



St Helen's
Bishopsgate

The Word of God

International Growth Groups (IGG) weekend away

29 November - 1 December 2019

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Timetable

God's Word as Creator

Question: Why does God's Word matter?

1) God's Word creates.

2) God's Word does new creation.

Discuss: How does this excite you to listen to God's Word? How does it grow your view of the importance of God's Word in his plans? How might seeing the Bible as the Creator God speaking change the way you approach it?

God's Word as Ruler

Question: Who rules?

1) God rules.

2) God rules through his Word.

Discuss: What does it look like for God's Word to rule a) in your life? b) in the church? c) in the world? How can we submit to God's Word even when it's hard? How might this change the way you approach the Bible in ICG or on your own?

The Bible and Qur'an: what do they say and should I listen?

1 A brief introduction

- Why bother understanding Islam and Muslim people at all?
 - Can help us realise that same words can mean different things, eg sin, prophet, God
 - Can help us to engage, affirm and challenge, subvert and fulfil, eg 1 Corinthians 1:18–31
 - Can help with discipleship—not just bolt-ons
 - **But**, please remember 2 Timothy 3:16!
- Why bother with Muslim people at all?
 - God...
 - People...
 - God...

2 Islam by numbers

- 5 Pillars: confession of faith, 5x prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage
- 6 beliefs: oneness of God, angels, messengers, books, day of resurrection/judgement and sovereignty
- 4 objections: Jesus is not Son of God/divine, Jesus did not die, the Trinity is wrong, and the Bible has been corrupted
- A word on the Qur'an and Bible to begin with:
 - Qur'an says it confirms previous Scriptures (Surahs 4:163–165, 5:44–47 cf 3:3–4, 21:7 & 48, 10:94) **and**, Allah doesn't allow his word to be changed (Surahs 6:34, 6:115, 10:65, 15:9)
 - **So**, previous Scriptures not corrupted, but misquoted (Surahs 2:75, 4:46 cf 5:13, 5:41)

3 Should we read the Qur'an?



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¹ Online: <https://www.pinterest.com/stilluz16/holy-quran-our-guide/>

In the name of Allah , the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful
 [All] praise is [due] to Allah , Lord of the worlds –
 The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,
 Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.
 It is You we worship and You we ask for help
 Guide us to the straight path –
 The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor,
 not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.
 (Surah 1, The Opener, <http://quran.com/1>)

- We can read it as Christians—and there is good, bad and demonic in it, as in everything outside of Christ
 - Yes, all truth is God’s truth, **but** other people’s truth is tied to untruths, eg Surah 4:171 on Jesus (he is called the Messiah but not the Son)
 - Read it to know what Muslim people think so that we can answer their objections, eg on the Trinity in Surahs 23:91, 5:72–75, 116
 - Read to it draw out implications, contrasts and depth of Gospel, eg if Mary is highest, then...if Jesus can raise the dead, then...

4 The Qur’an in its own words

- Eternal, sent down, complete and unchanged
- “By the Book that makes things clear—we have made it a Qur’an in Arabic, that ye may be able to understand. And verily, it is in the Mother of the Book in Our Presence, high, full of wisdom” (Surah 43 Al-Zukhruf, aya 2–4)
- “We have sent down to you a Book which is blessed, so that people may apply their minds to its revelations; and the men of wisdom may reflect” (Surah 38 Sad, aya 29)
- “...Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created, has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'” (Surah 96 Al-‘Alaq, aya 1-3)...” from Bukhari, Vol 1, Book 1, No 3, see www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/results.php5
- No one can imitate it (Surahs 2 Al-Baqara, aya 23-24, 10 Yunus, aya 38, and 11 Hud, aya 13) eg <http://www.hamzatortzis.com/essays-articles/exploring-the-quran/the-inimitable-quran/>
- Guarded from corruption (Surah 15 Al-Hijr, aya 9)
- One man, over 23 years, spoken partly in Mecca, partly in Medina, with later abrogating earlier (Surahs 2 Al Baqara, aya 106, 16 Al-Nahl, aya 101) eg wine in Surahs 2 Al-Baqara, aya 219, 4 Al-Nisa’, aya 43, and 5 Al-Ma’ida, aya 90
- 114 surahs, Caliph Uthman assembled c650 (Bukhari Vol 6, Bk 61, #510)
- Like the Bible eg stories of Moses and Jesus, morals/laws, preaching etc.

- Unlike the Bible eg Noah's son not in ark Surah 11 Hud, aya 40–43, Mary as Jesus' mother and Aaron's sister Surah 3 Al-'Imran, aya 33–45 and Surah 19 Maryam, aya 28, Gideon and Saul muddled Surah 2 Al-Baqara, aya 249ff, Pharaoh and Haman and Babel together Surah 28 Al-Qasas, aya 38.
- ❖ Says "I'm basically good and should try harder", eg Surah 18 Al-Kahf, aya 110: "Say: 'I am only a human being like you, being inspired that your god is One God. Whoever hopes to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and never associate anyone with the service of his Lord.'"

