

DOCTRINE

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# THE BLUEPRINT



9 INTERACTIVE BIBLE STUDIES FOR  
SMALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS



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*The Blueprint*  
Second edition  
© Matthias Media 2009

First published in 1988 as *The Leadership Papers*.  
Published as *The Blueprint* in 1995.

Matthias Media  
(St Matthias Press Ltd ACN 067 558 365)  
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ISBN 978 1 921441 39 4

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Cover design and typesetting by Lankshear Design Pty Ltd.

## » CONTENTS

How to make the most of these studies .....	5
INTRODUCTION .....	9
STUDY 1: Circles and tangents .....	13
STUDY 2: What makes Christians different? .....	25
STUDY 3: Visions on the road .....	33
STUDY 4: An unnecessary truth .....	41
STUDY 5: The importance of being obstreperous .....	49
STUDY 6: Pitiful Christians .....	59
STUDY 7: Bridging the chasm of history .....	69
STUDY 8: What—no controversy? .....	77
STUDY 9: Godly heresies .....	87
CONCLUSION: Who wants to be an ‘ism’? .....	95
APPENDIX 1: Who is in control? .....	99
APPENDIX 2: Tips for group leaders .....	109

## » HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THESE STUDIES

### 1. What is a Topical Bible Study?

Topical Bible Studies are a bit like a guided tour of a famous city. They take you on a tour through the Bible, looking at material related to the topic (in this case, Christian doctrine), helping you to know where to start, pointing out things along the way, suggesting avenues for further exploration, and making sure that you know how to get home. Like any good tour, the real purpose is to allow you to go exploring for yourself—to dive in, have a good look around, and discover for yourself the riches that God’s word has in store.

In other words, these studies aim to provide stimulation and input and point you in the right direction, while leaving you to do plenty of the exploration and discovery yourself.

These studies are like a tour of a famous city in another sense—they don’t hope to look at everything; just the important things. We can’t cover in detail everything the Bible says on a given topic, but we do aim to finish our tour without having missed any significant landmarks.

We hope that these studies will stimulate lots of interaction—interaction with the Bible, with the things we’ve written, with your own current thoughts and attitudes, with other people as you discuss them, and with God as you talk to him about it all.

## **2. The format**

Each study contains five main components:

- sections of text that introduce, inform, summarize and challenge
- a set of numbered study questions that help you examine the Bible and think through its meaning
- sidebars that provide extra bits of background or optional extra study ideas, especially regarding other relevant parts of the Bible
- an ‘Implications’ section that helps you think about what this passage means for you and your life today
- suggestions for thanksgiving and prayer as you close.

## **3. How to use these studies on your own**

- Before you begin, pray that God would open your eyes to what he is saying in the Bible, and give you the spiritual strength to do something about it.
- Work through the study, reading the text, answering the questions about the Bible passage, and exploring the sidebars as you have time.
- Resist the temptation to skip over the ‘Implications’ and ‘Give thanks and pray’ sections at the end. It is important that we not only hear and understand God’s word, but respond to it. These closing sections help us do that.
- Take what opportunities you can to talk to others about what you’ve learnt.

## 4. How to use these studies in a small group

- Much of the above applies to group study as well. The studies are suitable for structured Bible study or cell groups, as well as for more informal pairs and triplets. Get together with a friend or friends and work through them at your own pace; use them as the basis for regular Bible study with your spouse. You don't need the formal structure of a 'group' to gain maximum benefit.
- For small groups, it is *very useful* if group members can work through the study themselves *before* the group meets. The group discussion can take place comfortably in an hour (depending on how sidetracked you get!) if all the members have done some work in advance.
- The role of the group leader is to direct the course of the discussion and to try to draw the threads together at the end. If you are a group leader, the material in the appendix 'Tips for group leaders' (at the back of this book) is designed to help you think through how to use these studies in a group setting.
- We haven't included an 'answer guide' to the questions in the studies. This is a deliberate move. We want to give you a guided tour of the Bible, not a lecture. There is more than enough in the text we have written and the questions we have asked to point you in what we think is the right direction. The rest is up to you.

## 5. Bible translation

Previous studies in our Interactive Bible Study series have assumed that most readers would be using the New International Version of the Bible. However, since the release of the English Standard Version in 2001, many have switched to the ESV for study purposes. For this reason, we have decided to quote from and refer to the ESV text, which we recommend.





