

THE CLARITY (OR PERSPICUITY) OF SCRIPTURE

ACTS 2:16-18, LUKE 10:21-23

INTRODUCTION

- the story so far...
- How can I understand the Bible? (it's hard... people disagree...)

1. GOD SPEAKS DIRECTLY THROUGH THE BIBLE TO EVERY CHRISTIAN:

SCRIPTURE IS PERSPICUOUS

- **Understanding perspicuity**

Perspicuous... Perspex... Clear!

It *doesn't* mean that...

It *does* mean that God rules his people directly through his Word. He does not rule his people via a class of special interpreters or scholars or priests.

^{ESV} Acts 2:16-18, But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

- **Applying the doctrine of perspicuity**

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS THE TRUTH TO GOD'S PEOPLE

- **The Spirit's work of illumination**

^{ESV} John 3:19, And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.
²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 2:14, The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Two different (but related) works of the Spirit

Inspiration:

Illumination:

^{ESV} Luke 10:21-23, In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."²² All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."²³ Then turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!

- **Implications:**

humility

expectancy

prayer (e.g. Psalm 119:18)

hard work

3. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE TO WORK HARD AT LISTENING TO THE BIBLE: **PRAYERFUL MEDITATION AND STUDY**

- **What does God do? What do we do? How does it fit together?**

^{ESV} 2 Timothy 2:7, Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

^{ESV} Proverbs 2:1, My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ² making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³ yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. ⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

(i) We...

(ii) And we...

(iii) And the Lord...

- **Biblical meditation**

E.g. Joshua 1:8,
Psalm 1:2,
Psalm 119:15, 48, 97,
Romans 8:5,
Colossians 3:2

“Meditate on this power of God, and press it often upon your minds. We conclude many things of God that we do not practically suck the comfort of, for want of deep thoughts of it and frequent inspection into it. We believe God to be true, yet distrust him; we acknowledge him powerful, yet fear the motion of every straw. Many truths, though assented to in our understandings, are kept under hatches by corrupt affections, and have not their due influence, because they are not brought forth into the open air of our souls by meditation... A strong God, and a weak faith in omnipotence, do not suit well together.”

(Stephen Charnock, *Existence and attributes of God*, pp102-103)

Q: Is Biblical meditation part of your personal study of and devotion to the Lord in his Word?

