
Divine Guidance

by

Rev. Mark Perkins, Pastor
Denver Bible Church
326 E. Colorado Ave.
Denver, Colorado. 80210

Jesus Christ functioned under a system of divine guidance that was both similar to and unique from that used by church age believers.

Some believers in history have attempted to use the unique way in which Christ was led, and therefore ended up with disaster. If you stay with what is just for us as church age believers you will go the right way.

The unique part of divine guidance for Christ was that the Messianic prophecies related to the first advent. Christ knew these prophecies quite well as a part of His expertise on the Old Testament canon of Scripture. When He determined from His store of wisdom that it was time to fulfill a certain prophecy, then He did so with full confidence.

The wise decisions that Christ made in prophecy fulfillment were always kept within the constraint of His perfect character. Christ knew that He would fulfill prophecy; He did not manipulate events so that He would and thus look good. He let the opportunities present themselves within the integrity of the way that He conducted His life, and then He fulfilled them.

We do not have 'personal' prophecies about our lives as Christ did, and therefore we must avoid the Messiah syndrome with reference to divine guidance. Events in the Bible are not types for our lives; Bible verses do not provide direct guidance concerning where we should go or what we should do; there is no kind of 'twilight zone' guidance from the pages of Scripture.

One of the best illustrations of the Messianic guidance which Christ received from Old Testament prophecy is His wilderness temptation. The question is this: How did Christ know to go to the desert at that time? Here is what we do know:

Matthew 4:1, "Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil"

The verb is in the passive voice, which indicates that our Lord did not produce the action of the verb but instead received it. The constantive aorist tense summarizes the past action into one moment of time. The verb itself means to lead from a lower to a higher point. This point can be figurative, as in the case of spiritual maturity, or literal, as in this instance. Christ was going from the low point of the Jordan River (just a few miles from the lowest land elevation on the planet) to the rough wilderness above. This emphatically does not mean snatched away, as some have tried to make the point that the Spirit picked our Lord up and bodily moved Him to the desert. This is translated, 'was led up' The Spirit did the leading and Christ did the following.

A second prepositional phrase puts forth the leadership of the Spirit, who was the direct agent of the leading. It is HUPOTOU PNEUMATOS, and translated "by the Spirit.

The last clause of the verse is a purpose clause. The verb is the aorist passive of PEIRAZO, which means to put someone to the test. Depending on the one doing the test, the purpose may be good or bad. This is translated, 'to be tempted by the devil"

In the battle to come, it will be the ministry of God the Holy Spirit versus the temptation of the devil.

This is the first evidence testing done under the conditions of the church age. Christ is our prototype for the fulfillment of God's plan for the church age dispensation. An entirely new and never before tried set of grace assets will be put through its paces over the next forty plus days.

Mark 1:12, "And immediately the Spirit cast Him out into the desert"

The major difference here is in the verb that is used to describe the action of the Spirit in getting Christ to the desert.

The verb EKBALLEI is in the present tense, which reveals an action as it happens. It is the dramatic

way to present the action typical of Mark's gospel. The verb literally means to cast out. The Spirit 'cast out' Christ into the wilderness. Again we do not yet know how this occurred, only that it did.

Luke 4:1, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was being led by means of the Spirit in the desert." The main change here is the revelation that Christ was led by the Spirit for the duration of His stay in the desert, and that it was from a state of being full from the Spirit that gave the leadership.

Four words work together to form the foundational statement of the verse. They are translated "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit."

The nominative case of PLEIREIS forms the key part of the description it denotes a state of complete fullness. It can denote thought or emotion, negative or positive, but the idea here refers to the control of the soul.

The verse does not say how, but it does make it clear that Christ is under the control of PNEUMATOS HAGIOU, the Holy Spirit.

The first thing that Jesus does under the control of the Spirit is return from the Jordan, where he had just been baptized. The word for returned is HUPESTREPSEN, which is in the aorist tense. This describes a past action occurring in one moment of time, and thus the translation "He returned".

