



## WOW: Word Of the Week

Red-Letter / Rubricated / Rubric

November 9, 2022

**Three words: “Words of the Week.”** **Red-Letter:** a hyphenated word you probably recognize. **Rubricated:** a word you perhaps will not recognize. **Rubric:** a word many have heard but fewer could accurately define. Two weeks from today will be a “red-letter day” for me. The day is rubricated on my calendar. My goal is to make Jesus the rubric of my life.

The Gutenberg Bible is famous for being the first book in Western Europe to be printed on a printing press with metal, movable type. Using what was at that time a new process, Gutenberg experimented with the possibilities during the typesetting and printing of his Bible. One of his experiments was two-color printing.

In hand-lettered books and manuscripts of that day, it was common for chapter headings, headlines, and important texts to rubricated, to be lettered in red. This practice was called **rubrication** from the Latin “ruber” (red) and the headlines were known as rubrics. Because using red letters for certain sections required that pages go through the press twice, the process was time-consuming. Only a handful of pages in surviving copies of the Gutenberg Bible provide examples of mechanical rubrication.

Red-lettering came to be used in other places besides the Bible. Calendars were **rubricated** so that important days—feast days and holidays—were easier to see. These days came to be known as red-letter days. Today, many Bible are rubricated with the words of Jesus printed in red. The adjective, red-letter, refers to events or days of special importance.

My computer calendar has both November 23 and November 24 rubricated: November 24 because it is Thanksgiving, and those who know me best know also the reason November 23 is also printed in red!

Our words this week are not Bible words. But the background of the words reflects some of the history of the Bible, and we see examples everytime we read the “red letters” of Jesus’ sermons and teachings.

Application time.

What are the red-letter days and events in your life? I hope many of those days trace for you a growing relationship with Jesus. If you were to write the story of your life, what sections would you rubricate? What are the important, life-changing passages of your life? Finally, what is the rubric of your life?

Words for this life, words to point us to the life to come. If you would like to talk more about red letters and living a life in which Jesus is our rubric, do not hesitate to be in touch!