Quarter Four: *The Gift of Prophecy*

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Lesson 5—Revelation and Inspiration

Wednesday: Written Messages

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- **Last Week:** "New Testament Prophets"
  - Role of prophets & apostles in the NT; identifying true and false prophets; functions of prophets

- **This Week:** "Revelation and Inspiration"
  - The revelation of God to humanity: through nature, as well as Jesus & the Written Word
  - The process of inspiration: the Holy Spirit inspired His prophets to communicate His message
    - Thought inspiration communicated orally, in writing or thru dramatization

Memory Text: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things he saw" (Rev 1:1, 2, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- **1. Sunday:** General and Special Revelation (Pastor John L)
  - Differences between general & special revelation: general revelation shows God in the natural world; special revelation is both Jesus, the Living Word *and* the Written Word
- **2. Monday:** The Process of Inspiration (SQ)
  - 2 Tim 3 – Inspiration: how the Holy Spirit inspires His prophets to communicate His message to humanity. Thought inspiration: communicated in various ways.
- **3. Tuesday:** Oral Messages (Pastor Ryan)
  - 2 Pet 1 – God's communication with others & His prophets orally; the prophets communication with their audience orally (Examples include Noah, Nathan, Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist & Jesus).
- **4. Wednesday:** Written Messages (Jill)
  - God's prophet's communication with humanity in written form: the canonical books of the Bible; some are transcriptions of something given orally, some are thought inspiration.
- **5. Thursday:** Drama, Symbols, Parables (Pastor James)
  - The Bible's use of symbols, parables & dramatization to communicate God's message
- **6. Friday:** Ellen G White on Revelation & Inspiration (Pastor Ryan)
  - EGW's understanding of revelation & inspiration, as it pertains to both the Word of God & her own writings and how not to avoid extremes.

Wednesday: Written Messages

Ex 17:14; John 20:30, 31; 1 Cor 10:11; Rev 1:19

- This week: Study process of inspiration
- Rewrote title: "**Can I trust the written Word of God**?"
    - Today, we'll explore the
        - How.
        - Why.
        - What.
            - **1. How** God gave His written Word
            - **2. Why** God wanted it written
            - **3. What** God chose to preserve
        - Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.

- **1. How. How God gave His written Word**
    - *Jill in college – old fashioned transcriptionist for boss
        - Return with 18 micro-cassettes for his correspondence or books he wrote
        - Pressed foot pedal: goal to never stop & always keep up with his voice
        - Typed over 100 words per minute

    - Is inspiration simply God dictating?
        - He talks & I type?
        - If God wanted to communicate with humanity in writing, how would He do it?
            - Dictate every word? Leave gifted writers on their own? Is there another way?
            - Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.

- **Types of Inspiration:**
    - **Partial inspiration** (don't believe)
        - Only parts of the Bible are inspired
        - 2 Tim 3 – SQ's day (all Scripture is given by inspiration of God)

    - **Natural inspiration** (don't believe)
        - No Holy Spirit inspiration (no supernatural help)
        - Authors simply attuned to spiritual things on their own
        - 2 Pet 1 – Pastor Ryan's day (prophecy never came by will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by Holy Spirit)

    - **Verbal inspiration** (don't believe)
        - God dictated the words, & the prophets typed
        - The authors background, education, & emotions played no role in the text
        - Just read the Word to discover nuances of emotion, writing style, theological bent, etc.
            - Like speakers today: everyone emphasizes something differently & brings their own education & style into speaking

    - **Thought inspiration** (Dynamic or conceptual inspiration) – we believe
        - God's Holy Spirit inspires the prophet with His message & messenger conveys it.
            - In their own language
            - Utilizing their own educational & cultural background
            - With their own emotion and understanding
            - God inspires the person with thoughts & concepts, not the exact words
        - Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.

