

The Word is Clear



The Doctrine of the Perspicuity of Scripture

CLARITY

Introduction

What is meaning?

Who determines it?

Can anything be truly known?

Is it really a virtue to have an open mind?

I. Meaning is Found in the Author's Intention

In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight **He made known to us** the mystery of His will, **according to His kind intention** which He purposed in Him...

Ephesians 1:7-9

II. The modern reader has become the author of meaning.



O P I N I O N

Opposition to the Doctrine of Perspicuity

- A. It is a Question of Authority.
- B. The Modern Reader has become the author of meaning.
- C. Today, the Author is Denied – “deconstructionism”

(Deconstructionists are really Atheists.)

“...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

Romans 1:21 (NKJ)

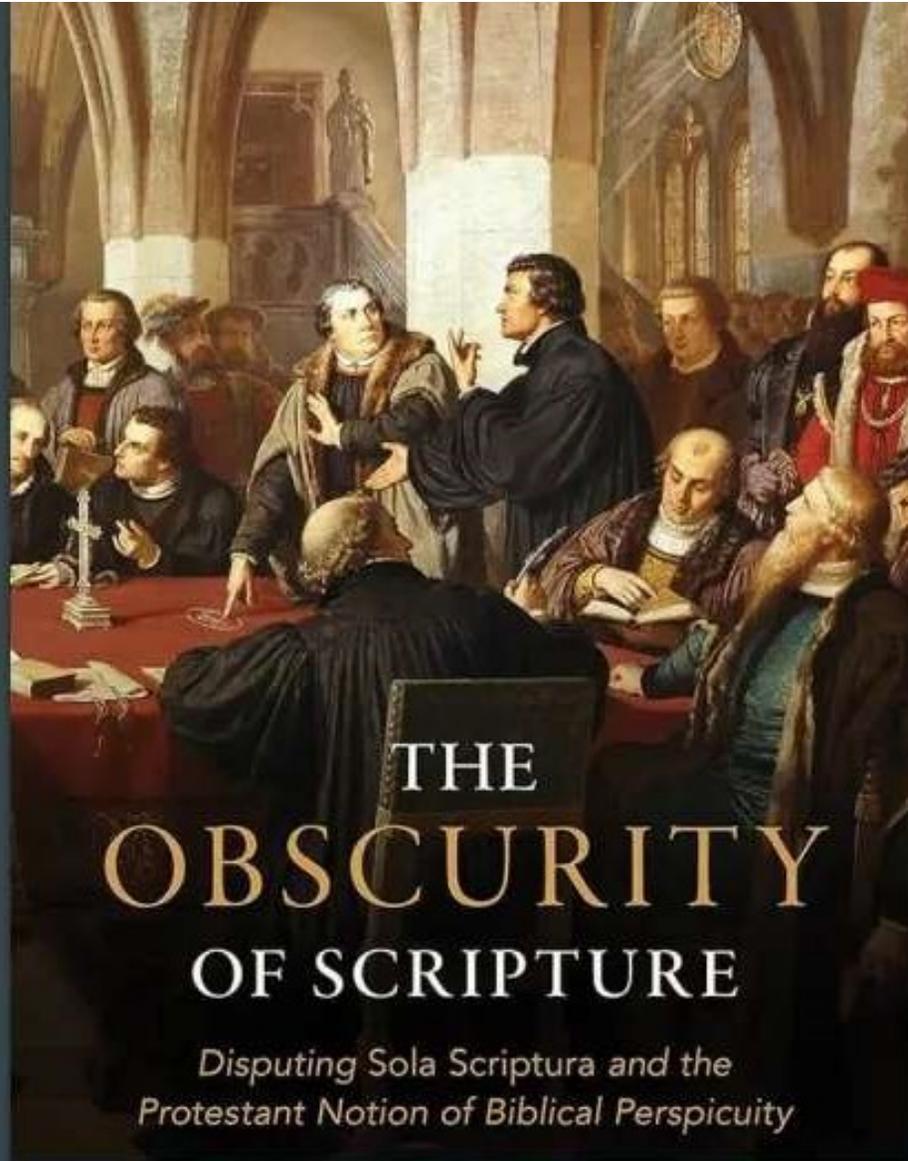


FROM THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:

The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone.

Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), 27)



THE
OBSCURITY
OF SCRIPTURE

*Disputing Sola Scriptura and the
Protestant Notion of Biblical Perspicuity*

The Doctrine of Perspicuity – Clarity of Scripture

“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all. Yet, those things that are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or another, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.”

(Westminster Confession of Faith: 1.7)

The Doctrine of Perspicuity – Clarity of Scripture

All things which are necessary to be known and observed for salvation and conduct are revealed with sufficient clarity for all to understand.

