

## BIBLIOLOGY (77A)

**QUESTION 16a-** What role does the Holy Spirit play in a person being able to interpret the Bible accurately?

This question boils down to this- how does the Holy Spirit guide and direct a person in the interpretive process of the Word of God? (For this study, this teacher will follow the outline of Roy B. Zuck, Vital Theological Issues, pp. 42-51)

**(Truth #1)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean He gives new revelation. God's Spirit will always work with written Scripture, He will not go it by way of addition or subtraction.

**(Truth #2)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean one's interpretation is infallable.

When the Holy Spirit inspired the original manuscripts He guarded them in such a way that they were without error (inerrancy) and incapable of error (infallibility). When it comes to interpretation the Spirit guides one into truth but does not guard against fallibility. For example, the Roman Catholic Church claimed it was the only group who could understand the Bible in an infallible way- which we (most Protestants) reject. A person has a right to private interpretation, but that does not mean that interpretation is true.

**(Truth #3)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does** mean one who has a true Spirit gift of Pastor/Teacher should be able to see and understand truths beyond the level of many.

We must be very careful here because any Pastor can claim the Spirit has let them see something that may not be God's Spirit at all. Some guidelines in this area are these:

- 1) Usually if a careful interpreter thinks he has unlocked something from God's word, other skilled interpreters from all ages, have seen the same truth.
- 2) If an interpreter presents unlocked truth to God's people, others who are dedicated students and of the Bible will sense it and embrace it. It will have a certain ring to it.

**(Truth #4)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does** mean that the unsaved person may be able to comprehend many of the statements in the Bible, but they are not able to appropriate it properly to one's faith system and life.

There are many unbelievers who have understood historical facts of the Bible. In fact, some have undertaken archeological digs based on their understanding. Most lost people have cognitively grasped certain Biblical data- such as the birth of Christ and the resurrection. But the person does not have the ability to apply these to his life and faith system.

**(Truth #5)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean that only Bible scholars can understand the Bible.

## BIBLIOLOGY (77B)

The Bible was given to be understood by all. We admit that great growth occurs when one with the proper gift utilizes it. However, every believer can carefully and prayerfully study the Scripture and expect a great level of understanding.

**(Truth #6)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does** coincide with the real spirituality of a person.

A worldly Christian, not yielded to the Lord will not ever be able to grasp God's word fully (I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:13). The Christian whose life is full of sin is susceptible to inaccurate interpretation. A spiritual Christian has far greater depth and discerning abilities.

**(Truth #7)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean one must not diligently study.

Nothing will ever replace careful diligent study of the word of God. The Holy Spirit works as one carefully studies the Scriptures. As an interpreter carefully studies a passage and meditates and consults other careful works on that passage, God's Spirit begins to unravel His truth.

**(Truth #8)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean the interpreter has no need to consult study helps, commentaries, theologies, Bible dictionaries, etc.

It is often asserted by "devout" people that they can understand the Bible without any help- just them and their Bible. This is nothing more than a "veiled egotism." To think that one is at such a remarkable level that he/she can by-pass all godly learning of all ages, is very foolish and arrogant. God's sovereignty has preserved the writings of some of the most dedicated men of God who ever lived, some of whom laid down their own lives. To ignore them is ignorance.

**(Truth #9)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean the interpreter can ignore common sense and logic.

Clear, systematic thinking is that which the Holy Spirit uses. The more the interpreter thinks clearly about history, geography, culture, and grammar the more accurate the interpretation. For example, if a text reads he went "up" to Jerusalem it may mean elevation, not direction. There will be harmony between clear, concise thinking and the work of the Holy Spirit.

**(Truth #10)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** typically give sudden flashes of instant, intuitive insight into the true meaning of Scripture. Insight into Scripture requires careful study, thought and analysis. The Holy Spirit does not usurp careful verification and validation, He works in harmony with it.

**(Truth #11)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean all parts of the Bible are equally easy and clear in meaning. II Pet.3: 16 indicates some things are "hard to understand."

**(Truth #12)** - The Spirit's ministry in interpretation **does not** mean it is possible to understand everything about God comprehensively and completely. Some things will not be known until we see our Christ 'face to face' (I Cor. 13:12). Some of the mysteries of God we will not know until we get to heaven.

## BIBLIOLOGY (78)

### QUESTION #18 - How did we get our Bible in English?

There is a wonderful and mysterious and, we might say, even miraculous chain in bringing the Bible "from God to us." This final question of Bibliology attempts to give some insight into that chain:

The English language is actually a language that stems from the German language. Drs. Geisler and Nix observe, "English...is a sort of tag end dialect of Low German that has developed into a predominant world language." (p.541) Somewhere near the year A.D. 449, the Germans were invited by the British to help fight a war against the Picts and the Scots. A language was developed to enable the Brits and the Germans to communicate, thus this is the early stage of the English language. The language went through three main periods: 1) The early period (A.D. 449); 2) The middle period (A.D. 1100-1500) - literature began to surface in English; 3) The third period (A.D. 1500ff.) - vowel sounds were fully developed.

To systematize the information, we will attempt to put things together chronologically:

1. John Wycliffe (1320-84). John Wycliffe became an opponent to the Roman papacy because he saw the spiritual apathy and moral degeneracy within it. Wycliffe translated the N.T. from the Latin Vulgate into English in A.D. 1380 and the O.T. in A.D. 1388.
2. John Purve (1354-1428). John Purvey was Wycliffe's secretary and he revised Wycliffe's English translation into better English in A.D. 1395.
3. William Tyndale (1492-1536). With the development of Gutenberg's printing press (1453ff.) the first Greek grammar appeared in 1476 and Greek Lexicon in 1492. The first Hebrew Bible was printed in 1488, the first Hebrew grammar in 1503, and the first Hebrew Lexicon in 1506. William Tyndale became the first man to translate the Bible into English from Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Tyndale has one of the most famous quotes in Church history which came as a result of a dispute he had with a man who said it was better for a man to be "without God's law than without the Pope's." Tyndale gave his famous reply- "I defy the Pope and all his laws; if God spares my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost." The King James Version is basically a 5th revision of Tyndale's revision.
4. Miles Coverdale (1488-1569). Miles Coverdale was Tyndale's assistant and proofreader. He did not translate directly from Hebrew and Greek as Tyndale did, but what he did do was revise and print Tyndale's English Bible. It was Coverdale who introduced chapter summaries. Coverdale used five sources for his revised English Bible- Vulgate; Pagnini's Latin version of 1528; Luther's German; the Zurich Bible and Tyndale's.
5. Thomas Matthew (1500-1555). Thomas Matthew had also been an assistant to Tyndale. As the English language was changing, he combined Tyndale's N.T. and Coverdale's O.T. into a revised English. His work was done in 1537.