The second thing is that "He was being led by means of the Spirit."

The verb is the simple verb for the act of leading. It is in the passive voice and so reveals that the subject receives the action of leadership. The imperfect tense indicates that the action took place over a duration of time in the past, and not just at one moment. It is translated, "He was being led."

The preposition EN plus the instrumental case of means shows that the Spirit was the means of the leading.

EN TEI EREMO portrays both location in the desert and the amount of time spent there. It is translated, "in the desert" This tells us that the Spirit not only led Christ to the desert, but also the entire time that He was there.

Analysis of the three.

God the Holy Spirit exerted leadership in getting Christ to the desert to be tested.

Christ is our prototype, and therefore the way in which the Spirit leads Him is the way in which we are led.

The way in which the Spirit leads is fully revealed in the New Testament canon.

Just because all the mechanics are not revealed in these passages about the wilderness temptation does not mean that they are not there. In fact, it is implicit that they are from the mention of the Spirit's leadership.

The Spirit guides through the recall of Bible Truth.

The Spirit guided Christ through the recall of both the principles of Divine character and Messianic prophecy.

In this case, the Spirit recalled Isaiah 40:3-5, "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'"

Christ understood this passage as we do - it reveals the ministry of John the Baptist. Malachi 3:1 corroborates this fact.

And the ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the Messiah in the desert. From this it would seem obvious the direction that Christ would take upon the completion of His baptism - straight to the desert.

And so Christ obeyed the leadership of the Spirit and entered the desert - not by hocus pocus but by the recall of Messianic prophecy and application.

Divine Guidance and the Essence of God

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must begin with humility based on the essence of God proper.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must have spiritual self esteem based on the capabilities of God.

In order to remain in the direct will of God you must make decisions from the nike - the victorious ideology of the Christian way of life. 1 John 5:4: "And this is the victorious ideology that has overcome the cosmic system - our doctrine."

The victorious ideology includes the right mental attitude of Divine Character.

The overall principle of righteousness and justice.

The motivation of personal love for God and virtue love for mankind.

The grace approach to problem solving and flexible proficiency.

The forethought of organization.

The principle of willpower in self control.

The extension of willpower over time in the temperament of faithfulness and dependability.

The communication with integrity.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the true goal.

The victorious ideology includes a thorough understanding the field of endeavor.

The victorious ideology includes an understanding of the mechanics which lead to the attainment of the true goal.

Implementation of the victorious ideology in any field of endeavor or matter of guidance will result in your ending up where God wants you - in His direct will.

In other words, make the decision from the best available information.

Recognize the function of the Divine Decree in the presentation of opportunity, but sift opportunity through the filter of Divine Character.

Do not seek to make things happen because of your unhappiness with your life circumstances.

If things are bad and the opportunity arises to move on, then do so. If things are bad and Divine character demands that you move on, then by all means do so.

Do not let circumstances dictate your decisions. Difficult circumstances are a test of your willpower and faithfulness, but not necessarily messages from God. Christ ran into endless difficulty in the execution of His ministry, but He did not use them as an excuse to stop teaching the Word. This is one of the primary reasons that I am still in the ministry.

On the other hand, if circumstances are overwhelming they may prompt you to reconsider your present position through the lens of divine character. You may find violations which force you in another direction. The divine discipline of Paul illustrates this.

Sometimes even when you have all of your ducks in a row with a decision God still overrules. You can bet that He has a greater purpose in mind for you if He does. 1 Thess 2:18 is the perfect illustration.

Grace Notes is a ministry of Austin Bible Church, Austin, Texas

<http://www.austinbiblechurch.com>

For an index of topics, or information about regular Bible studies, write to:

Warren Doud

Grace Notes

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757

E-Mail: wdoud@gracenotes.info

URL: <http://www.gracenotes.info>

There is no charge for Grace Notes materials. The work is supported by Christians who pray for the ministry and share in the expenses.