In other words, and oversimplified:

The Bible is understandable.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

The doctrine that says the Bible can be understood,
is often itself misunderstood.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

A. This does not mean understanding comes

- without effort
- all at once
- without “ordinary means”
- without a willing and obedient heart
- without the Holy Spirit
- without mistakes (of the reader)
- and never completely

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

B. This doctrine is affirmed in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

B. This doctrine is affirmed in the Old Testament.

Deut. 6:6-7

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 – For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach....

... But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

B. This doctrine is affirmed in the Old Testament.

Deut. 6:6-7

Deut. 30:11-14

Psalm 1:2 – But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

B. This doctrine is affirmed in the Old Testament.

Deut. 6:6-7

Deut. 30:11-14

Psalms 1:2

Psalms 19:7 – It makes the simple wise.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

B. This doctrine is affirmed in the Old Testament.

Deut. 6:6-7

Deut. 30:11-14

Psalms 1:2

Psalms 19:7

Psalms 119:130

**Psalms 119:105 – Your Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.**

C. This doctrine is affirmed in the New Testament.

1. The O.T. is never considered unclear by Jesus.

Matt. 12:3, 5 – “Have you not read what David did...?
Have you not read the Law?”

Matt. 19:4 – “Have you not read...?”

Matt. 21:42 – “Have you not read the scriptures...?”

Matt. 22:31 – “Have you not read what was said to you by
God...?” (said then, to us now)

Matt. 9:13 – “Go learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy and
not sacrifice.’”

John 3:10 – “Are you a teacher of Israel and yet you don’t
understand these things?”

Matt. 22:29 – “You are wrong, because you know neither the
Scriptures nor the power of God.”

C. This doctrine is affirmed in the New Testament.

2. The Epistles are written to entire churches, not just to priests, scholars or leaders.
 - “To the church / churches / all the saints...”
(1 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1)
 - Scripture was to be read publicly
(1 Tim. 4:13; cf. John 20:30-31; 2 Cor. 1:13; Eph. 3:4; Jas 1:1, 22-25; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:19; 1 John 5:13)
 - This would be read to children (Eph. 6:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:15)

C. This doctrine is affirmed in the New Testament.

3. New Testament authors assume readers understand the Old Testament.
 - a. O.T. is quoted around 300 times in the N.T.
 - b. Romans 3:9-20 – O.T. verses on man's sinfulness
 - c. Hebrews 1 – O.T. verses on Christ's deity & supremacy
 - d. Hebrews 11 – O.T. examples of Faith

C. This doctrine is affirmed in the New Testament.

4. Jesus expected ancient scripture to be understood.

a. They were old then and are older now.

b. People in Jesus' time, 1500 years removed from Moses, 1000 years from David, were expected to read and understand the meaning.

c. We have the same expectation today.

III. The Bible teaches that it can be understood.

D. This doctrine is consistent with God's goodness.

1. God **revealed** salvation (Deut. 30:15).
2. God **promised** salvation (Jesus) beforehand through the scriptures (Rom. 1:2-3; John 17:3).
3. If the Gospel message is not clear, it is of no use.
4. If God's revelation, promises and commands are not understandable, how can they be believable?
5. How can God hold us morally accountable if we can't understand what He said? **(cf. Deut. 30:11-14)**

IV. Scripture is clear, but it will take some doing.

A. Understanding takes time and is a process.

"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it..."

