GROVE BIBLE

CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE

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The Clarity of Scripture

The doctrine of The Clarity of Scripture, also known as perspicuity, holds that the Bible is clear in its overall message. God's Word is not composed of secret, esoteric messages that can only be understood by an elite few. Its message is clear and can be understood by all and savingly understood by believers (Matt. 11:25,26). The Bible is to be understood in its normal literal sense, not to be searched for secret messages, hidden meanings, mysterious codes, or allegorical teachings. Scripture is effective by virtue of its perspicuity and The Power of The Spirit.

Perspicuity

The word "perspicuity" comes from the Latin perspicuus, which means "transparent, clear, evident, or manifest". The basic message of The Bible is clear enough for anyone, even a child, to understand (Duet. 6:6,7). The Word of God can be understood by those who possess little or no formal education and even brings understanding to the simple (Psalm 119:130, Psalm 19:7). As John MacArthur stated, "Scripture, because of its absolute clarity, brings understanding where there is ignorance, order where there is confusion, and light where there is spiritual and moral darkness. The Bible shines with such vivid clarity that the Psalmist said, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). The Protestant Reformers fought to get the Bible out of the ivory towers of the Medieval clergy, many of whom wielded the Scriptures as a mystical text that could only be understood by the elite sacerdotal few. The 16th century English Reformer, William Tyndale, gave his life to get the Scriptures into the hands of the common plowman, he famously said to an antagonistic Roman Catholic, "I will cause a boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the scripture than thou dost." Tyndale believed that the Scriptures were clear enough for the average man, who spoke the common vernacular, to understand.



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What Perspicuity Does Not Mean

The fact that Scripture is clear, does not mean that there are not portions of the Bible that remain mysterious (Duet. 29:29). Nor does it mean that there aren't passages that can be difficult to understand (2 Peter 3:16). Biblical truth is accessible to the likes of lowly children (Matt. 11:25,26) and yet deep enough for the greatest theologians to be perplexed by (Rom. 11:33). "Perspicuity [does] not mean that every verse of the Bible is equally clear or that the meaning of any text just falls off the page into the lap of the reader. Perspicuity refers to the overall message of Scripture, not to any individual verse. The basic meaning of salvation in Christ [is] clear to all who [have] eyes to see or ears to hear, but the details and the finer points might only be available to those who have the necessary learning and skills to divide the Word of God" (Carl Trueman). Scripture must be diligently studied (2 Tim. 2:15) and only God can grant saving comprehension of the gospel message (Acts 16:14, 1 Cor. 2:14, Luke 24:45). As the Psalmist prays, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18). Scripture is clear in its central message and is accessible to ordinary men but only God can savingly reveal His truth to His people. "Do you know who taught the eagles to find their prey? Well, that same God teaches His hungry children to find their Father in His Word" (Tyndale).