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Question 19 - What is meant by the clarity of the Bible?

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

19. What is meant by the clarity of the Bible?

The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it.

Both Old and New Testament give ample testimony regarding this.

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Psa. 19:7). "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psa. 119:13). "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. . . Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:1-5, 8).

Wayne Grudem amply summarizes this biblical truth:

"The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture therefore has a very important, and ultimately very encouraging, practical implication. It tells us that where there are areas of doctrinal or ethical disagreement (for example, over baptism or predestination or church government), there are only two possible causes for these disagreements: (1) On the one hand, it may be that we are *seeking to make affirmations where Scripture itself is silent*. In such cases we should be more ready to admit that God has not given us the answer to our quest, and to allow for differences of viewpoint within the church. (This will often be the case with very practical questions, such as methods of evangelism or styles of Bible teaching or appropriate church size.) (2) On the other hand, it is possible that we have made *mistakes in our interpretation* of Scripture. This could have happened because the data we used to decide a question of interpretation were inaccurate or incomplete. Or it could be because there is some personal inadequacy on our part, whether it be, for example, personal pride, or greed, or lack of faith, or selfishness, or even failure to devote enough time to prayerfully reading and studying Scripture.

"But in no case are we free to say that the teaching of the Bible on any subject is confusing or incapable of being understood correctly. In no case should we think that

persistent disagreements on some subject through the history of the church mean that we will be unable to come to a correct conclusion on that subject ourselves. Rather, if a genuine concern about some such subject arises in our lives, we should sincerely ask God's help and then go to Scripture, searching it with all our ability, believing that God will enable us to understand rightly.

"This truth should give great encouragement to all Christians to read their Bibles daily and with great eagerness. We should never assume, for example, that only those who know Greek and Hebrew, or only pastors or Bible scholars, are able to understand the Bible rightly – remember that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and that many of the Christians to whom the New Testament letters were written had no knowledge of Hebrew at all: they had to read the Old Testament in a Greek translation. Yet the New Testament authors assume that these people can read it and understand it rightly even without scholarly ability in the original language. Christians must never give up to the scholarly "experts" the task of interpreting Scripture: they must keep doing it every day for themselves."

(*Systematic Theology*, Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 108-110).