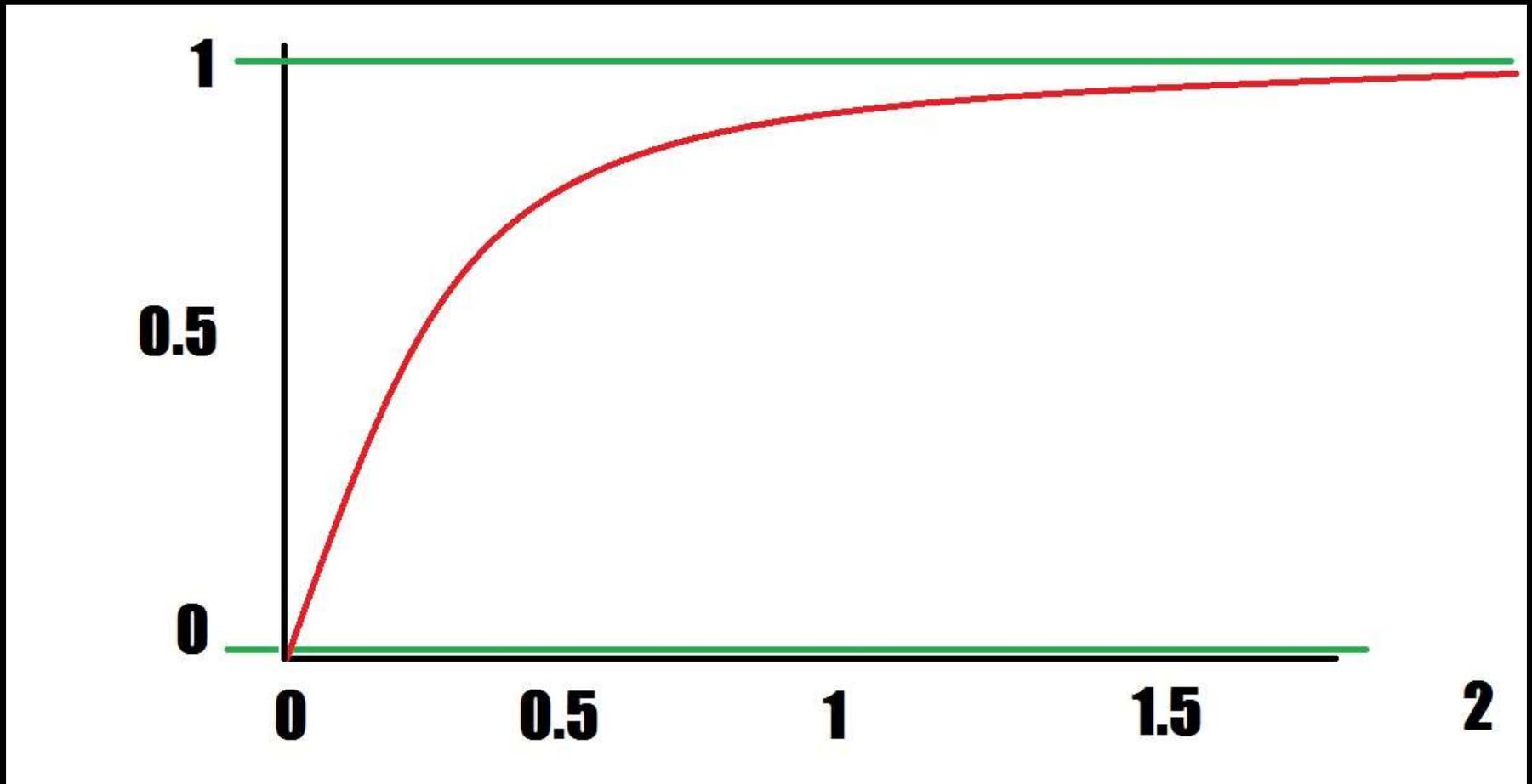
(Joshua 1:8)





Acts 15 – Jerusalem Council

It is like an “asymptote”



IV. Scripture is clear, but it will take some doing.

A. Understanding takes time and is a process.

B. Understanding takes effort.

2 Peter 3:15-16

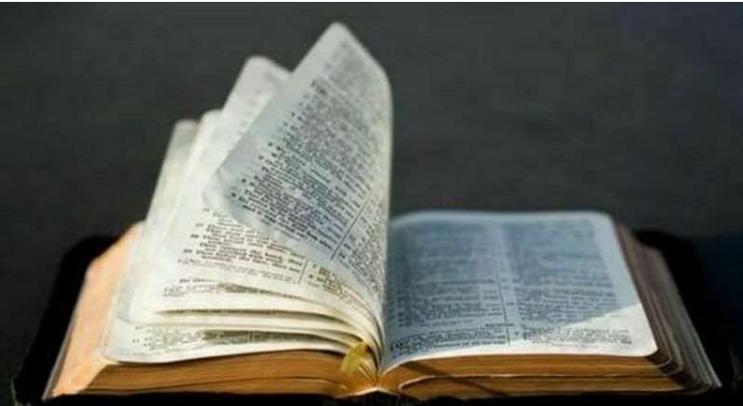
- ...just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things **hard to understand**, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