## » INTRODUCTION

THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS nearing the end of his turbulent life, a life poured out in serving the Christ he had met on the Damascus Road. As he wrote to his young friend and co-worker Timothy, he urged him to continue the work that Christ had called them to, the work of teaching and preserving and modelling the gospel. They are moving words:

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have

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heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.<sup>1</sup>

The pattern of sound words. The good deposit. This is the Word that Timothy was to preach, in season and out of season, in the face of those who would not put up with sound doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

It is this same gospel that Timothy was to entrust to other reliable people, who in turn would be able to teach others.<sup>3</sup>

*The Blueprint* is all about this ‘pattern of sound words’ that we are to believe, preserve, build our lives on and pass on to others. In the studies that follow, we will look together at the great themes and truths which God reveals in the Scriptures—concerning God, mankind, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, resurrection and the life to come.

A firm grasp of this ‘sound doctrine’ is the basis of Christian growth and maturity, and one of the essential characteristics of the Christian leader. As Paul says to another of his co-workers, Titus: “He [the elder] must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”<sup>4</sup>

But whether you are in leadership or not, we trust that studying the Scriptures will increase your spiritual knowledge and understanding of God, and that knowing him better, you will please him more in every way.

## The format

As a simple means of opening up these foundational biblical ideas, we have chosen a fairly standard doctrinal statement to use as a framework—the doctrinal basis of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES). This statement is used throughout Australia as the doctrinal standard of evangelical\* student groups and,

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\* By ‘evangelicalism’ we mean plain biblical Christianity built around the gospel. We’ll refer to evangelicalism at different times in these studies, and return to it in more detail in our conclusion.

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with minor variations, is also used by numerous other Christian organizations as a statement of their basic beliefs. Taken together, the nine sentences in the doctrinal statement form a clear and very helpful summary of what biblical Christianity believes. It reads:

The AFES upholds the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, including:

- 1 The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- 2 The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead.
- 3 The universal sinfulness and guilt of humanity since the fall, rendering men and women subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
- 4 The conception of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit and his birth by the Virgin Mary.
- 5 Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death, as our representative and substitute, of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God.
- 6 The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- 7 The necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit to make the death of Christ effective in the individual sinner, granting him or her repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ.
- 8 The indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.
- 9 The expectation of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one study for each of the nine statements as well as a conclusion and an appendix. The conclusion explains what it means to be an 'evangelical', and appendix 1

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(‘Who is in control?’) is an additional, optional study on the sovereignty of God—an idea that permeates the other studies but isn’t explicitly mentioned in the AFES doctrinal basis. We strongly encourage you to do this optional study, as it examines a key biblical truth about the nature of God. All of the studies are best read with an open Bible close at hand, both to look up the footnotes and to answer the questions that are interspersed throughout. The ‘Implications’ questions that follow each paper are designed for personal reflection and then discussion. If you are not doing the studies in a group, make sure you discuss your thoughts with someone before proceeding to the next one—whether a friend, your minister or your Bible study leader.

## Further reading

There are a number of helpful books worth consulting in your study of the basic doctrines of Christianity. The best of them are:

TC Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men*, IVP, 1999.

Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth*, IVP, 1998.

Jl Packer, *God’s Words*, Baker, 1998.

*The New Bible Dictionary*, IVP, 2007.

Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd edn, Baker, 1998.

Consult the tables of contents and indexes in these books to find articles, Scripture references and detailed bibliographies on the subjects discussed in these studies.

For further information on using these studies in a small group, see ‘Tips for group leaders’ at the end of the book.

## Endnotes

1. 2 Tim 1:8-14
2. 2 Tim 4:1-5
3. 2 Tim 2:2; cf. Titus 1:9
4. Titus 1:9

## » STUDY 1

# CIRCLES AND TANGENTS

THE BIBLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A battleground for Christians, both from without and within. Those who reject Christianity rightly see the Bible as their point of attack. Amongst those who profess to be Christians (but are not) we also find sustained attacks upon the Scriptures. The traditional divisions between the denominations are often divisions of attitudes towards the Bible.

Because the Scriptures are the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct, disagreements at this point lead to much wider disputes on a whole range of subjects. Those who take the Bible as the authoritative norm of life will obviously have different views from those who take other books, prophets or experiences as their standard. And there can be little hope of reconciliation when people disagree

upon the basic supreme authority.

