



Lecture # 3 Part 3

The Biblical Process

The whole process of communication “**from God to us**” begins with the matter of divine revelation.

2. God not only spoke to the prophets in various ways, but He spoke in their words whether written or oral ([Hebrews 1:1](#)).

[Hebrews 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

That is, the prophets’ messages were God’s message; their voices were God’s voice. God was saying what they were saying; or, to put it more precisely, they were saying **what God wanted said**.

- a. This is verified in a general way by [2 Peter 1:21](#) and [Hebrews 1:1](#), which indicate that the oral message of the prophets came from God; it was God’s word given through the prophets’ mouths.

[2 Peter 1:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

[Hebrews 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

It is what David said in [2 Samuel 23:2](#): “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”

Jeremiah also cites God as saying, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth” ([Jeremiah 1:9](#)).

[Jeremiah 1:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.”

- b. This is borne out in particular by the prophetic formulas, as each prophet introduced his oral message by statements such as “**Thus says the Lord,**” “**The word of the Lord,**” “**The Lord spoke.**”

THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

From the biblical description of the process of inspiration, the necessary constituents of a theological definition of inspiration may be derived. **There are three:**



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1. **Divine causality.** The prime mover in inspiration is God: **“For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21).** In other words, God *moved*, and the prophet *mouthed* the truths; God *revealed*, and man *recorded* His word. The Bible is God’s word in the sense that it originates with Him and is authorized by Him, even though it is articulated by men. God speaks *in* their written records.
2. **Prophetic agency.** The prophets played an important role in the overall process of inspiration; they were the means by which God spoke. The word of God was written by men of God. God used persons to convey His propositions. In other words, as **J.I. Packer** perceptively observes, there God exercised **“concurrent operation in, with and through the free working of man’s own mind.”**⁷ He amplifies the concept further saying,

We are to think of the Spirit’s inspiring activity, and, for that matter, of all His regular operations in and upon human personality, as (to use an old but valuable technical term) *concurrent*; that is, as **exercised in, through and by** means of the writers’ own activity, in such a way that their thinking and writing was **both free and spontaneous** on their part **and divinely elicited and controlled**, and what they wrote was not only their own work but also God’s work.⁸

God prepared the prophets by training, experience, gifts of grace, and, if need be, by direct revelation to utter His word. **“By it [inspiration], the Spirit of God, flowing confluent with the providentially and graciously determined work of men, spontaneously producing under the Divine directions the writings appointed them, gives the product a Divine quality unattainable by human powers alone.”**⁹ In inspiration, then, **God is the primary cause**, and the **prophets are the secondary causes**. Thus the divine influence did not restrict human activity but rather enabled the human authors to communicate the divine message accurately.