

What is involved in Clarity?

This doctrine says that it was the intent of God and is the actual state of Scripture that they are clear, that they determine to communicate the message of God first and foremost, and this message is obviously seen and understood in them. Moreover God has created and guarded Scripture so that it is understandable by normal people, and its most important messages in them are obvious and easy to understand. By means of this obvious, God communicates His message, His character, and His will.

Deut 6:6 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: Deut 6:7* *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

This passage teaches us that God has made his message that we adults can easily understand it, and moreover even children can. The point here is simply that the message has been God-created simple to understand, obvious, and even children can understand it.

Within this matter, we touch on its authority and our capacity to understand (also to interpret) Scripture. This is not to say that there are not essential principles involved in the interpretation of Scriptures, but equally, the Scriptures are accessible to all that want to take the time and effort to study them and understand them.

“But if many things may be hard to understand to many people, but they don't come from the obscurity of Scripture, but from (our) own blindness and lack of understanding (because) who do not follow the way with perfect clarity of truth... Then we leave evil men to accuse, with perverted blasphemy, darkness and a clouded heart to the clearness of God's Scriptures... If you speak of internal clarity, no man can see anything in Scripture, but that one that has the Spirit of God... If you speak of external clarity, absolutely nothing is obscure or ambiguous; but all the Scriptures are by

the revealed Word in clear light and proclaimed to the whole world.” Martin Luther “Bondage of the Will”.

“All things in Scripture are not equally clear in themselves, nor are they obvious to all (2Pet 3:16); but the things that are needed to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are clearly presented, and open in any portion of Scripture, in order that the more educated but untrained, using ordinary means, can come to a sufficient understanding of them (Psa 119:105, 130).” Westminster Confession 1:7.

What do we learn from the abuses?

An example from “the other side” of these things serves us to illustrate more. The Catholic Church teaches that Scripture is an enigma for the common person. They say it is not possible for ordinary people, even saved, to understand them without the intervention, interpretation, and official declaration of the Catholic Church, because God has made Scripture “imperspicuous” (not clear).

2Pet 1:19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20* **Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** **21** *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

It is important to correctly understand Peter's point. He declares that the message of God is such that it is not under any special, individual interpretation. Simply put, nobody can proclaim that their own interpretation is the only and absolute, and final interpretation of a passage. The correct interpretation which God wanted to communicate is that which is clear and obvious to all **according to what the words themselves actually say.** Secondly, the interpretation that the words indicate through established vocabulary meanings, grammar, syntax, and other grammatical and historical elements is the right interpretation. (This is called the **historical**

grammatical method of interpretation.) Thirdly the correct interpretation is that which **harmonizes with the rest of Scripture.**

This is of great value to observe in regard to false prophets, the cults, and false religions that try to destroy this doctrine from the beginning as they try to subject people to themselves rather than leaving them under God's dominion. They cannot do their manipulative methods of control and leaving of the truth if people understand this principle and believe in the clarity of Scripture. When false interpretations are put forth by evil men seeking to drag them off into error, the obedient people of God examine Scripture, and stand on the clarity of God's Word for all to understand, and rebuke the false teaching.

Requirements for understanding the Bible

1Cor 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

The First Condition for understanding Scripture is that the activity of interpreting and understanding them is not exclusively a mental or analytical activity. In other words, it is spiritual, in that the man does it with his spirit, or the spiritual part of his nature in which he understands the message of God. In other words, the spiritual condition of the person investigating is critical to whether he understands it or not. This is easy, but so many fail in it because they don't see it or the consequences.

This point means that the information that Scripture communicates is on one level, but for understanding to happen, the person has to use own spirit and soul to really understand the message. You can teach the facts of Cain and Abel's two sacrifices, but the information does nothing on that level, and there is no real understanding. When this information is mediated on, and absorbed by the individual, and finally then and only then the individual is

affected by it spiritually. Morally, the person must accept its message for its impact to be registered. There is a use of a person's spirit and soul for true understanding to take place, and this demands a positive response of their soul. Rebellious people have a hard time understanding the Bible. Obedient and faithful people seem to have less and less problems as their spiritual life goes on and gets more mature.

"To learn", "to understand" (correctly interpret), and to discern, these all revolve around seeking and finding the message that God wanted to communicate to us (our receptiveness). There is no understanding without personal application. To understand is based in this spiritual activity within the person, in a taking of the correct position towards what God is saying. Without the person subjecting himself to God to obey and accept as in his own life, there is no real understanding. Unsaved people and people rebellious to God cannot understand the Bible really because of that moral blockage of their own creation. They only understand details, information, or data about the Bible. The requirement for a Bible teacher is that first he enters into a saving relationship with God, when he accepts, subjects, and obeys God.

John 7:17 *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

Secondly, the interpretation of Scripture or the understanding of it only takes place when we are actively involved in that Scripture. **Our will determines whether we will understand it or not.** It never "works" when we are passive about obeying it. If you want to understand the Bible only so that you can passively pass that information on to others, you will be condemned to confusion and error of interpretation. This is why it is difficult for a false prophet to really understand and teach Bible truth. He will always mess it up somewhere. He can mimic other saved teachers, but he cannot master the material. God

requires that your own heart is first affected by some truth before you can teach that truth to others. You must seek it first for your own life and understanding before being able to effectively give it to others. For a pastor or Bible teacher, this means he must provide a long history of obedience to God's will before God will begin unlocking the secrets of the depths of God. For God, there are no "tourists" in understanding the Bible, that is, ones who want to know but not to do it.

Matt 22:29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*

Thirdly you have to have an element of faith before God grants you understanding of his message, or you will not understand it correctly. Faith here is to say, confidence in God, actually accepting God's position and statements on the thing whether you actually understand all the ins and outs of it. Faith is to accept God without arguing with Him, without seeking a work around of how God presents things.

In this verse above we also have a forth principle, that the error in understanding and interpreting the Scriptures many times is based in ignoring the harmony of Scripture. This principle says that the Bible, because it is the fruit of a divine God that is all powerful and a genius, that He keeps all errors, contradictions, or internal conflicts out of his Word (inspiration demands inerrancy). So the more you know of other parts of the Word of God, the more you are guided in how to interpret any one part.

The Emergent Church attacks completely the clarity of Scripture. For them, this is their first premise, that nobody can know God nor his will through Scripture.



The Clarity of the Scriptures (Perspicuity)

By David Cox
[BS09] v1 ©2012 www.coxtracts.com
You may reproduce for free distribution

Deut 6:6 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture or by its other name "perspicuity", affirms that Scripture's message is actually clear to understand, and this is by divine design. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for not understanding the Scriptures, reaffirming the concept that Scripture is easy and obvious to understand. The problem of not understanding them is not in the nature of Scripture, but in the sin of man's heart.