Most groups use the Bible. But using the Bible is not the same as believing the Bible. The Mormons frequently quote the Bible on our doorsteps yet believe that the Bible is full of errors. Roman Catholicism reads parts of the Bible in the Mass, yet sees the authority for faith and life as found in the traditions of Christ, only part of which is the Bible. Many Liberal Protestant preachers will refer to the Bible, and when the Bible agrees with them will quote it with authority, but in fact they sit in judgement over the Bible, thinking their own wisdom wiser than the wisdom of God. To trust in the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct, requires one neither to add nor subtract from it. *Using* the Bible is very different from *believing* the Bible.

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## The evangelical position on Scripture

The first statement of the AFES doctrinal basis is:

The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

This is frequently seen as *the* distinctive of evangelical belief. It certainly does mark evangelicals out from the crowd. However, it is only part of the matrix of truths found in the doctrinal basis of evangelicalism. Without a belief in the personal, sovereign God, the doctrine of Scripture would not stand. Similarly, without the doctrine of Scripture we would not come to know the personal, sovereign God.

### Clarifying terms

The statement uses clearly recognizable doctrinal jargon to express its position carefully and accurately. It is important that we master this jargon in order to avoid misunderstandings.

#### 1. The divine inspiration

This refers to the inspiration of the Scriptures by God. The use of the word ‘inspiration’ comes from 2 Timothy 3:16 and refers to God ‘breathing out’ the Scriptures. It means more than the Scriptures are ‘inspired’, or that they ‘inspire’ us. Shakespeare, Mozart and Rembrandt could all be described as ‘inspired’, by which we mean ‘way above average’. They may also have an ‘inspiring’ effect upon us, by which we mean ‘they lift us out of our normal, mundane lives’. However, theologically and biblically, the idea of inspiration is that the words are breathed out by God—the words of Scripture are God’s words.

This in no way implies the *method* by which God inspires. It does not commit us to any idea of mechanical dictation or automatic writing. The inspiration did not remove the personality or style of the human author. The Scriptures are treated as if there is a dual authorship:

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God and man, with the primary author being God. Psalm 110:1 is said to have been written by David<sup>1</sup> and by God<sup>2</sup> and by David speaking by the Spirit.<sup>3</sup> This dual authorship can be seen throughout the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Infallibility

The Scriptures can be relied upon completely—they will never fail us. This is what is meant by the traditional term **'infallible'**. The Bible is completely trustworthy because its author has made sure that it is without error.

At this point some evangelical Christians have differed with others by trying to claim too much for the infallibility of Scripture. The Bible is unique and can only be described, never defined. To say that it is infallible is a description of its character, not a definition by which we can determine the ways in which God has spoken. Thus some parts of the Bible (the parables, for example) may be fiction and yet still be described as infallible. Other parts of the Scriptures may involve poetic licence and exaggeration, without losing their veracity.<sup>5</sup> While on one hand we must be wary of doubting the absolute trustworthiness and truthfulness of the Scriptures, on the other hand we must not claim too much for the Scriptures, thus squeezing them into an unbiblical strait-jacket. Infallible history, like all history, may involve incidental variations in the reporting of events. Such minor variations do not affect the Scripture's infallibility.

## 3. Holy Scripture, as originally given

'Holy Scripture' refers to the whole Bible comprising the old and new covenants. These 66 books are the written words of God. However, the version that has been inspired and is entirely trustworthy is the original version. Not every copy or translation of the Bible is the divine, inspired, infallible word of God. God gave his revelation to mankind through his authors. On different occasions, mankind in its neglect and sinfulness has tampered with and varied what was originally given.

Fortunately, none of the original copies have been

## Infallible and inerrant

There has been a significant debate amongst many who call themselves 'evangelical' since the mid 1970s over the exact nature of biblical infallibility. The debate has been about whether the Bible can be authoritative at the same time as containing errors of fact (for example minor historical errors or errors in scientific fact). In the course of that debate, the term 'inerrant' has been applied to the Bible by those who want to make a strong claim about the nature of the truth presented in the Bible. The use of the word 'infallible' in the AFES statement does not reflect a particular position on this issue, as it was first produced before the term 'inerrantist' was a part of the debate.

In these notes, infallible should be understood as it is defined here and not as an anti-inerrantist position. A clear and helpful statement of the inerrantist position can be found in *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* ([http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Chicago\\_Statement\\_on\\_Biblical\\_Inerrancy](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Chicago_Statement_on_Biblical_Inerrancy)).

