



The Book of God

By Walter Wangerin

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Here is the story of the Bible from beginning to end as you've never read it before, retold with exciting detail and passionate energy by master storyteller Walter Wangerin Jr. The Book of God reads like a fine novel, dramatizing the sweep of biblical events, making the men and women of this ancient book come alive in vivid detail and dialogue. From Abraham wandering in the desert to Jesus teaching the multitudes on a Judean hillside, this award-winning best-seller follows the biblical story in chronological order. Priests and kings, apostles and prophets, common folk and charismatic leaders -- individual stories offer glimpses into an unfolding revelation that reaches across the centuries to touch us today.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

"This is not the Bible," Wangerin (*The Book of the Dun Cow*; *Miz Lil* and the *Chronicles of Grace*; etc.) says of this newest work. But it is a novel featuring many of the Bible's most dramatic characters. He partitions the whole into eight parts: half focus on personalities (*The Ancestors*, *Kings*, *Prophets*, *The Messiah*), and half concern themselves with epic themes (*The Covenant*, *The Wars of the Lord*, *Letters From Exile*, *The Yearning*). Retelling the stories of the Bible in novelized form allows Wangerin to be more selective: no slogging through seemingly endless genealogies or the minutiae of military conflicts for him. Instead, he imagines the finer points of the tension between Sarah and her slave, Hagar; the words Isaac might have used in blessing Jacob; or the drama of Jesus's baptism by his cousin, John. In doing so, he also makes some curious inventions. Does Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, become a justifiably more interesting character, for instance, if he is presented as willingly making nails for the evil ruler Herod to use in crucifixions? For adult readers who are intimidated by the sheer bulk of the Bible, or for those who desire a novelist's different perspective on some very familiar stories, Wangerin is likely to be a welcome voice; for others, however, the novel will feel like an ornate but pale imitation of a great book.

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From Library Journal

Renowned storyteller Wangerin (*Ragman and Other Cries of Faith*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1994) here selects portions of the biblical narrative for retelling to a contemporary audience. Ever the raconteur, Wangerin evokes the deep and powerful emotions that motivate all human behavior. Yet rich as these retellings sometimes are, many of his characters lack even the depth with which they are presented in the biblical accounts. Unfortunately, Wangerin's "novel" reduces the power of the Bible's multidimensional characters to the flatness of much of today's most popular spiritual fiction. Buy only where Wangerin is popular.

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From [Booklist](#)

You can't actually turn the compressed language of the Bible, by turns poetic and tedious, into a novel, but Wangerin is a good man to try. He's a former pastor who grew famous with his young-adult fantasy, *Book of the Dun Cow* (1978), and its sequel, *The Book of Sorrows* (1985). Wisely, he begins with another beginning than Genesis: Abraham and Sarah in their childless, embittered old age, destined to sire multitudes. Here and elsewhere, Wangerin allows a trace of his trademark whimsy: Sarah, trying to comfort her aged husband in his disappointment that she has been barren, hints diplomatically that he should try to impregnate a servant girl. Abraham stares at her imponderably; Sarah lowers her eyes and says, "It was just an idea." Quickly, too, the reader understands that Wangerin's novelized Bible is not just a gimmick, but a form of commentary--on faith, for instance, in the merciful God who allows Sarah to conceive Isaac and, equally, in the incontrovertible will of a capricious, jealous God who asks for young Isaac's sacrifice. Something like the ebb and flow and counterpoint in a novel has indeed evinced itself by the end of Abraham's story, but Wangerin's skill shines brightest in his final 300 pages, a synthesis of the Gospels that poetically captures the courtship of a small-town couple named Mary and Joseph, the birth of their son, and the rise, political repression, and crucifixion of a messiah. An inevitable failure, perhaps, but also a gallant effort that is frequently spellbinding. *John Mort*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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