

We can draw on 3,000 years

by [Martin B. Copenhaver](#)

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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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Goethe observed that “the one who cannot draw on three thousand years is living hand to mouth.” Each generation can choose to dig its own new wells, but such wells necessarily will be rather shallow. No single generation, acting in defiant isolation, is capable of more. By reading the Bible we pay attention to the experiences and beliefs of those who have gone before us, and we listen for the wisdom of the ages.