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kept, otherwise we would be tempted to venerate and worship them. However, it is important for us to study the available manuscripts carefully to ascertain the original message of God. In God's great kindness, many thousands of copies of the Scriptures have been preserved, along with considerable knowledge of the means by which they have been transmitted to us. Thus we can be assured that what we have today is substantially what was originally given. The variations between manuscripts are so small that no doctrine can be said to hang on them.

## Authority

One of the key issues in the Reformation was the question of authority. It was through reading the Bible that men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin came to question the authority of the established church of their day. Their chief point of contention was that the Roman Catholic church had established itself as the authority for interpreting the Bible. They rightly saw that some of the Roman Catholic teaching directly contradicted what God had said in his word. The question clearly became: which authority will you follow? The Reformers were adamant that the Bible created the Church and not the other way around. Thus the church was to live in obedience to the word.

## 4. Supreme authority

The phrase 'supreme **authority**' indicates that the doctrinal basis acknowledges the existence of other authorities. This is because the Scriptures themselves recognize other authorities.<sup>6</sup> Governments are put in authority over people just as fathers are put in authority over children. However, the supreme authority, the authority over all other authorities, is said to be Scripture. There is no authority equal to, or over, the Scriptures.

## 5. Faith and conduct

Notice too that the authority of Scripture is limited to matters of faith and conduct. The Scriptures do not claim to be an authority in calculus, nuclear physics, poetry or chess. There may be some aspects of these disciplines where the Scriptures have some relevance, but by and large, these topics are not addressed, and there is no claim to supreme authority here.

Rather, the Scriptures are God-breathed and useful "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."<sup>7</sup> It is in the area of faith and conduct that the Scriptures are speaking. 'Faith' refers to more than our trust in God; it includes the idea of *the* faith that was delivered once and for all to the saints.<sup>8</sup>



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## Why does the Bible have authority?

God is personal and revelatory. He reveals himself to be living and speaking and truthful. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe who rules the world by his word and reveals himself in his speech. What does this have to do with the Bible's authority?

### 1. God's character

The Thessalonians turned from idols to serve “the living and true God.”<sup>9</sup> This is characteristic of the description of God in the Scriptures. Psalm 115 points to God as being radically different from the idols who “have mouths, but do not speak”. Jeremiah scorns the following of such idols; he says, “Their idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field, and they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk.”<sup>10</sup> The God of Israel, on the other hand, speaks: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host ... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”<sup>11</sup>

However, God not only speaks; he speaks the *truth*. The “living and true God” is not only true in that he really exists, but is also true in his character and nature. Two of the things that are said to be impossible for God are telling lies<sup>12</sup> and disowning himself.<sup>13</sup> God is faithful to his word and, consequently, God's word is right and true.<sup>14</sup> It is on this basis that we affirm that the Holy Scriptures are infallible.

### 2. Ruling, revealing, relating

God rules his universe by his word. By his powerful word he created the world<sup>15</sup> and by the same word he will destroy it.<sup>16</sup>

God's word always achieves his purpose<sup>17</sup>—it is living and active, penetrating and judging.<sup>18</sup> So much is the word of God an expression of God himself and of his powerful rule in this world, that the *word* of God can be used to explain the incarnation.<sup>19</sup>

However, the word of God not only rules the world, but also reveals God to the world. In the past God spoke through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.<sup>20</sup> The word of truth, the gospel of salvation, has been spoken to us to reveal the great plan of God in redemption.<sup>21</sup> Even to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ have been made plain.<sup>22</sup>

God relates to us through this revelation. He makes himself known by it, and through it he regenerates us. The preaching of Jesus Christ as Lord is used by God to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.<sup>23</sup> The gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.<sup>24</sup> By the message of the cross we come to know the power of God and the wisdom of God and God himself.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the reason that the Bible has authority is because of its author—God. The sovereign Lord of heaven and earth has spoken through the prophets and in his Son. To reject the word of God is to reject God himself.

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## What authority does the Bible have?

The Scripture has authority over all matters on which it speaks. It is not exhaustive—it does not cover all matters—but, because of its authorship, its authority extends over everything it covers.

### 1. Contemporary

The Bible is not imprisoned in a particular historical context. It was delivered at a point, or more accurately a phase, of history and to understand it correctly we need to read it in its original context. However, the Bible is a contemporary word that does not need to be ‘made relevant’. It is permanently relevant because God is speaking his word to us.

