

Luke 24:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Analysis

Jesus enables understanding: 'Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures' (τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς). The verb 'dianoigō' (διήνοιξεν, opened) is the same used for opening Scriptures (v.32), showing parallel between intellectual opening and spiritual illumination. The purpose clause 'that they might understand' (τοῦ συνιέναι) indicates divine enablement is necessary for biblical understanding. Natural human reason alone cannot grasp spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:14); the Spirit must illuminate. This verse establishes the doctrine of spiritual illumination—believers need the Holy Spirit's work to rightly understand and apply Scripture.

Historical Context

The disciples had heard Jesus teach for three years, yet understanding came only through resurrection and Spirit-enabled illumination. This anticipates Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Spirit's coming empowered apostolic witness and understanding. Jesus had promised the Spirit would 'teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance' (John 14:26). The pattern established here—Scripture, resurrection witness, spiritual illumination—became the foundation for Christian theology. Reformed theology particularly emphasizes the Spirit's internal testimony as necessary for saving faith.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How should the necessity of divine illumination shape your approach to Bible reading and dependence on the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the relationship between human study effort and divine illumination in biblical understanding?

Interlinear Text

τότε	διήνοιξεν	αὐτῶν	τὸν	νοῦν	τοῦ
Then	opened he	their	G3588	understanding	G3588
G5119	G1272	G846		G3563	
συνιέναι		τὰς	γραφάς·		
that they might understand		G3588	the scriptures		
G4920			G1124		

Additional Cross-References

Acts 16:14 (Parallel theme): And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

1 John 5:20 (Parallel theme): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Psalms 119:18 (Word): Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Acts 26:18 (Parallel theme): To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Job 33:16 (Parallel theme): Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

Ephesians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Luke 24:32 (Word): And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Exodus 4:11 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

Revelation 3:7 (Parallel theme): And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;