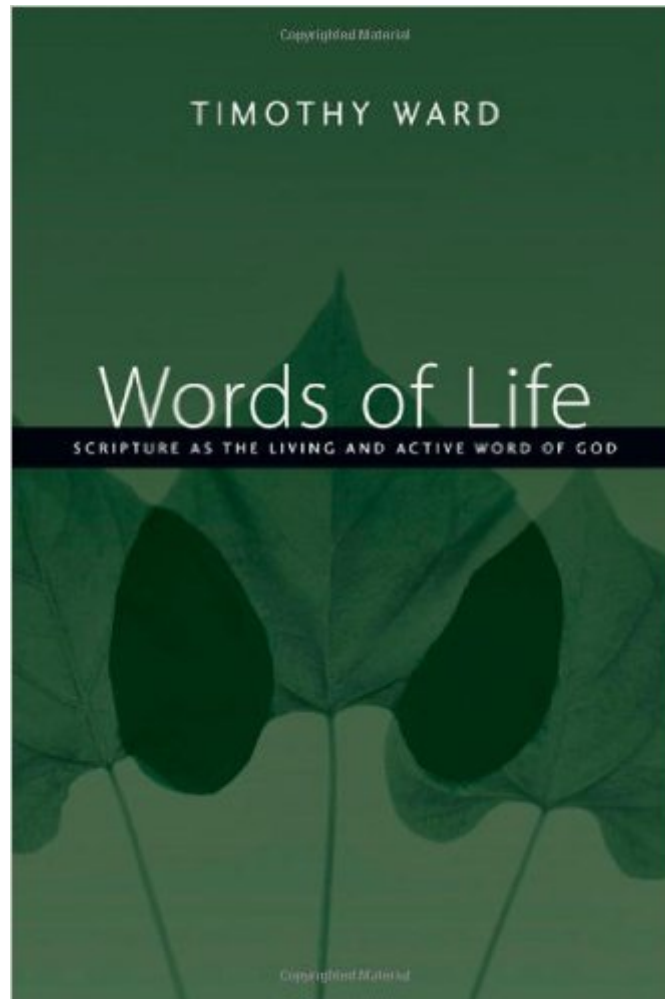


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Words Of Life: Scripture As The Living And Active Word Of God



Synopsis

Throughout Christian history, the overwhelmingly predominant view of the Bible has been that it is itself the living and active word of God. In this book Timothy Ward explains and defends what we are really saying when we trust and proclaim, as we must, that the Bible is God's word. In particular he describes the nature of the relationship between the living God and Scripture. He examines why, in order to worship God faithfully, we need to pay close attention to the Bible; why, in order to be faithful disciples of Jesus, the Word-made-flesh, we need to base our lives on the words of the Bible; and why, in order to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, we need to trust and obey what the Bible says. Ward offers an understanding of the nature of Scripture under three main headings. A biblical outline shows that the words of the Bible form a significant part of God's action in the world. A theological outline focuses on the relationship of Scripture with each of the persons of the Trinity. And a doctrinal outline examines the 'attributes' of Scripture. A final chapter explores some significant areas in which the doctrine of Scripture should be applied. Ward offers us an excellent, lucid exposition of the nature and function of Scripture, expressed in a form appropriate for the twenty-first century, grounded in the relevant scholarship, and standing firmly in line with the best of the theological traditions.

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Customer Reviews

Kevin Vanhoozer's endorsement on the back cover certainly caught my eye: "I have been on the lookout for a compelling and contemporary treatment of the nature and authority of Scripture for years. I ask of every promising new title, `Are you the one who is to come, or shall I look for

another?' Ward's book may be the one."That's quite a statement, especially for a book that checks in at just under two hundred pages. As it turns out, however, what Ward's book lacks in length it more than makes up for in substance. In fact, its relatively small size is more of an advantage than a hindrance. Ward's purpose for writing *Words of Life* shows up early and clearly, "I want to articulate, explain and defend what we are really saying when we proclaim, as we must, that the Bible is God's Word." This is certainly a purpose for which many books have been written, but what makes Ward's book particularly helpful is the approach he takes to this task, an approach that articulates the theology of Scripture in a way that is both historically orthodox and refreshingly contemporary. Ward builds his fundamental view of Scripture on the idea that God's Word is a primary (if not THE primary) way in which God has worked and is working in the world. The concept that Scripture is God's communicative action (demonstrated throughout the Bible) is the critical starting point for Ward that forms and shapes his entire doctrine of Scripture. In other words, all the "categories" that he affirms in relation to Scripture (its clarity, sufficiency, authority, etc.) stem from this overarching Biblical idea. As I reflected on this, comparing and contrasting it to the starting place that I inherited through my tradition, I found it to be very freeing and exciting.

Timothy Ward's brief, but penetrating, foray into the nature of Scripture and its interconnection with God's person and revelation offers an accessible on-ramp into the complexities of classical hermeneutics while teasing out major disagreements pot-marking current hermeneutical studies. *Words of Life* initially caught my eye when I was teaching a home school course on hermeneutics. Looking for an understandable, yet nuanced, explanation of the bedrock commitments of the nature of Scripture, I was delighted to find this Anglican rector's work, one I would warmly recommend for eager learners in the church and for students wishing to progress in their study of hermeneutics. What Ward does especially well is to maintain the classical, evangelical, and reformed commitment to the nature of Scripture while insisting that Christians see Scripture as the supreme revelatory gift of the Triune God, tied to the nature and work of God himself. Stated differently, *Words of Life* ably holds together *sola Scriptura* and *solo Deo*, insisting that Christians must not pull apart these interlocked and mutually connected commitments. Ward corrects an evangelical tendency over the last couple centuries, contrary to Calvin, to isolate the doctrine of Scripture and hermetically separate it from the God revealed in Scripture. Ward's treatment of speech-act theory, defining the use of language "at root the means one person performs actions in relation to another", weaves through at least two chapters and becomes the critical touchstone of his argument for bringing together and sustaining the intersection of God's nature and Scripture. He

underscores God's speech at the advent of creation and his subsequent actions described in Scripture.

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