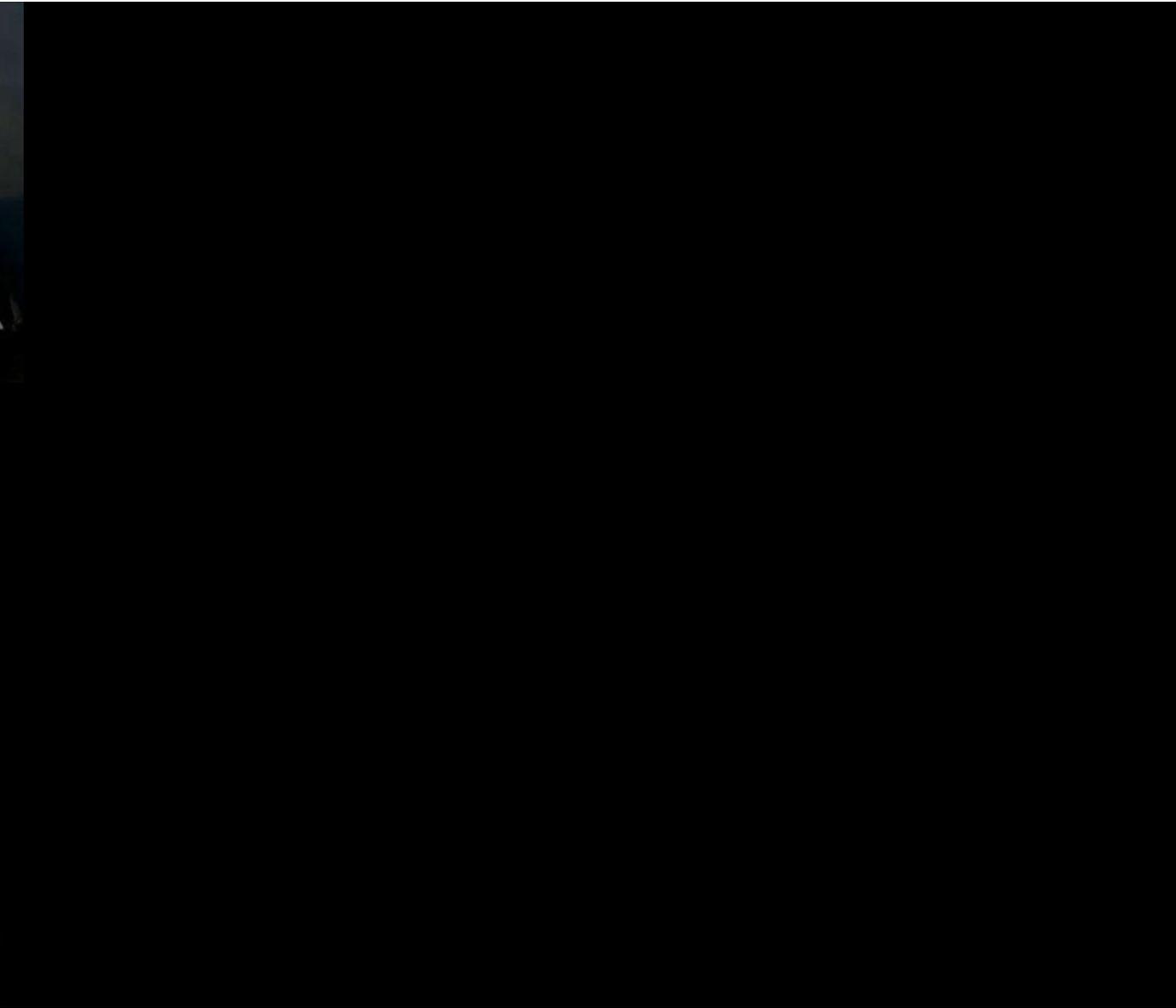
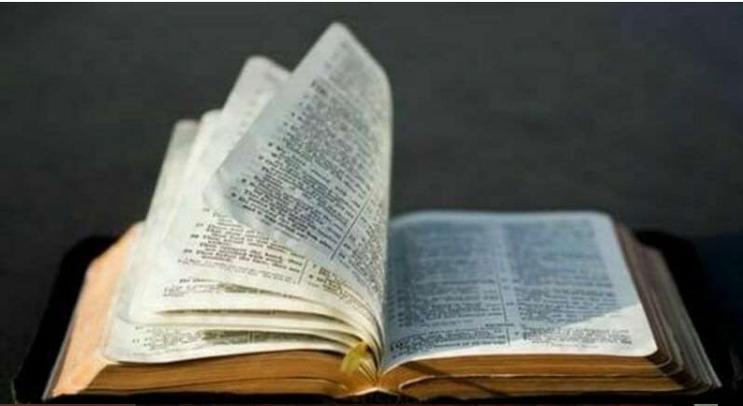
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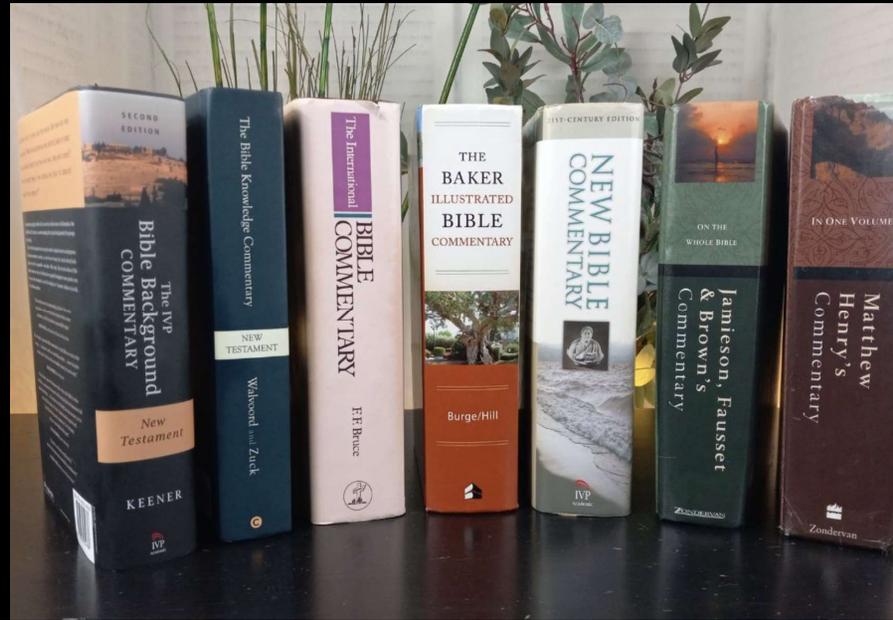
