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**Lim, Susan. Light of the Word: How Knowing the History of the Bible Illuminates Our Faith. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023**

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# Book Review

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Lim, Susan. *Light of the Word: How Knowing the History of the Bible Illuminates Our Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2023

In a world so far removed from biblical times, it can be easy to slip into seeing the Bible as fairy tale-like and to question whether the events and people written within it really exist. Sarah C. Lim's *Light of the World: How Knowing the History of the Bible Illuminates Our Faith* does an excellent job of bringing the stories of the Bible into a historical framework that may help readers understand and relate to the scriptures in a new way as they reflect on their beliefs about the Bible and its authority. Lim is a historian, writer, and former professor at Biola University, and an active member of Mariners Church in Irvine, California who speaks at conferences, churches, and retreats. In this book, Lim turns her historical and theological expertise onto the Bible to shed light on how, while not a history book in the strict sense, the Bible does ring historically true.

As a part of this examination, Lim explores and evaluates the books that were included, as well as some that did not make it into the canon. She provides insight into how the individual books and writings came together to collectively be known as the Bible. Lim elaborates on this process by discussing the effects of past and current practices associated with Christianity; one example being the schismatic history of the Nicene Creed and how it was brought into existence through the confusion caused by the many variations on and false religions that spread in the wake of early Christianity. One unique contribution of this book is its encouragement and call for church leaders and parents to engage in discussions promoting biblically founded perspectives on the taboo or hot-button topics in today's society amongst those they lead and care for. Lim gives examples both from her own life and from the history of the Bible on how this was applied in the days of the disciples and enables those under Christian leadership to be better equipped to understand and defend their beliefs and have a foundation for support.

This book is scholarly and cites a multitude of sources from Christians and theologians of various backgrounds ranging from Martin Luther, John Calvin, and translations and critiques of earlier church writings to newer sources like C. S. Lewis, Billy Graham, Lee Strobel, and N. T. Wright. While by no means definitive, this book serves as an excellent introductory text to the historicity of the Bible and the reliance on historical fact as a means of apologetics. The book was written in a way meant

to inspire further research and reflection and includes a reading list of other books. While the topics are more complex, the language is easy to read for those still starting on their journey, while encouraging deeper questions. One unique contribution that separates this book from others on the topic is that it provides reflection questions at the end of each chapter, inviting readers to further engage with the material and reflect on their own conscious or unconscious beliefs. This book would make an excellent addition to libraries associated with churches, Christian universities, or public institutions with a community interested in the history of Christian theology.

**Reviewer**

Arianna Dahlia, Concordia University, Irvine