

The Whole Counsel of God

The full scope of biblical doctrine as integrated in the pattern of apostolic gospel proclamation

In Christ “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2.3). This means that the revelation of God in Christ sets before us the full scope of truth. The apostle Paul referred to this as the whole counsel of God (Acts 20.27), and it was Paul’s responsibility to declare it in its entirety. It was only because Paul taught the whole divine counsel that he would be clear of guilt in the case of a person who was taught by him but subsequently made spiritual ship wreck (Acts 20.27). In this we see that the whole counsel of God is necessary for faith. The responsibility that Paul accepted to declare the whole counsel holds for all those to whom God entrusts the ministry of the word. God’s servant is accountable if someone under his charge strays and is ruined for lack of having been taught an aspect of the full truth of Christ.

This September we will begin a projected two-year comprehensive study of the biblical doctrine. We will not focus on the details of doctrine. Rather, we will look at the biblical truth as a whole. The various themes involved fit together in a pattern that forms the whole of the truth. This is what Paul refers to when he charges Timothy to hold fast the pattern of sound words which he had heard from him (2Tim 1.13). We will seek to study biblical doctrine within the basic apostolic pattern for the truth.

The foundational pattern for apostolic teaching is given in the gospel. We will begin our study by showing that the apostolic gospel provides a pattern that integrates three main areas of doctrine: God in Christ, the word of God and salvation as participation in Christ. All doctrines fit into this outline. Here is a quick overview of the subjects.

1) *God in Christ*

The subject of the gospel is the person and work of Christ. This subject opens up and ties together the doctrines of the trinity, creation, man, the incarnation, sin and the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

2) *From God to us: The word of God*

The risen Christ established the OT as fulfilled in his work and also gave the apostolic commission out of which the NT came. The apostles incorporated both the OT scriptures and the apostolic role in the gospel message. The subject of scripture and the word of God takes in the themes of revelation, the nature of scripture and the function of the word of God in the continuing work of Christ.

3) *What God is achieving in Christ*

The gospel brings about faith and through faith we have our participation in Christ. This opens up the doctrine of salvation, of the church and of the consummation of all things in history (end times) and in eternity (the eternal state).

4) *God’s initiative and action*

The distinctive feature of the gospel is that it announces God’s initiative and action. This is brought into focus through the cross and resurrection of Jesus. But, the divine initiative extends to embrace all from eternity to eternity. We will close our study by looking at God’s sovereignty in his eternal purposes and in his operations through history.

Dates and Time	Location	Format
Second Saturday of the month Sept. '05 to June '06 8:30 – 11:30 am	Bakerview Chapel, Francis Road and Garden City Way, Richmond	We begin with fellowship over a light breakfast (a modest cost is shared by participants). A structured discussion is then held based on notes provided.

The Biblical Solutions Seminar is designed to engage Christians in seeking biblical solutions to problems and needs that arise in their work for God through a serious and disciplined study of scripture. The seminar is intended for those who show a calling and commitment to serving the Lord, and who are already proficient in the knowledge of the Bible.