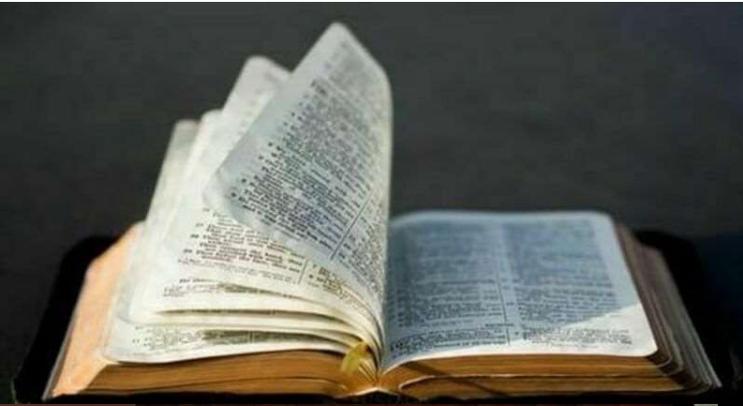
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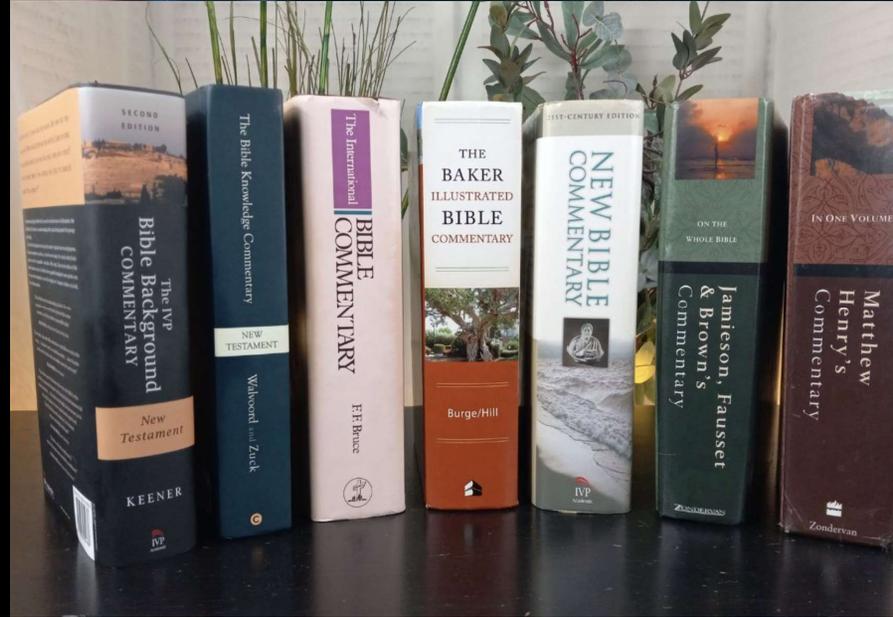
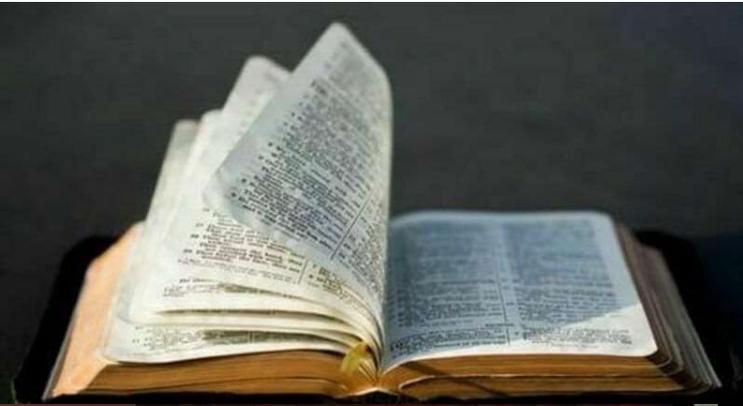
B. Understanding takes effort.

