

GOD IS ON THE MOVE_ LESSON 1

Today we begin a new series I'm calling "**GOD IS ON THE MOVE.**" Over the coming weeks we will consider God's General Revelation in **Creation** / God's Word delivered to the world through divine **Inspiration** / Christ's work on the Cross in relation to our **Salvation** / and the Sanctifying work of the Spirit for our **Transformation**.

From the very opening lines of the Bible we can see that *God is on the move*. Listen to Genesis 1:1-2_ "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.**" I suppose someone may want to debate whether "*hovering*" requires movement, but even a helicopter has to have its props rotating in order to hover in one place. The **KJV** and **ASV** translate this text as either the Spirit of God "**moved**" or "**was moving**" over the waters. The Hebrew verb signifies "*a vibrant moving*" and conveys the same idea of a mother bird hovering or fluttering by her brood. The word reappears in **Deuteronomy 32:11** to describe the eagle's movements in stirring its young into flight. It is as if Yahweh first surveyed the project He is about to tackle_ and I find it interesting that the "*work of God*" is overseen here by the Spirit of God. Take note of that, for it will be a reoccurring theme in this lesson series.

The Hebrew writer tells us that God then did something so incredible that it has never again been duplicated. He made everything out of nothing. "**By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.**" (**Hebrews 11:3**) Now many men have taken something of value and reduced it to rubble. My mom could take a few left overs and turn them into a sumptuous feast. My dad could take some scraps of wood and a handful of nails and make something useful. But no one_ **no one**_ but God could make something out of nothing.

The purpose that seems apparent in our text for God being "*on the move*" is that He wanted to create **an inhabitable environment** for mankind. It's not just that He created the heavens and the earth, but that He prepared the earth to be home for us. Before creating Adam from the dust of the earth, God brought order out of chaos, spoke light into the world, made land and vegetation_ then sea creatures, reptiles, and animals. And only after all that, did God uniquely form mankind in His own image.

This celestial ball we know as earth is just one planet among multitudes in the Universe. It rests in the Galaxy we call the Milky Way, which contains about **200 billion** stars. Our galaxy is shaped like a giant spiral, rotating in space, with arms reaching out like a pinwheel, and our sun is but one star on one arm of the pinwheel. It'd take **250 million** years for the pinwheel to make one full rotation. But this is only our galaxy. There are many others with various shapes, including spirals, spherical clusters, and flat pancakes. Our closest galaxy is the Andromeda Galaxy, about **12 million trillion** miles away. If you could look very deep into each patch of sky the size of our moon, you would be able to see about a million more galaxies. Amazing. Yet, thus far there has been no other planet or star discovered to compare with this home that God created for us. None other could sustain life as we know it. So **why do they even exist?**

Consider the Psalmist's words: "**¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. ²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ³There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. ⁴Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.**" (**Psalm 19:1-4**) Could it be that the sole purpose of all of the rest of the universe is to cause mankind's mouth to drop open in awe and wonder_ before pouring out praise to the One who made it? That creation itself is to prompt us to look up in wonder and then fall down in worship of the God who moved so majestically in creation? That the tapestry of the heavens is to move us to faith in our incredible Creator?

For whether you believe (as I do) that the days of creation in Genesis are literal 24 hour days or you believe as some Bible scholars do that they refer to longer periods of time, you cannot honestly gaze at the heavens without seeing that the handiwork is God's. Paul the apostle wrote: **"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."** (Romans 1:20) Vincent van Gogh was a unique artist, famed for his bold, dramatic brush strokes which expressed emotion and a feeling of movement. He often used paint straight from the tube (*impasto*). Art critics easily recognize his work by his style and flair_ even authenticating and dating his paintings accordingly. When God **"moved"** to create, He left His unique brush strokes and such a vivid array of colors that most remain invisible to the naked eye. The average person can see about 10 million colors_ which is certainly far less than the estimated 18 decillion (33 zeros) variations. God **"moved"** majestically in creation and I submit to you that He is still **"moving"** hearts to ponder their Creator whenever they openly consider the masterpiece that is the works of His hands.

We read in Genesis 2:2_ **"By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work."** So, once God finished **"moving"** in Creation, He **"moved"** back to heaven and has been sitting idle ever since, right? Wrong. He rested from that project, but if you think He's been resting on His laurels ever since, think again. When Jesus was criticized for healing on the Sabbath, He said, **"My Father is always at His work to this very day..."** (John 5:17) God was **"on the move"** many millennia after He finished **"moving"** in Creation_ and He still is.

We may not always see God at work_ or even sense His movement in our day to day life_ but that doesn't mean He isn't **"on the move"**, doing something incredible that we don't yet perceive. **Imagine Adam** awaking from his God-induced sleep to see Eve for the first time. Where'd she come from? God was **"on the move"** as he rested. Or imagine **the first farmer** planting a seed in the ground. As far as he could see, nothing was happening_ but underground the seed germinated and changed before springing forth. **Think about Eve** soon after she first conceived. I'm sure she knew something was going on inside, but I doubt that she immediately understood that her morning sickness was **"God on the move"** as He began to knit together a child in her womb. Many times we don't realize God was **"on the move"** until He finishes His work.

I can't help but wonder how much is presently **under construction**. I am convinced that God is at work, whether behind the scenes, underground, or deep inside. In fact, in Revelation 21:5 He says He is **"making all things new."** He is definitely **"on the move."** The question is whether our hearts will be **"moved"** by Him_ and whether we will then choose to **"move"** with Him when He calls. In a conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:8, Jesus says we should consider the wind, for we don't know where it comes from or where it is going_ and such are those who are born of the Spirit. You can't see the wind, but you can see the effects of its **movement**. Driving to Benton Harbor yesterday, we encountered strong winds which bent tree branches and shook road signs. You could even feel the wind pushing against the car. Later we could still see the effects of the wind outside as we sat in a restaurant, but it wasn't effecting us. The building stood firm and we were sheltered from the wind. I think we're often more like buildings than trees. Stephen, the 1st Christian Martyr, accused the Pharisees of resisting the Spirit, and I'm afraid we're also guilty of that sometimes. It's not that God isn't **moving**, but we aren't being **moved** by Him. We stand stubborn and unresponsive. Yet, if we want others to see God **moving**, that has to change.

God is on the **move**. Let's **move** with Him.