- **Biblical Examples of thought inspiration**
  - Amos vs Isaiah
    - Amos = herdsman & his book uses rustic, agricultural metaphors
    - Isaiah = educated, court prophet uses sophisticated, royal, Hebrew vocabulary

  - Mark vs Luke
    - Mark (information from Peter) = uneducated, breathless, hurried way
      - Changes tenses mid-sentence which is perfect at a campfire, but not for written Greek
      - Mark 5:26 (women with issue of blood) – "and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had & was no better, but rather grew worse."

    - Luke = sophisticated, classical, elegant Greek (highly educated doctor)
      - Uses medical, nautical, legal terminology
      - Luke 8:43 – "Now a woman, having a flow of blood for 12 years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians & could not be healed by any,"

  - Quoted sections of Scripture
    - Verbal inspiration would say it is all quoted exactly the same
    - Thought inspiration says the individual person writes down the quote with their own background, individuality & personhood

    - Examples: the Voice at Jesus' baptism
      - Matt 3:17 – "And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"
      - Mark 1:11 – "Then a voice came from heaven, 'You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"
      - Luke 3:22 – "… 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'"

    - The sign on Jesus' cross
      - Matt 27:37 – "…This is Jesus the King of the Jews"
      - Mark 15:26 – "… The King of the Jews"
      - Luke 23:38 – "… This is the King of the Jews"
      - John 19:19 – "… Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"
- **1. How**. How God gave His written Word
  - Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.

- **2. Why. Why God wanted it written**
  - God could have left everything oral – but He didn't.
    - Ex 17:14 – "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua…'"
      - Both written text & oral tradition ensured this would be remembered
      - First time in Scripture God asked for something to be written down
      - Bible contains an infallible message that stands the test of time

- Because written words:
  - Preserve truth
  - Outlive generations
  - Remove confusion & miscommunication
  - Can be revisited
  - Reveal love
    - *Greg, writes notes – written note for proposal (poem)
    - A little boy upon his knee
    - Head bowed, praying silently
    - Father, if it's Your will for my life
    - When I grow up, I would like a wife
    - I want my life to be true to You
    - Not only to You, Father, but to her too
    - My life to You, Lord, I give my all
    - I always want to heed Your call
    - Little boy grew impatient…. God had His hand over all
      - Written words endure
- **2. Why**. Why God wanted it written.
  - Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.

- **3. What. What God chose to preserve**
  - **Speeches & sermons**
    - In Deuteronomy, Moses recorded his last speeches
    - In the gospels, the writers recorded the sermons, parables & teachings of Jesus
      - The Word contains a written record of something orally transmitted

  - **Prophecy**
    - Rev 1:19 – "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."

  - **Redemption, Salvation & Jesus**
    - John 20:30, 31 – "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."
      - John's Preface: (preface = why & how the author wrote the book)
      - This is why John wrote his gospel
        - We would know & believe Jesus
        - We would receive salvation

  - **History & Edification**
    - 1 Cor 10:11 – "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

    - Rom 15:4 – "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."
      - Forthtelling: present-day message of edification, comfort, encouragement
        - 1 Cor 14:3

- **Feelings** (of prophets themselves)
  - Dan 8:27 – "And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days…"
  - Rev 22:8 – "Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things."

- **Quotations** (from non-inspired sources) (cut, if no time)
  - Acts 17:28 – Paul, Mars Hill addressing the influential thought leaders of the day
    - "for in Him we live & move & have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'"
      - Paul quotes from Stoic Poet, Aratus of Soli
      - & philosopher & poet, Epimendes

  - 1 Cor 15:33 – "Do not be deceived: evil company corrupts good habits."
    - Paul is quoting from a 4th century, BC, Athenian comedy play

  - Titus 1:12 – "One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'"
    - The philosopher Paul is quoting is Epimendes again

  - Some of the Proverbs are reframed from ancient Egyptian wisdom text

  - Gen 3:1 – 5 – words of Satan in the temptation of Eve

Can I Trust the Written Word of God?

- Because our view of inspiration shapes our confidence in Scripture.
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