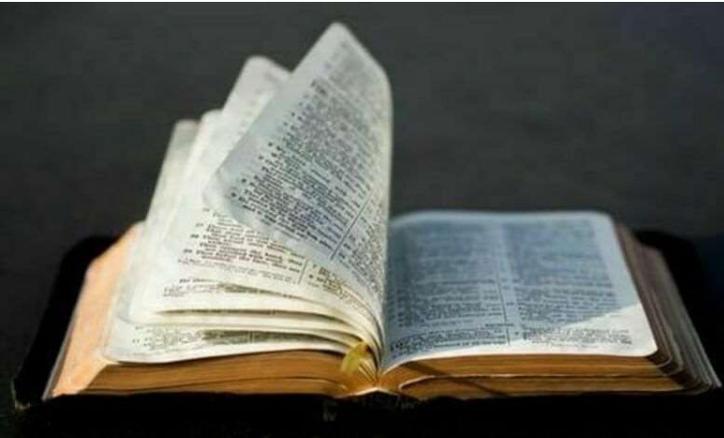
C. God has provided some great resources.











verseflow

EARLY ACCESS



Second - the Son of the LORD with an electronic edge

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Bible Books

| | |
|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Isaiah |
| 2 | Hobakkuk |
| 3 | Zephaniah |
| 4 | Haggai |
| 5 | Zechariah |
| 6 | Malachi |
| 7 | Matthew |
| 8 | Mark |
| 9 | Luke |
| 10 | John |
| 11 | Acts |
| 12 | Romans |
| 13 | 1 Corinthians |
| 14 | 2 Corinthians |
| 15 | Galatians |
| 16 | Ephesians |
| | Philippians |
| | Colossians |
| | 1 Thessalonians |
| | 2 Thessalonians |
| 1 | Timothy |
| 2 | Timothy |
| | Titus |
| | Philemon |
| | Hebrews |
| | James |
| 1 | Peter |
| 2 | Peter |
| 1 | John |
| 2 | John |
| 3 | John |
| | Jude |
| | Revelation |

Commentary

Did foreknow (προγνω)

Five times in the New Testament. In all cases it means foreknow. *Act. 26:5; 1Pe. 1:20; 2Pe. 3:17; Rom. 8:29.* It does not mean foreordain. It signifies prescience, not prelection. "It is God in His plan, by means of which, before we are destined by Him to salvation, He has to destine discrete" (Meyer). It is to be remarked:

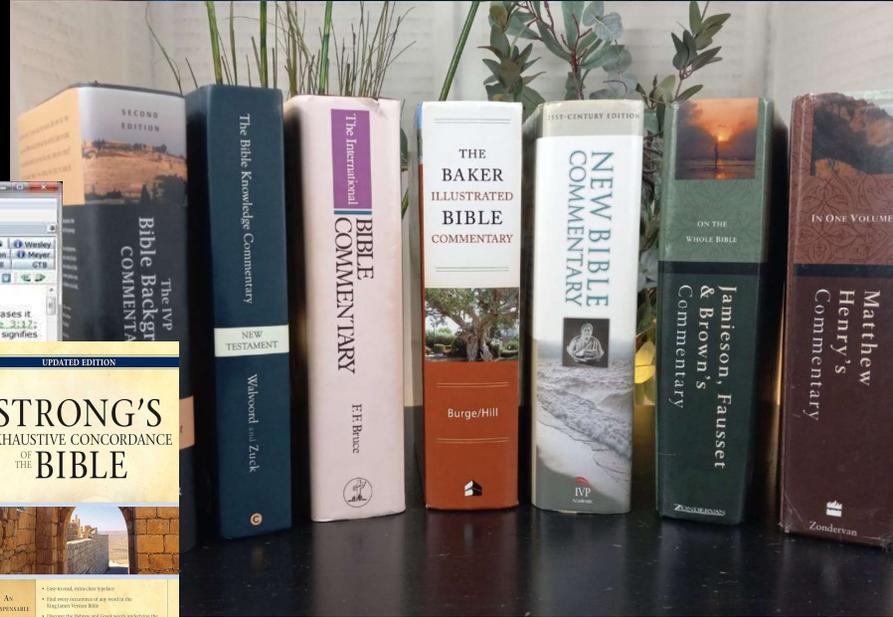
1. That προγνω foreknow is used by as distinct and different from predestinate.

Journal Notes Study Notes Topic Notes

Webster

Predestinate

The apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, (*Rom. 8:29*) speaking of God, saith, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." And elsewhere the same apostle, speaking of the church in Christ, saith, "that he hath



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EARLY ACCESS

A Willing Heart



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Bible Books

| | |
|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Isaiah |
| 2 | Hobakkuk |
| 3 | Zephaniah |
| 4 | Haggai |
| 5 | Zechariah |
| 6 | Malachi |
| 7 | Matthew |
| 8 | Mark |
| 9 | Luke |
| 10 | John |
| 11 | Acts |
| 12 | Romans |
| 13 | 1 Corinthians |
| 14 | 2 Corinthians |
| 15 | Galatians |
| 16 | Ephesians |
| | Philippians |
| | Colossians |
| 1 | 1 Thessalonians |
| 2 | 2 Thessalonians |
| 1 | Timothy |
| 2 | Timothy |
| | Titus |
| | Philemon |
| | Hebrews |
| | James |
| 1 | 1 Peter |
| 2 | 2 Peter |
| 1 | 1 John |
| 2 | 2 John |
| 3 | 3 John |
| | Jude |
| | Revelation |