5 To be a little more critical

- Allah only speaks Arabic?
 - How is this for all humanity?
 - What does this say about Allah?
- Eternally from God and protected?
 - Very specific to Muhammad's life and his needs, eg "...Aisha said, 'O Allah's Apostle! I do not see, but that your Lord hurries in pleasing you.'" <http://www.alim.org/library/hadith/pdf/SHB/48/7> and Surah 33 Al-Azhab, aya 50–51; exonerates Aisha (surah 24 Al-Nur, aya 11–15), enables Muhammad to marry his adopted son's wife (Surah 33 Al-Azhab, aya 4–5, 37f)
 - What about Satanic influence in Surah 22 Al-Hajj, aya 52 re Surah 53 Al-Najm, aya 19-20, 62 cf Ibn Ishaq Life of Muhammad, p 165?
 - More here: <http://www.answering-islam.org/Green/uthman.htm>
- Complete and unchanged?
 - Why is there a missing verse on stoning for adultery? http://wikiislam.net/wiki/Qur'an,_Hadith_and_Scholars:Stoning
 - How do we know Caliph Uthman got the right one?
 - We have no Qur'an from 7th Century and variants still exist, eg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5CQ5jQvIBw>
- Can't be imitated?
 - Who would judge? How?
 - "If you say that there is nothing like the Qur'an in point of style and ornamentation, we reply that the style of our great poets...is pure and chaste and from the choicest Arabic...The Qur'an on the other hand, is broken in its style; hybrid in its diction and, while high sounding, often destitute of meaning." (The Apology of al-Kindi, maybe early 9th century)
- Incorporates old tales? "No! These are not ancient fables!" according to Surahs 6 Al-Anam, aya 25, 8 Al-Anfal, aya 31, 16 Al-Nahl, aya 24, 25 Al-Furqaan, aya 4–6, 46 Al-Ahqaf, aya 17, 68 Al-Qalam, aya 15, 83 Al-Mutaffifin, aya 13

- **But** read Surah 18 Al-Kahf, aya 7–26 about the ‘sleepers in the cave’
- Or, Surahs 3 and 19 about Mary being looked after in the Temple
- No eyewitnesses
- ❖ No beginning, end, order, structure, history or storyline – doesn’t agree with previous prophets

6 Trusting the Bible

- The Qur’an and Muhammad accept it eg Surahs 5 Al-Ma’ida, aya 43–46, 6 Al-An’am, aya 92, 10 Yunus, aya 37, 46 Al-Ahqaf, aya 12
- God is speaking through 35+ people, over 1,400 years eg 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 2:16–21
- The Bible as a consistent story says “I’m fallen and need rescuing”

Genesis 2: Blessings	Genesis 3: Curses	Revelation 21-22: Amazing blessings
Intimate relationship with God v7–18 cf 3:8	Broken relationship with God v10–13	God will be with His people 21:3–4
Harmonious relationship with each other v22–24	Broken relationship with each other v6–7, 12, 16	No crying or pain 21:4, healed nations 22:2
In God’s land v8–15	Out of the land v23–24	In God’s city 21:1–3, 22–27
Pleasant work under God v15	Pain and suffering v16–19	No suffering, serving perfectly 21:4, 22:3
Eternal life v9 cf 3:22	Death v19, 22	Receive life, no curse/death 21:6, 22:3

- Jesus the Messiah is the fulfilment of God’s promises (Luke 24:36–49)
- People who first read the Bible could verify its words (Luke 1:1–4) – agrees with history
- Challenges every culture so must come from outside human cultures
- Makes most sense of life and who we are, including ‘sinful prophets’
- Full of prophecies being fulfilled, eg Abraham and Sarah having Isaac (Genesis 17:15–19 & 21:1–5), Israel being enslaved in Egypt (Genesis 15:13–16 & Exodus 12:40), God’s righteous servant suffering for other people’s sins (Isaiah 52:13–53:12 & Luke 23:32–46), God’s Anointed One not decaying in the grave (Psalm 16:10 & Luke 24:45–47)
- ❖ So: read, turn, enjoy forgiveness, have certainty, and proclaim

God's Word in Christ

Question: What is God's Word today?

1) God's Word today is Christ.

2) Christ's Word today is the Bible.

Discuss: What might it look like for you to apply a) the uniqueness of the Bible, b) the sufficiency of the Bible? How does this excite you to read the Bible yourself? How might the life-giving, judging power of the Bible change your attitude to it?

Application

- I. **We should approach the Bible as though God will give life, reveal himself, and rule our lives through it.**

Discuss: What would that look like a) in your personal walk with God? b) at IGG or church? What would it look like in a ministry context a) with a Christian, b) with a non-Christian?

- II. **God only creates, reveals, and rules through the Bible. It alone is unique, sufficient, and authoritative.**

Discuss: What would that mean for a) when you look for a new church? b) your personal decision making? c) your evangelism to your non-Christian friends?

- III. **God only creates, reveals, and rules when the Bible is rightly understood as its authors intended.**

Discuss: What should that mean for a) the way a church teaches the Bible? b) the way you read the Bible? What does that say about people who don't handle the Bible this way?