Jesus attacked the Sadducees for ignorance of the Scriptures saying, “... have you not read what was said to you by God?”<sup>26</sup> A similar argument is used in Hebrews 3 and 4, where God’s words to Israel about the temptation in the wilderness also speak a word of God to us today. In fact, referring to the

exodus, Paul goes so far as to say that “these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come”.<sup>27</sup>

### 2. Sufficient

It is important to understand that the Scriptures are sufficient for Christian living. God’s revelation of himself is not partial, but final. In the past it was a partial revelation, when “at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets”.<sup>28</sup> In the past, angels as well as prophets wondered what they were speaking about when they spoke of the salvation that was to come and predicted the sufferings of the Christ. In the gospel these things have now been completely revealed.<sup>29</sup>

Christ opened the minds of his disciples to understand that he had come to fulfil the Scriptures by his suffering and resurrection.<sup>30</sup> He brings the Scriptures to their close. All the prophets find their “yes” and “amen” in him.<sup>31</sup> Now the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.<sup>32</sup>

Look up the following verses and see what they reveal about the place of God’s word in the Christian life.

- Acts 20:32

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- Romans 15:4

- 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 (cf. 1 John 2:27)

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- Jude 3 (cf. 2 Tim 1:13-14, 2:2)

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## How do we know?

THE ARGUMENTS SO FAR SEEM TO BE circular. The Bible claims that the Bible is authoritative. If you believe the Bible, you will believe that it is authoritative.

What happens if you don't believe the Bible? How can you ever get onto the circle? What happens if you believe the Book of Mormon, or the Koran? These books also claim to be the authoritative word of God. Their authority seems every bit as circular as the Bible's.

On one level, we should expect that the authority of the Bible will be found within the Bible itself. If it were found elsewhere, then there would be a rival claim to authority in matters of faith and conduct. If, for example, it was by reason that we concluded that the Scriptures were authoritative, then reason would become the supreme authority. The question remains: How can we ever get onto the circle?

### 1. The work of the Spirit

Why do we believe in Scripture? Because of God's Spirit at work in us. It is God who opens our eyes to see the glory of God in the face of Christ.<sup>33</sup> Paul thanked God that the Thessalonians received the word of Paul not as the word of man, but as the word of God.<sup>34</sup> It is because we are his sheep that we know the voice of Jesus.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the Scriptures are Spirit-authenticated.

The converse is also true. Those who reject the authority of the Bible usually wish to do so on 'rational' grounds. Their intellect cannot stomach what they read (to mix metaphors). We need

to remember, however, that the decision to reject God is fundamentally spiritual, not rational. The man who says in his heart "There is no God" is a fool, not a member of the intelligentsia.<sup>36</sup>

### 2. The example of Christ

If we are to be followers of Christ, then we should imitate Christ's attitude to the Scriptures. Jesus consistently quoted and referred to the Scriptures as having authority. He considered the Old Testament as a 'court of final appeal' in matters of controversy.<sup>37</sup> He insisted that prophecy would find its fulfilment in his actions.<sup>38</sup> He attacked the Sadducees for their failure to know the Scriptures.<sup>39</sup>

As if this wasn't enough, the rest of the New Testament demonstrates the same acceptance of the authority of Scripture.<sup>40</sup> The New Testament even quotes itself as having such authority.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. The reasonableness of belief

If we are Christians, and have the Holy Spirit within us and are seeking to follow the example of Christ and his apostles, it can be seen that accepting the authority of the Scriptures is thoroughly reasonable. In fact, denial of the Scriptures is a genuine symptom of unbelief. But what of those outside of Christ? Can this reasonableness ever be demonstrated to them?

The reasonableness of belief can certainly be demonstrated, if not proven. If the Scriptures are true, they must be consistent with what we know of the world. If there was a major inconsis-

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tency between our knowledge of the world and our knowledge in Scripture, then it would be hard for people ever to climb onto the circle of belief. Another way of saying this is that the circle of belief touches on the world that we know. These points of contact are like tangents onto the circle. One chief point of contact is history.

We cannot *prove* the truth of the gospel through history. However, history can help us onto the circle. From a purely historical standpoint, we can learn something of the person of Jesus: who he claimed to be and whether those claims measure up to the facts as we have them. This knowledge may lead us to think seriously about his claims over our lives and the meaning he gives to our existence. Such an approach can lead us to accept that belief in Jesus is quite ‘reasonable’.

The same point can be made negatively. The Bible speaks about the nature of the world and humanity. Its perception of man as being universally sinful is a reasonable assessment of the state of the world. If it was *unreasonable* it would be hard to commend to outsiders.