Commentary

Rom 8:29 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Rom 8:32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Dictionary

Predestinate

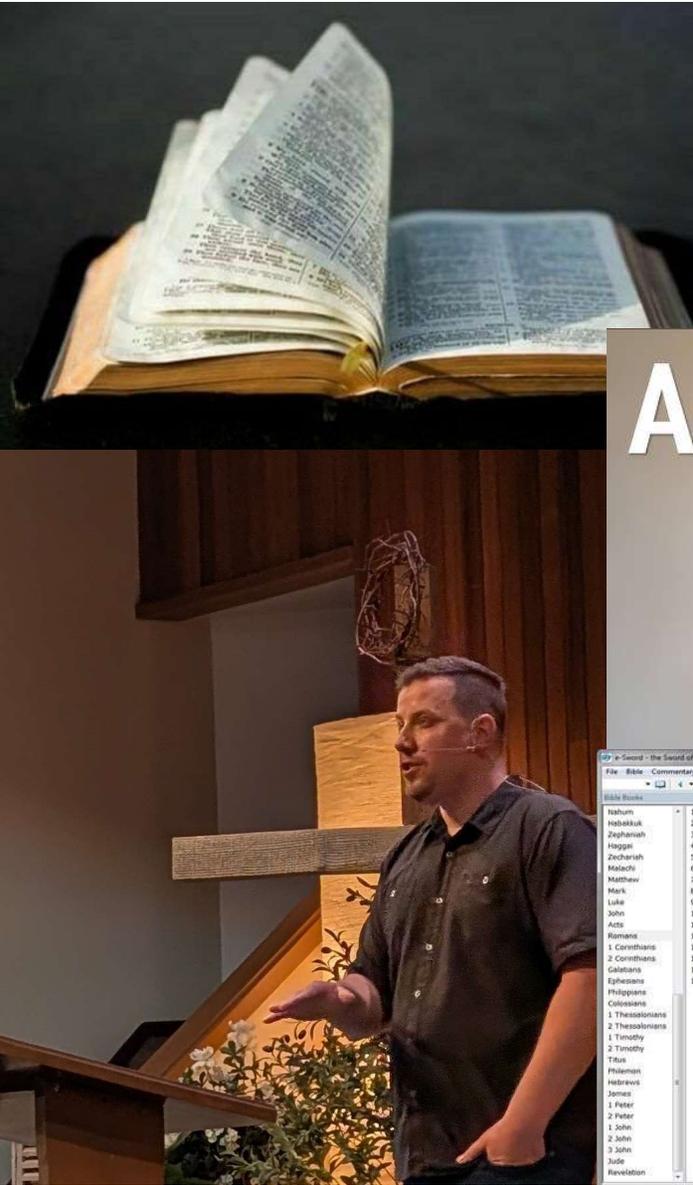
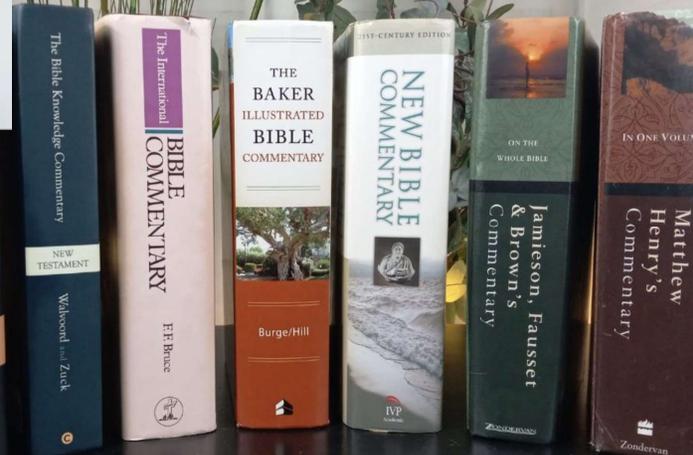
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UPDATED EDITION

STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE

AN INDISPENSABLE

- The most used reference work
- Full cross-references of all words in the Holy Bible
- Includes the original Hebrew and Greek words



