TALKING POINTS

The Gift of Prophecy
Quarter 4, Lesson 6
"The Prophetic Writings"

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MEMORY VERSE: "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week's lesson discusses how the prophetic writings were made.

1. The Bible was written by prophets (Sun-Fri)

- As we have studied, of all the ways God has chosen to communicate with humanity (theophany, urim, angels, dreams, etc.), His "preferred method" has been the prophetic gift.
    - Prophets have communicated their messages orally and through representations, but for the benefit of all humanity, many prophets were instructed to write out their messages (Ex. 17:14; Jer. 36:2, 3). These collective writings compose the Scriptures (2 Pe. 1:19-21; Mt. 26:56; Rom. 1:2; 16:26).
        - While the Scriptures are a product of the prophetic gift, not all prophets wrote out their messages ("non-literary"), and of those who did not all were included in Scripture (2 Chr. 9:29; 12:5, 15; 21:12).

2. The Bible is a human expression of the divine mind (Sun-Fri)

- As the Bible was written by men (2 Pet. 1:21), it contains the varied perspectives and writing styles of the different authors.
    - Different authors notice different details (Mt. 8:28; Mk. 5:1, 2), and may use different words or expressions in telling the same account (Mt. 10:28; Lk. 12:4).

> The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men…. As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects…. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life. GC v, vi

    - Also, many of the Bible authors used scribes or secretaries, such as Baruch (Jer. 36:17, 18), Tertius (Rom. 16:22), Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1), and Sylvanus (1 Pet. 5:12).

- Finally, Bible authors were known to borrow sayings from uninspired authors, credited (Ac. 17:28) as well as uncredited (Eccl. 12:9, 10; Lk. 1:1-4).
    - Literary borrowing is the practice of using ideas, words, plots, or techniques from earlier writers. Unlike plagiarism, literary borrowing relies on adaptation, reinterpretation, or open homage rather than hidden theft.
- Ellen White also employed literary borrowing. Of her use of other source material, attorney Vincent L. Ramik observed
    - "Ellen White used the writings of others; but in the way she used them, she made them uniquely her own, ethically, as well as legally. And, interestingly, she invariably improved that which she 'selected'!" Adventist Review, Sept. 17, 1981
- Yet none of these human elements compromised the integrity or the authority of the divine message.

3. The Bible is the word of God (Sun-Fri)

- "We have this treasure in earthen vessels…" (2 Cor. 4:7).
    - Thursday, par 1 points out that prophets were not exempt from the failings and imperfections of humanity. It is important to emphasize, however, that this does NOT mean their messages contain human errors and are therefore untrustworthy.
- "…that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."
    - Paul's point is that the weakness of the vessel makes it more evident that the message must have divine origin.
- "*Holy* men of God spoke as they were *moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Pe. 1:21).
    - In other words, while written by men, they were "holy men" – dedicated to God – and their message was by the Spirit.
        - This is why Paul could say regarding his own message, "you welcomed it not as the *word of men*, but as it is in truth, the *word of God*" (1 Th. 2:13).

CONCLUSION

> Both in the [Battle Creek] Tabernacle and in the college the subject of inspiration has been taught, and finite men have taken it upon themselves to say that some things in the Scriptures were inspired and some were not…. When men venture to criticize the Word of God, they venture on sacred, holy ground, and had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness. God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired. The testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this. 1SM 23.1