It is at this point that the controversy between science and revelation begins. Is the Bible’s view of the world ‘unreasonable’ in the light of our empirical knowledge? It would be hard to maintain belief in the Scriptures if they taught authoritatively that the world was flat or that the moon was a crescent. However, the description of man and the world in the Scriptures is sufficiently consistent with our empirical knowledge of the world for there to be no real conflict.

These tangents onto the circle of

faith have limited apologetic and evangelistic usefulness. They must not be given authority over the Scriptures. Nor must they be seen as an alternative to hearing the Scriptures read and taught, for faith comes from hearing the word of God.<sup>42</sup> It is the gospel word that is the power of God for salvation.<sup>43</sup> It is the miracle of God’s Spirit regenerating us through his word that enables people to come to faith in the gospel.

## The correct response to Scripture

When the people of God gathered around Mt Sinai, they heard the voice of God and they trembled.<sup>44</sup> In the presence of God man is afraid, and this fear is the beginning of wisdom.<sup>45</sup> The appropriate response to the word of God is the same as our response to God himself.

We must not merely be hearers of the word, but doers, humbly accepting what God says and earnestly seeking by his strength to put it into operation. We must be people who search out what God is saying.<sup>46</sup> God calls upon us to have his word on our hearts and in our minds, as we get up in the morning and go to bed at night, as we go in and out of our house, and as we teach our children.<sup>47</sup> We are to meditate (that is, to *think*, not to ‘mystically meditate’) upon his word day and night.<sup>48</sup>

If we have God’s word, then we have life, for “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God”.<sup>49</sup>



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## » Give thanks and pray

- Give thanks to God for the provision of the Bible so that we can hear him speak to us.
- Pray for yourself and your church that you would be people who 'believe' the Bible rather than just 'using' it.
- Pray for the work of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of those close to you that don't know God. Pray that his word might challenge them and bring them to faith.

### Endnotes

1. Acts 2:34-35
2. Heb 1:13
3. Matt 22:43-44
4. cf. Acts 3:21-22, 4:25; Heb 4:3-8
5. Note, for example, Jesus' striking language in Luke 14:26.
6. Rom 13:1; 1 Pet 2:13
7. 2 Tim 3:16-17
8. Jude 3
9. 1 Thess 1:9
10. Jer 10:5
11. Psalm 33:6, 9; also see Isaiah 44-45 for the stark contrast between the dumb idols and the God who speaks.
12. Heb 6:18
13. 2 Tim 2:13
14. Heb 10:23; Pss 33:4; 119:142, 151
15. Genesis 1; Ps 33:6
16. 2 Pet 3:7
17. Isa 55:11
18. Heb 4:12-13
19. John 1:1-18
20. Heb 1:1-3
21. Eph 1:13
22. Eph 3:1-13
23. 2 Cor 4:5-6
24. Rom 1:16
25. 1 Cor 1:18-2:5
26. Matt 22:31
27. 1 Cor 10:11; cf. Rom 15:4
28. Heb 1:1
29. 1 Pet 1:10-12
30. Luke 24:27, 44-47
31. 2 Cor 1:20
32. Rev 1:2-3, 19:10
33. 2 Cor 4:5-6
34. 1 Thess 2:13
35. John 10:27
36. Ps 14:1; cf. 1 Cor 2:14
37. Matt 22:29-32; Mark 7:6-13
38. Matt 26:52-56
39. Mark 12:24-27
40. 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 3-4; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Cor 10:6-11
41. 1 Tim 5:18; 2 Pet 3:15-17; 1 Cor 7:40, 14:36-37
42. Rom 10:17
43. Rom 1:16
44. Exod 19:16
45. Ps 111:10; cf. Prov 9:10
46. Like the Bereans of Acts 17:10-11; cf. James 1:21-22.
47. Deut 6:4-8
48. Josh 1:8
49. Matt 4:4; Deut 8:3

# THE BLUEPRINT



When an ageing Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy, he urged him to hold fast to the pattern of sound teaching, to guard the good deposit and to preach the Word faithfully.

**The Blueprint** is all about this pattern of sound teaching that we are to believe, preserve, build our lives on and pass on to others. In this set of studies, we look at the interlocking biblical themes that are at the heart of Christian doctrine—concerning God, mankind, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, resurrection and the life to come.

Briefer and more accessible than a textbook on doctrine, **The Blueprint** invites you to interact with these great truths by researching key Bible passages and answering important questions on each topic. The studies are ideal for group or individual use.

