

Systematic Theology: Bibliology

Clarity and Illumination (Based on notes from Dr W Grudem and Dr K Bauder)

What does GCBC teach?

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. **The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.**¹ It is the responsibility of believers **to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture**, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

What are we talking about?

Clarity: "The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings _____ by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it."²

Illumination: "Illumination is that work of the Holy Spirit in which He enables the believer _____ [i.e. the _____] the words of Scripture _____] of the Word of God.

What has the Church throughout history taught?

Martin Luther on both clarity and the need for illumination: "no man sees one iota in the Scriptures, but he that hath the Spirit of God. ... For the Spirit is required to understand the whole of the Scripture and every part of it. If you speak of the external clearness, nothing whatever is left obscure or ambiguous; but all things that are in the Scriptures, are by the Word brought forth into the clearest light, and proclaimed to the whole world."³

What does the *Bible* say?

The Bible admits that there are things that are hard to understand: 2 Peter 3:15b-16

The Bible argues that what it says should be taught even to children: Deuteronomy 6:6-7

¹John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20

²Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 108.

³Martin Luther, "Erasmus' Scepticism: Section IV", *On the Bondage of the Will*.

The Bible says that the “_____” can be made _____ by just reading the Bible: Psalm 119:130

The Bible says that the problem is not with the _____. Matthew 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31

The Bible also argues, though, that there is a _____ of the natural man.
1 Corinthians 2:14

The Bible tells us how this _____ is overcome: 1 Corinthians 2:6-13

What does this mean?

To help us understand this better, let's just unpack that 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 passage a little bit.

The _____ of illumination is the _____.

The things _____ (v6).

The things _____ (v10).

The things _____ (vv11-13).

1. The _____ (v11).

2. The _____ (v12).

3. The _____ (13).

The _____ for which the Spirit has been given:

Here is the whole point: While the Bible is clear enough to be understood in its _____, the Holy Spirit of God is required because He is the One who _____ us to _____ what is going on in the things God has revealed.

How does this doctrine relate to the Gospel?

What difference does it make?

Why do people misunderstand Scriptures? and If scripture is so clear, then why are there so many denominations?

Causes for Doctrinal or Ethical Disagreement

1) We may be “seeking to make _____ where Scripture itself is _____.

2) We may have made _____ in our _____ of Scripture.

3) We are _____ people.

How should we respond?

ANSWER KEY

What are we talking about?

are able to be understood

to understand the spiritual *significance* , *difference*, should *make in our lives*

What does the *Bible* say?

hard, understand

even, children:

“simple”, wise

Bible

natural blindness

blindness

What does this mean?

agent, Holy Spirit

hidden (v6)

revealed (v10)

understood (vv11-13).

1. illustration (v11)

2. application (v12)

3. understanding (13)

purpose

central message, enables grasp

What difference does it make?

1) Affirmations, silent

2) mistakes, interpretation

3) sinful