

Beading the Bible as History by Theodore Plantinga, Burlington, Ont.:
G.R. Welsh Company Ltd., 1980. Softcover, 110 pp.

What place does the historical dimension have in so many stories and prophecies contained in the Bible? Is the Bible a history book? Plantinga says that the Bible is "indeed a history book – and much more besides." Biblical history is important. God acted in history. All the events recorded in Scripture are for our instruction and edification, and not just to satisfy our curiosity. We will fail to understand Scripture, if we don't accept the historicity of events and their contexts. "The Bible is not a history textbook in any modern, twentieth-century sense," says Plantinga, "but our very salvation depends on the history it relates. That's why we must be thoroughly familiar with that history. Without such familiarity, the non-historical passages will not reveal their full meaning to us either." The Bible has been given not just to tell us how we can be saved, but above all to reveal God to us. God reveals Himself not only through the spoken Word, but also through history. The Bible must be read, therefore, "as a book of revelational history."

Plantinga pleads for an open approach to the language of Scripture, an approach not prejudiced by assumption and presuppositions foreign to Scripture. We must affirm that the Bible is the Word of the living God.

Plantinga explores many different topics, including Covenant History, Culture and Calling; God's Law and Moralism and The Day of Salvation and The Last Things. This short, well-written, important and timely work is refreshing reading. Recommended not only for pastors and teachers, but for all who want to become better equipped in handling the "Sword of the Spirit."

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