

GOD ON THE MOVE_ THROUGH INSPIRATION

Our 2nd lesson in this series involves *God on the Move through divine inspiration*. As we saw last week, God rested from His work of creation on the 7th day_ but He continued to work in many marvelous ways thereafter. In 2nd Peter 1:19-21 we read: **"We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."** (NIV)

Many translations (KJV / ASV / NLT) render the phrase in that last verse, saying that the prophets were **"moved"** by the Holy Spirit. The Greek term here (*phérō*) is used to describe a ship carried along by the current or propelled by a gust of wind. Specifically this passage refers here to someone being **"moved"** inwardly, prompted by the very Spirit of God. So, from day one_ (*or should I say day 6*) _ God has been on the move in delivering His divine revelation to people.

There has been much debate about exactly how God did this. Some believe He dictated what the prophets were to say and to write_ and they did exactly that, word for word, phrase for phrase. Others hold that He put the thoughts and ideas in their minds and hearts, but gave them liberty to choose how best to convey them. They suggest that, even then, the Holy Spirit divinely guided them in the process and even edited their messages as they were relayed. Kind of like a divine *"spell check"* and *"auto correct"* which could not be overridden. Let me tell you what I believe...

The original manuscripts were infallible and without error. God spoke directly to and then through people. Yet, when He did that, most of them were but tools for Him to audibly project His Word. At the risk of over simplification, these prophets were similar to a micro(*or mega*) phone in the hand of God. At others times, He allowed for_ even intentionally used_ individual personalities to relay His message, as, the Holy Spirit moved and guided each of them in their choices. Now it may seem inconsistent to us that the Spirit of God could in one and the same action provide the very words of Scripture and still accommodate Himself to the linguistic peculiarities and total personality of the individual writer, but this seems to be precisely what took place. God's Spirit so pervaded the mind of the human writer that he chose out of his own vocabulary and experience precisely the words, thoughts, and expressions that conveyed God's message. ***The phrases "Thus says the Lord" or "God said" occur around 450 times in the OT. There are also numerous times we read things like "the Lord proclaimed" and "the Spirit of the Lord spoke."***

In the NT there are also some significant statements. Here are just a few: Matthew 4:4 records that when referring to Scripture, Jesus Himself said: ***"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."*** The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: **"All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."** Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us: **"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by his Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe."** Jesus promised His followers in John 16:12-13 ***"When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you things that are to come."*** And in Galatians 1:12 Paul said, ***"I did not receive this gospel from man nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."***

So, understanding exactly how God “**moved**” the prophets, apostles, and other writers to relay His word and will is not nearly as important as simply accepting that He did in fact “**move**” them. One more point. He “**moved**” them to write the original manuscripts, none of which we have today. What we have available are handwritten copies of those documents_ and by God’s grace, we can even hold in our hands some very reliable translations of those Holy Scriptures. I’m not claiming they are without fault, but I do want to assure you of this. In Jeremiah 29:13 God said, **“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”** Jesus also said in Mark 13:31: **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”** He wasn’t talking about the KJV, NASV, NIV, NLT, ESV, RSV, or any other version; not even the original manuscripts, because we don’t have a single one of them. However, He was promising us **the integrity of God’s word will be preserved forever.** What God wants us to know will always be available to those who want to know it.

Now, what does this all mean to us? Listen carefully. This book contains the very words of God. Other books may quote from it, but this is sum total of His recorded revelation to mankind. It tells us about God. In it, we often find God telling us about Himself. Much of it is an historical account about His intervention in the world and His interaction with humanity. Yet, this book also tells us about us_ who we are, and what God has planned for our future.

A young man told me several years ago that He didn’t see the point of reading the Bible, let alone studying it. I’d learned earlier that his father had been killed in Viet Nam when he was 5 years old_ and that tragedy left a gaping hole in his heart. I asked him, *“What if you found an old trunk in your grandma’s attic that belonged to your dad? Inside was a high school year book and even a journal that he had kept? Would you want to read them? What if there was a bundle of love letters sent from Nam to your mother? Would you want to read them? What if there were family pictures of your dad, even some of him with you_ holding you on his lap or fishing with you as a boy? What if there was also a personal message_ a sealed letter your dad had left to be opened on your 21st birthday?”* It didn’t surprise me that he said he would want to read every last word_ and not just once.

Your Father in heaven has left you a whole treasure chest of journals, letters, and snapshots. They’re all right here. He intended for you to come to know Him through them. And He wants to help you to do that_ to open up this chest and understand some deep truths about His love for you_ and His plans for you . How? God is still **“on the move”** as far as inspiration is concerned. Listen to 1st Corinthians 2:9ff...

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him, ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. ¹¹ The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

I have been “**moved**” by other pieces of literature_ as well as by songs and movies. That is especially true if they have a spiritual theme. My heart has been touched and I have been “**moved**” to tears_ or at the other extreme to laugh aloud. I’ve also been “**moved**” to feel righteous indignation or come under deep conviction. God’s word particularly has the ability to “**move**” me_ but not just to feel something. It “**moves**” me to do something. For not only did the Spirit of God “**move**” to inspire the writers...

He “**moves**” still today to inspire me. Moreover, I am not alone in that. I do not believe I am more gifted than any other born again believer_ but perhaps I do recognize the gift I’ve been given more than many others do. Before I open this book, I thank God that He “**moved**” men to write it_ and ask Him to “**move**” me to discern and apply it. I ask you to do the same...

What has God been “**moving**” you to do_ but you haven’t “**moved**” upon yet? What is it that repeated message that keeps coming to your heart and mind whenever God’s word is shared_ whether through personal reading, messages you hear, or songs that are sung? What is God “**moving**” you to leave behind? What is He calling you to pick up? What is He prompting you to do?

Maybe He’s “**moving**” you to confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior for the very first time. Maybe He’s “**moving**” you to be united with Him in baptism. Maybe He’s “**moving**” you to spend more time with Him in prayer or in His word. Maybe He’s “**moving**” you to be the husband or wife He’s called for you to be_ or mother or father you know your children need. Maybe He’s “**moving**” you to be a better son or daughter or friend or neighbor. Or maybe He’s “**moving**” you to walk away from some bad habit or harmful relationship. If any of that’s the case, listen...

He won’t “**move**” you around against your will_ like a pawn on a chessboard. Instead, He “**moves**” us within to make the “**moves**” we need to make_ “**moving**” ever closer to Him.