

Orienting, anchoring, challenging, comforting, questioning, interpreting, loving

by [Elizabeth Johnson](#)

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What's the Bible for? We asked dozens of writers to respond to this question in seven words or less, as well as to expand on their response in a few sentences. To see all of the responses together as they are posted, bookmark this [page](#).

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Some words are like seashells. Hold them to your ear and hear whispers of infinity. Biblical texts have something of this seashell quality. Not all; for example, not instructions to slaves and wives. But many texts resound with the awesome, fascinating mystery of God. They offer life a road map. By a kind of grace they produce in those who listen to them what they are expressing: passion for justice, radical hope, love of neighbor and of all creation—even strangers.