

Illumination- “Enlightening the Truth”

Introduction:

As Christians, we are able to understand the Scriptures through illumination. This is God’s way of teaching us the Scriptures. Although we have the Holy Spirit as our teacher, He cannot guide us if we do not read God’s Word. The necessity of illumination falls back on man’s finiteness and man’s sinfulness. Because we are finite creatures, our ways are not the same as God’s and we require the Spirit to guide our understanding. Our sinfulness gives us the reason for our study of the Scripture, as well as showing to us what has been contaminated by that sinfulness. Illumination is not by any sort of special revelation; it is obtained through a thorough study and meditation of God’s Word. We are, by faith in Christ, to put into practice that which the Scripture teaches us, lest we become blinded by our accumulated ignorance, and progressively blurred in our comprehension of spiritual realities. In this way illumination increases, and our grip on the truth strengthens.

“Illumination is not concerned merely with understanding facts, but using those facts to promote Christlikeness.” -Charles Ryrie

- I. Reminder of What the Holy Spirit Does
 - A. The Holy Spirit indwells or lives within every believer in Christ.
 1. Rom. 8:9- “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”
 2. I Cor. 12:13- “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...and have been made to drink into one Spirit.”
 - B. Spiritual gifts also come from the Spirit, and they should be used to promote unity in the body of Christ.
 1. Eph. 4:11-12- “And he gave some...for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”
 2. Rom. 12:6-7- “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us...prophesy, ministering, teaching”
 3. I Cor. 12:4,7- “Now there are a diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal”

- II. Definition- “Illumination is the inward act of the Holy Spirit shedding light on the Word of God, giving the Christian the ability to understand the Scriptures in meaning and implication.”

- III. Explanation- *Illuminate* in the Greek is φωτίζω **phōtízō**; meaning “to shed rays, to shine; (transitively) to brighten up; (literally or figuratively) enlighten, illuminate, bring to light, make to see.”
 - A. **To bring to light, render evident:**
 1. 1 Corinthians 4:5- “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness...”
 2. Ephesians 3:9- “And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God...”
 - B. **To cause something to exist and thus to come to light and become clear to all:**

1. 2 Timothy 1:10- “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ...and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”
 - C. **To enlighten spiritually, imbue with saving knowledge of the gospel: hence, of those who have been made Christians:**
 1. John 1:9- “*That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that is in the world”
 2. Hebrews 6:4- “For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,”
 3. Hebrews 10:32- “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;”
 - D. **To instruct, inform, teach (in the Old Testament):**
 1. 2 Kings 12:2- “And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.”
 2. Psalm 119:130- “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”
 3. Daniel 5:14- “I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.”
- IV. Two Key Passages: There are two key passages which give great descriptions concerning the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- A. John 16:7-8, 12-15:
 1. Christ foreshadows the Spirit’s coming back in 14:26. The Holy Spirit is the teacher, and His presences in the believer guarantees the availability of this ministry to all believers.
 2. Holy Spirit must arrive (vv.7-8)
 3. He will guide you (v.13)
 4. He will glorify God. (v.14-15)
 - B. I Cor. 2:9-3:2:
 1. The Spirit’s teaching involves all of Scripture even those things which are yet to come. (vv.9-11)
 2. The Spirit reveals to us things about God (vv.12-13)
 3. Unbelievers cannot experience this ministry. Even though they may have a high understanding of the Bible, to them what they know is foolishness. (v.14)
 4. Carnality in the believer can hinder this ministry of the Spirit. The illuminating work of the Holy Spirit depends on our relationship with God. Sin can hinder our understanding of Scripture. (vv.2:15-3:2)
- V. Application
- A. The purpose of this ministry is the glorify of God- “The end result of the Spirit’s illumination ministry is to glorify God in believers lives by our understanding of Scriptures which brings spiritual health and wholeness.”
 - B. The Spirit will use those who have the gift of teaching to carry out this mission through their study and teaching of Scripture (Rom. 12:7; I John 2:27).
 - C. Goal of illumination: to give understanding to saved (Eph. 1:17-19) and shine light of the Gospel to the unsaved (II Cor, 4:3-4)