IV. Scripture is clear, but it will take some doing.

A. Understanding takes time and is a process.

B. Understanding takes effort.

C. God has provided some great resources.

D. Understanding requires a willing and obedient heart.

E. Understanding requires the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:14-16

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

IV. Scripture is clear, but it will take some doing.

A. Understanding takes time and is a process.

B. Understanding takes effort.

C. God has provided some great resources.

D. Understanding requires a willing and obedient heart.

E. Understanding requires the Holy Spirit.

F. We can still misunderstand it.

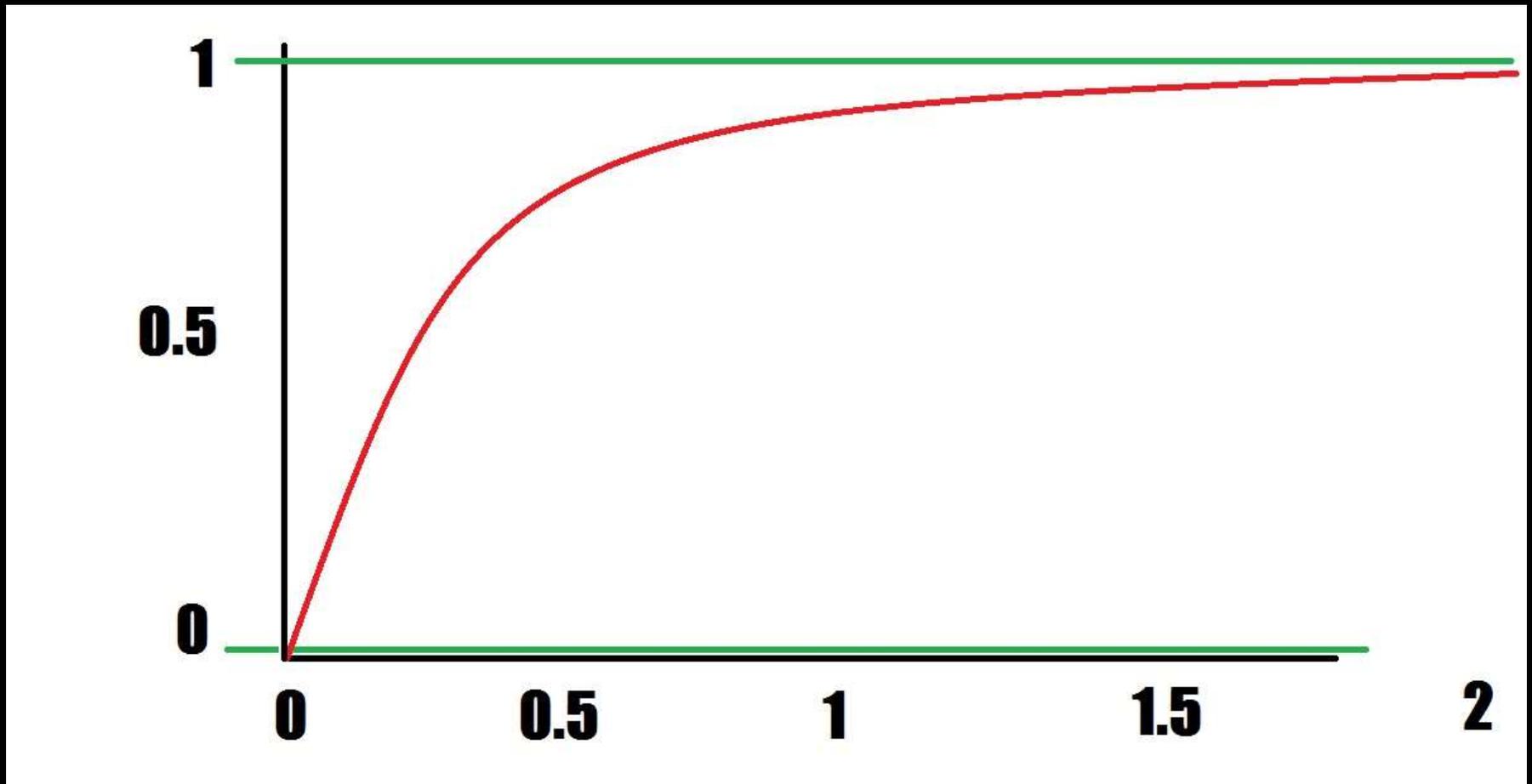
G. There are some things we won't completely understand in this lifetime.

**"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.
"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."**

- Isaiah 55:8-9 -



It is like an “asymptote”



V. Study scripture to know God: relationship!!!

A. The written Word brings us to the incarnate Word, Jesus.

(Heb. 1:1-2; John 1:14)

B. The Word is rightly understood in a relationship with God.

C. It is a process God uses to make us more like Christ.

(2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:20)

VI. Doctrine is for doing: application.

- A. Study the Bible with expecting to understand.
- B. If I can understand it, then I can explain it. (Heb. 4:12)
- C. Communicate the Gospel clearly.
- D. What is my walk communicating?

VI. Doctrine is for doing: application.

D. **What is my walk communicating?**

You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being **made clear** that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. **(2 Corinthians 3:2-3)**

VI. Doctrine is for doing: application.

- A. Study the Bible with expecting to understand.
- B. If I can understand it, then I can explain it. (Heb. 4:12)
- C. Communicate the Gospel clearly.
- D. What is my walk communicating?
- E. Respond by worshiping the God who wants you to understand how much He loves you.

The Word is Clear

