

## Divine Guidance

- I. Introduction
  - a. Have you ever spoken with someone who believed that they had been called or directed by God to do something?
    - i. The woman pastor
    - ii. The man leaving his wife for the woman God meant for him
    - iii. Mormon missionaries – burning heart testimony to the book of Mormon
    - iv. Someone who has been saved by a “religious experience”
  - b. It can be very difficult to convince these individuals that what they believe is not in harmony with the Scriptures
    - i. Since they believe it came from God, it must be right
    - ii. There is a deeper misunderstanding about the nature of divine guidance today.
- II. Key Statement: The Divine guidance that the apostles and prophets received is different from the divine guidance which Christians receive today.
- III. The Divine Guidance of the Apostles and Prophets
  - a. It’s Promise by Jesus
    - i. John 14:26 – Remembrance of everything Jesus had said to them
    - ii. John 16:13 – All truth; future events
    - iii. Matthew 10:19-20 – No need to prepare for a trial; God’s spirit would speak through them
    - iv. Summarize
  - b. Its nature
    - i. The promise was for spiritual understanding that was
      1. Complete
      2. Infallible
      3. Miraculous
      4. Directly provided by the Holy Spirit
  - c. It’s purpose
    - i. Hebrews 2:3-4 – to confirm the word
    - ii. 1 Peter 1:16-21 – To assure the apostles and their hearers of the Divine source of their teaching
    - iii. Ephesians 3:3-5 – To give a perfect understanding to the apostles and prophets, which would then be shared with others
    - iv. Summarize
  - d. It’s Provision
    - i. Acts 2:1-4 – The promise of the Father arrives
    - ii. 2 Peter 1:3 – all things
    - iii. Jude 1:3 – Once for all delivered
    - iv. Summary
- IV. We do not have the same divine guidance
  - a. Compare: Do we have?
    - i. All things brought to our remembrance?
    - ii. All things Jesus taught given to us by the Holy Spirit?

- iii. All truth provided without the written word?
  - iv. No need to consider what we should say in defense of the gospel?
  - v. Our very words provided directly to us by God's spirit?
  - vi. If these promises are to us, we are not receiving them for some reason
- b. Those promises are to the apostles and prophets, not all Christians
- i. We are told that our source is different from the apostles and prophets – Eph 3:3-5
    - 1. Paul got his knowledge from the Holy Spirit,
    - 2. but we get that knowledge from reading what Paul wrote.
  - ii. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, including miraculous knowledge, was to cease – 1 Cor. 13:8-10
    - 1. Knowledge, prophecy and tongues would fail (stop)
    - 2. When that which was perfect came, the incomplete would cease
      - a. Incomplete revelation
        - i. All truth was revealed, but not to one person all at once
        - ii. A prophecy here or there, a sermon here or there, an epistle or gospel here or there
      - b. Perfect revelation
        - i. All of the faith was revealed in time
        - ii. Then it was written down to be preserved for later generations
        - iii. The NT scriptures
        - iv. The faith, once for all delivered to the saints
    - 3. Miraculous spiritual gifts were like training wheels for the early church
      - a. The miraculous work of God through the apostles and prophets was necessary for the church to begin
      - b. But the church was not intended to be sustained by constant miraculous intervention by God
      - c. It was to grow and accomplish its mission with what had been provided by God in the 1<sup>st</sup> century
  - iii. The manner in which miraculous gifts were given placed definite limits on their duration
    - 1. Acts 8:14-18
      - a. Philip preached the gospel and performed miracles
      - b. Philip did not give miraculous spiritual gifts
      - c. Peter and John came and gave miraculous spiritual gifts by prayer and laying their hands on Christians
      - d. It was by the laying on of the apostle's hands that early Christians received the Holy Spirit
    - 2. The duration of Miraculous spiritual gifts

- a. While the apostles lived, more and more Christians received miraculous spiritual gifts when the apostles laid their hands on them
- b. When the last apostle died, no additional Christians received miraculous spiritual gifts, however, these gifts continued to be exercised by those Christians who had already received them
- c. When the last Christian died who had received the gift from the apostles, there were no longer miraculous spiritual gifts in the church
- d. That is the circumstance that we are in today

V. Dangers of confusing the two

- a. Compare the apostle's divine guidance with ours
  - i. The apostles
    - 1. Complete
    - 2. Infallible
    - 3. Miraculous
    - 4. Directly provided by the Holy Spirit
  - ii. Us
    - 1. Incomplete
      - a. We haven't learned it all
      - b. Much of what we have learned we have forgotten
    - 2. Fallible
      - a. We may have misunderstood it when we heard it
      - b. We may be remembering what we learned incorrectly
    - 3. Non-miraculous
      - a. God's reputation is not at stake if I make an error
      - b. He has made no promise to me that my speech, memory, or judgment will be correct
    - 4. Indirectly provided through the inspired Scriptures
      - a. This is what is complete, perfect, and unchanging
      - b. 1 Pet. 1:22-23
- b. If we are confused about which level of guidance we have, we can fall into VERY SERIOUS ERRORS
  - i. Assuming that our decisions are from God
  - ii. Assuming that our opinions or judgments must be correct
  - iii. Assuming that opinion of respected Christians or received traditions must be correct
    - 1. Methodist example – From preamble – “[This creed book] is a record of the successive stages of spiritual insight attained by [our denomination] under the grace of Christ. We therefore expect that [this creed book] would be administered, not merely as a legal document, but as a **revelation of the Holy Spirit working in and through our people.**”

2. Article IX -

- a. "...that **we are justified by faith, only**, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort."
- b. **BUT GOD'S WORD SAYS...**"You see then that **a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**"  
- James 2:24

c.

- iv. Holding our understanding of Scripture over Scripture itself
- v. Resistant to being corrected
- vi. Closed to teaching from Scripture

VI. Conclusion

- a. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration
  - i. Moses and Elijah were there
  - ii. Peter wanted to honor Jesus as equal with them
  - iii. But God said, This is My Beloved Son, Listen to Him!
- b. Don't listen to me, listen to God's word
  - i. Don't listen to religious leaders
  - ii. Don't listen to your heart
  - iii. Don't listen to your memory
  - iv. Don't listen to your own past judgments
  - v. Don't listen to your family
  - vi. Don't listen to religious creed books, catechisms, manuals, magazines
  - vii. Don't listen to TV or radio
  - viii. Don't listen to famous theologians of our day or past centuries
  - ix. All these things may have their value, but of all these things the following statements are true
    - 1. They are incomplete
    - 2. They are fallible
    - 3. They are non-miraculous
    - 4. Any truth they provide is indirectly through God's word
- c. Listen to God's word
  - i. Don't throw out your commentaries or Bible study materials
  - ii. But use them with wisdom
  - iii. Always holding God's word itself as precious gold, and the words and ideas of men and even yourself as poor, cracked, and unstable containers for the precious truth that God has revealed
  - iv. Even the apostles had this attitude – 2 Cor. 4:5-7
- d. Invitation