

The Prototype Divine Power System; the Lord Gave It to Church Age Believers, 1 John 5:20: Dianoia: “Faculty of Perception”: the Ability to Learn Truth

11. When the Lord entered into human history He did so in hypostatic union. His true humanity was equipped with a prototype system that enabled Him to carry out Operation Reconciliation without being ambushed by the temptations of *cosmos diabolicus*.
12. This system was activated at the moment of the virgin birth and continued throughout the Incarnation. The prototype system includes:
 - 1) The indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah 11:1-2.
 - 2) The function of the faith-rest technique was demonstrated at the early age of twelve when Jesus’ parents unwittingly left Him in Jerusalem where for three days, with a relaxed mental attitude, He carried on theological discussions with the Jewish scribes recorded in Luke 2:42-49.
 - 3) Teachability demands the development of genuine humility which properly begins in the home. We learn that at age 12 the Lord was in humble submission to the leadership of His parents. Luke 2:51, a verse worth noting:

Luke 2:51 - And Jesus went down with them [Joseph and Mary] and came to Nazareth, and He was [εἰμί, *eimi*] continuously in subjection [ὑποτάσσω, *hupotassō*] to them ...

The verb “subjection” is the present passive participle of *hupotassō*. With the verb “to be” preceding it – εἰμί, *eimi*, translated “was” – it becomes an imperfect periphrastic construction. This tells us that the Lord’s submission to His parents was consistent throughout the time He was in their care, thus a state of continuous genuine humility.

- 4) Spiritual momentum comes through spiritual growth and the Lord learned doctrine under the ministries of the Holy Spirit. Luke 2:40, 52.
- 5) The motivational virtue of personal love for God was evident early in the Lord’s life. The Christ Child initially submitted to the plan of God for the Incarnation from the feeding trough in Bethlehem. Hebrews 10:7-9
- 6) The functional virtue that reflects spiritual autonomy is unconditional love for the human race, a virtue that was expressed by the Lord on the cross when He was asked to be identified with our sins. Isaiah 53:1-12; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24.
- 7) Momentum testing pursued the Lord throughout the incarnation. He faced evidence testing at the hands of Lucifer in Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13.
- 8) From age 12 the Lord was in status quo spiritual maturity. He functioned in the sophisticated spiritual life until He was executed on Calvary. His prototype spiritual life was bequeathed by Him to all Church Age believers beginning at Pentecost (Acts 2:1ff). This operational system enables us to grow in grace and enjoy the same spiritual life pioneered by our Lord.

1 John 5:20 - We have learned that the Son of God has come and He has given ...

13. The inheritance of the divine power system is mentioned next, introduced by the perfect active indicative of the verb:

δίδομι, *didomi* - “has given”

perfect: Dramatic; describes a fact in an unusually vivid and realistic way by emphasizing the results of the action in its existing state.

active: The Lord produces the action by providing to Church Age believers the advantages of the divine power system.

indicative: Declarative; we are able to perceive divine truth by functioning inside this system.

14. To whom does the Lord give something? The answer follows with the dative plural indirect object of **ἐγώ, egō**: “to us.” This is a dative of advantage for believers in whose interest the Lord “has given” something.

15. The direct object comes next and, only excepting the Lord Himself and His work on the cross, it is the most powerful, efficient, and productive gift that has ever been given to believers: **διάνοια, *dianoia***.

16. The word means “faculty of perception” and refers to the divine operating assets that enable the believer to comprehend the thinking of God, a process empowered by and communicated through the mentorship of the Holy Spirit.

17. It is the Grace System of Learning that is discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2.

18. The word *dianoia* comes from the Attic Greek and is defined by Liddell and Scott’s *A Greek-English Lexicon* (405) as “a process of thinking, discursive thought (thinking marked by analytical reasoning), thinking faculty, intelligence, understanding, intellectual capacity revealed in speech or action by the characters in drama.”

19. These definitions are expanded on by:

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:963; 966-67:

διάνοια. The Use outside the New Testament.

This is a very common word throughout Greek prose. The basic sense of “thought” or “reflection” opens up many possibilities of meaning, so that διάνοια [*dianoia*] can be used as an alternative for νοῦς [*nous*].

It means “thought” as a function, the activity of thinking. It also means the “power of thought,” “understanding,” “the ability to perceive,” “the thinking consciousness.” (p. 963)

The Usage in the New Testament.

In the Synoptic Gospels and Hebrews, where *διάνοια* occurs only in expressions influenced by the Old Testament, the main sense is “understanding,” “mind.” The fulfilling of the first commandment, namely, to love God (Mark 12:30 (and the parallel passage) Deuteronomy 6:5 [The *Shema*: שְׁמַע יִהְיֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד]: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is the unique One.”)) claims the whole man, his whole heart (*καρδία* [*kardia*]), his whole soul (*ψυχή* [*psuchē*]), his whole spiritual life (*διάνοια* [*dianoia*]), his whole strength (*ἰσχύς* [*ischus*]). The requirement of the new divine order affect the moral consciousness, the point in man’s being which determines his ethical attitude, Hebrews 8:10 and 10:16.

Hebrews 8:10 - “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds [*διάνοια*, *dianoia*], and I will write them on their hearts [*καρδία*, *kardia*].”

Hebrews 10:16 - “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart [*καρδία*, *kardia*], and on their mind [*διάνοια*, *dianoia*] I will write them.”

The alternation of *διάνοια* and *καρδία* shows that both are synonymously related to the centre of man’s inner life.

When Paul in Ephesians 4:17c-18 calls the Gentiles who live “in the futility [*μταιότης*, *mataiotēs*: vacuous] of their mind [*νοῦς*, *nous*], being darkened in their understanding [*διάνοια*, *dianoia*],” he traces the defect of disposition (*νοῦς* [*nous*]) back to a defect of consciousness, of the faculty of spiritual and moral understanding (*διάνοια* [*dianoia*])—a defect which is finally called πώρωσις τῆς καρδία [*pōrōsis tēs kardia*: “the hardness of their heart”].

Ephesians 4:17 - So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord [a statement of canonicity], that you walk [*περιπατέω*, *peripateō*: behavior patterns, character traits, lifestyle] no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility [*mataiotēs*] of their mind [*nous*],

Ephesians 4:18 - being darkened in their understanding [*διάνοια*, *dianoia*], excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart [*πώρωσις τῆς καρδία*, *pōrōsis tēs kardia*]. (p. 966)

In the Johannine writings *διάνοια* occurs only at 1 John 5:20: “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding [*dianoia*] so that we may know Him who is true.” To argue that the word has here the sense of *γνώσις* [*gnōsis*], i.e., knowledge with a specific content, is to fly in the face of its history. Known usage allows only the meaning “faculty of perception” or “gift of apprehension.” The idea is that the Son of God has awakened in us the mind and given our thinking the orientation to know God, to receive His revelation, to share fellowship with Him. The reference is not to a natural disposition for knowledge of God and fellowship with Him. The New Testament... never understands either *διάνοια* or *νοῦς* in this way. It is speaking of the ability which is given to Christians with experience of saving revelation. (p. 967)

20. The principle that emerges from this analysis of *dianoia* is “faculty of perception” or the “ability to perceive.” This ability of perception is given by Jesus Christ and made possible by procession.