

**Date:** April 7, 2019  
**Series:** The Holy Spirit of God

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WISE DECISION MAKING

(Part 4---Selected Scriptures)

Over the last three Sundays we have looked at the different views that Christians hold concerning God's will and how the Holy Spirit guides God's people in the decisions they make.

### I. **The traditional view** of finding God's will

Those that teach the **traditional** view, say the process of discerning God's will includes:



1. The Word of God



2. Circumstances (open and closed doors, etc.)



3. Inward impressions/Inward peace

Thus, if you get a "green light" on all three of these, those who hold this view say that you can be confident that you have found God's perfect will.

### II. **The Charismatic View**

Those who hold this view believe that "... God communicates directly and verbally with individuals, families, and churches to let them know his plan for them. This often occurs through an apostle, prophet, prophecy, audible or inaudible voice, or a 'word of knowledge' ... Dreams and visions are also forms of direct communication from God to the Christian. In short, each means of revelation that God used to give us the Scriptures is still available to individual Christians today."

### III. **The Way of Wisdom View**

Those who hold this view of God's guidance believe that the emphasis of Scripture is on God's **moral will** and argues that the Bible reveals nothing about an "**individual will**" of God that governs every decision we make. It holds that if there is no command in Scripture about a decision you have to make, God gives you the freedom to choose (but you are to choose **wisely!**)

## What About Supernatural Guidance?

### 1. Did God give supernatural guidance in Bible times?

Answer: Absolutely. Examples:

- **Pillar of cloud by day/fire by night** (Num 9:15-23)  
God gave this guidance to Israel for 40 years, but once they entered the promised land, it stopped.
- **Old & New Testament prophets**  
(Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22; Acts 11:28; 21:11, 31-36)  
How could people know the prophet was of God?  
--- He must come in the name of the Lord  
--- His message must harmonize with God's earlier revelation of Himself  
--- The message must be confirmed by fulfilled prophecy or a miracle
- **Angelic voices**  
An angel tells the apostles (Acts 5:20) and Philip (Acts 8:26) where to evangelize.
- **Visions**  
Paul is told through a vision to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10).
- **Dreams**  
In the Old & New Testament, God provided supernatural guidance through dreams (Jacob ---Gen 31:10-13; Saul---1 Sam 28:6; Joseph in Luke 1:20; 2:12-13, 19-23)

### 2. Does God give supernatural guidance today?

We know from Scripture that the canon of Scripture has been closed by God. Jude said the faith has been "once for all delivered" to the saints (Jude 3). The question is this: **What if God wanted** to personally intervene and command us to do something specific not found in Scripture, e.g., "Go and speak to the man in the white ballcap over there about Jesus immediately," or something like that? Here's the bottom line. **Some scholars say** that on rare occasions, God may do that. Also, they would say, supernatural guidance like this is not something we are commanded to seek.

There are **other scholars** who would say, "God, does not intervene in this way today. He has told us His will in the Word of God and that is sufficient. He has no need to tell people personally (even on rare occasions) what He wants them to do."

This is a very tough question. Scripture is not clear on this. It does not say, "God will NEVER say something to you personally..." And yet, it does not say that He MIGHT say something to you personally on a rare occasion. So how should we answer this question about special, supernatural guidance?

It seems to me that since God is sovereign and can do what He wants to do, it is **theoretically possible** that He might speak directly to you or I and tell us something He wants us to do or say.

Dr. Garry Friesen wrote:

“If [supernatural] guidance is needed, God can sovereignly break in at His initiative, just as He did with Paul.

But on the other hand, this type of guidance was very rare in Bible times and we are never told to seek this kind of guidance. So I agree with Dr. Friesen that **IF** He is doing it, it is probably very rare.

(Word here on Muslims coming to Christ via dreams.) A missionary to Muslims in Central Asia examined 120 testimonies of Muslims who came to Christ (half of which were first-hand accounts). 44 of the 120 included dreams and visions prior to the person’s salvation. **QUOTE:** “the most distinguishing characteristic of pre-conversion dreams and visions among believers with Muslim backgrounds is that these experiences occur subsequent to meeting Christian believers into reading or hearing the Bible... in only two cases did it seem clear that no such interaction had occurred.” One researcher reported that according to nearly 200 interviews with believers with Muslim backgrounds, **“The Bible** figures centrally in over 90% of those conversions. In research terms, this is awesome.” Another experienced missionary said: **“Dreams prepare** people to believe ... however, they never (in my experience) contain a clear gospel message.”

### 3. **How do I respond** when someone says to me, “God told me to do thus and such,” or “I felt led by the Spirit to do thus and such”?

Though it is incorrect to use words about supernatural revelation in regard to inner impressions, **if what they are really saying** is that they have decided to make a wise decision about something, you can let it slide (e.g., “*Hey Pastor Bob, God spoke to me and I have decided to give \$500 to you ... I mean, to the missions fund!*”)

**But if they are obviously** doing something foolish, you should intervene and see if they might be willing to reconsider what they plan on doing. (“*Hey Pastor Bob, I felt God’s Spirit leading me to send some \$\$\$ to Planned Parenthood so they can help poor people...*”)

**Q & A**