading the Bible, we gain insight into God’s character, guidance, and plan for all people. As we spend time reading and meditating on His word, we grow closer to Him.

Jesus modeled this for us. He viewed Scripture as inspired by God and framed His life in accordance with it. In His ministry, He used many Old Testament images, such as the Good Shepherd and ransom themes. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus read from the Old Testament scroll and said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Jesus also used it against the devil’s temptation in the desert. His example shows us that the Bible is much more than a book; it is God’s word to us and for us, giving us life and strength.

***The Bible is a word about history.*** A person can read the Bible as a purely historical document and gain understanding of various periods and cultures. It illustrates that Christianity is not a contrived myth but a faith that is rooted in historical reality. God is and has been involved in history from the beginning, when He brought all things into being, to the present day. Demonstrating God’s daily interaction with His creation in practical ways through times of challenge, joy, war, and peace — at all times, the Bible reveals a God who created us and longs to be in relationship with us “in the here and now.”

Although some 40 different authors — separated by time, culture, and literary style — wrote the Bible over a time span of hundreds of years, it reveals one story, one plan, and one God. Throughout the Book, that story is about almighty God’s eternal work to redeem a wrecked world, and its history is the record of His unfolding plan to save us. As St. Augustine wrote, “The Old Testament and the New Testament constitute a divine library, one sublime unity, origins in the past to issues in future, processes between, connecting two eternities.”

*At the center of it is Jesus Christ.*

***The Bible is a word about Jesus Christ.*** All history up to the point of Jesus’ birth was a preparation for

His coming and all history afterward is the spread and establishment of His Kingdom. As the author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote, “In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe” (Heb. 1:1-3).

The Old Testament and the New Testament are intricately intertwined. The first verse of the New Testament, Matt. 1:1, reveals this link, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham ...” The first thing we need to know about Jesus, Matthew states, is His ancestry and how He is related to the Old Testament. Jesus is the long awaited Messiah.

Scholar, Scott Hahn, writes, “The Old Testament tells us the long journey of the road towards salvation. This road leads to the New Testament where Jesus says, ‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law of the prophets. I have not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.’” In other words, the New Testament is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises.

At the heart of the Christian Gospel and the Bible is the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us how Jesus, Himself, lived, died, and rose again, gaining for us eternal life, and what Jesus taught about how we should live.

During this time of Advent, I encourage you to read the Bible afresh. Spend time in God’s word, and you will grow closer to Christ. As the writer of James expressed, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). I especially suggest you read the Gospels. Enter into the joy of Jesus’ arrival through the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke.