

**The Written Word**  
Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-3 ©  
With Pastor Joseph Rodrigues

**OUTLINE**

**Introduction**

This study explores the *written* Word of God in its distinctiveness as a form of communication from other forms of revelation.

It explores its content, its authority, and its purpose and how it came to us.

It looks at how Jesus used it, and how his life was a fulfillment of it.

It examines what God's word accomplishes through it and how we should approach it for proper study.

-Recap on last two sessions

-Coverage this session a consideration of 'the word of God' [the *written* word, the Bible];

**Distinction from other forms of revelation, i.e.-general (creation & moral experience vs. special revelation).**

**General revelation is a revelation of god made to all people everywhere (See especially Rom. 1:18-32 and Rom 2:14 ff.) – creation and moral experience**

**Special revelation denotes the ways god makes himself known with clarity and fullness, which far surpasses general revelation. It is centred in the miracle of the incarnation and mediated through the god inspired words of the bible**

**The word of God**

**OT usage** 'dabar' (word of god) is used to describe a divine communication which comes from god to men in the form of commandment, prophecy, warning, or encouragement. ; E.g., 'the word of Yahweh came to...'

Sometimes the word is 'seen' as a vision (e.g. **Is. 2:1**)

Yahweh's word is an extension of the divine personality, invested with divine authority and is to be heeded by angels and men (e.g. **Ps.103: 20; Dt. 12:32**)

It stands forever (**Is.40: 8**)

Once uttered it cannot return unfulfilled (**Is. 55:11**)

Only in **Ps 119** is it referred to as a *written* rather than a spoken message (used as a synonym for the law 'Tora').

**NT usage-** two Greek words are used to convey the meaning of *dabar*. They are *logos* and *Rhema*.

*Logos* is used supremely as the message of the Christian gospel (**Mk. 2:2; Acts 6:2; Gal 6:6**, for example).

*Rhema* also bears the same meaning (**Rom.10:8; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 6:5** etc.) though it is not as comprehensive in its scope.

To the early Church the word was a message revealed from God *in Christ*, which was to be preached, ministered, and obeyed. It was the word of life (**Phil 2:16**), of the cross (**1Cor. 1:18**), of salvation (**Acts 13:26**), of truth (**Eph 1:13**) and of reconciliation (**2 Cor. 5:19**).

**The Bible (Latin 'biblia', books)**

Structure: 66 books (39 in OT and 27 in NT)

Form:

**Old testament-** Written over a period of about 1000years, from 1400 BC-400 BC, followed by the 400 "silent years" before Christ came

History:	Genesis to Deuteronomy (Law)	= 5
	Joshua to Esther	= 12
Poetry:	Job to Song of Songs	= 5
Prophecy:	Isaiah to Daniel (Major Prophets)	= 5
	Hosea to Malachi (Minor Prophets)	= 12

*New testament-*

Gospels:	= 4
Historical:	= 1
Epistles and Pastoral:	= 22
Prophetic:	= 1

The Bible reveals the word of god *in writing* (**Jn 10:35**). The law was a written code.

The Bible reveals the word of God *in person* (**Jn. 1:1, 14; Rev. 19: 11-13**)  
There is total agreement between the two!

#### **Authority and power of God's written word:**

- Author is Holy Spirit
- Given by inspiration (**2 Tim 3:16**); is profitable
- The interpreter is the Holy Spirit, the final authority (**2 Pe. 1:20-21**)
  
- Two titles 'word of God' and 'scripture' are synonymous, both in OT and NT
- In the OT Scripture were the 'law' and the 'prophets'. There were also other 'writings'
- Scripture cannot be broken (**Jn 10:34-36**)
- Authority behind NT is Holy Spirit (**Jn 14:25-26**)
- Jesus gave the disciples all they could bear (receive, understand) at the time. He trusted the Holy Spirit to reveal all further truth (**Jn. 16: 12-14**).

#### **How Jesus used scripture**

- No room for doubt (**Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10**); he used it as a sword (**Eph 6:17**)
- Not even the smallest part of the written word is insignificant (**Matt. 5:17-18**)
- Whatever came through Moses was from God whose word is eternal (**Matt. 22:31-32**)

#### **How Jesus' life was a fulfillment of scripture**

- References in NT (about 18 times) "...that scripture might be fulfilled"
- All of the events in his life were in accordance with scripture (birth, life, death resurrection etc.)

#### **What God's word does**

- You read the bible, the bible reads you!* (**Heb. 4:12**; alive/effective/discerning)
- When received in faith it will do what it is intended to do (**1 Thess. 2:13**).
- Makes us partakers of God's own nature (**2 Pe. 1:3-4**)
  - Produces faith (**Rom. 10:17**)
  - Is the seed of new birth; incorruptible seed; it produces incorruptible life (**1 Pe. 1: 22, 23**)
- Provides spiritual nourishment
  - Milk (**1 Pe. 2:2**)
  - Bread (**Matt. 4:4**).
  - Solid food (**Heb. 5: 12-14**)
- Provides mental illumination, (**Ps. 119:27-30**) by making available the wisdom of God
- Provides physical healing (**Ps. 107:17-20**)
- Provides victory over sin and death (**Matt.4: 4, 7, 10; Ps 119: 9, 11**)
- Provides cleansing and holiness (**Eph. 5: 25-27**)
- Acts as a mirror (**Jas. 1:23-25**)

#### **Conclusion**

## **Additional information**

**For those who want to know why and how the Roman Catholic Bible is *different* (i.e. has other material not in the Christian Bible)**

### **Notes: The Apocrypha**

The word "Apocrypha" means that which is veiled secret or closed'.

In theology, the term apocrypha refers to the 14 books added to the OT by the Roman Catholic Church **in 1546 AD** (at the Council of Trent). These books are: 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Book of Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Song of the Three Holy Children, History of Susanna, Bel and The Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 Macabees and 2 Macabees.

**Most of the rest of Christendom rejects these books as having a place in the canon of Scripture., for the following reasons:**

1. None of these books had a place in the Hebrew canon, which forms our Old Testament.
2. They were written in the 400 years between Malachi and John the Baptist, the period between the two testaments which is referred to as "the silent years" because of the lack of inspired prophetic utterances. This is why the Jews themselves had rejected these writings from inclusion in the Hebrew canon
3. Jesus endorsed the Old Testament Books specifically during his ministry, quoting authoritatively from them. But he never quoted from any of the apocryphal writings listed above. Neither did any of the Apostles, who used the OT scriptures to testify about Christ.
- 4 None of these books was ever included in any catalogue of Canonical books during the first four centuries of the Church.
5. None of these writers claims divine inspiration and authority for their writings. This is in contrast to "The Law and The Prophets" that Jesus and the Apostles upheld as authoritative.
6. None of these writers speaks with a message from God.
7. They teach doctrines and uphold practices which are contrary to the Canonical scriptures.