

New Testament word study: *theopneustos*: “God-breathed” (Part 2)

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HOW, then, did all the things referred to in Part 1, take place?

“**Above all**, you must understand that **no prophecy of Scripture** came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things.

FOR prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by holy spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21, NIV – *Rotherham emphasis*).

[“holy spirit”: *pneuma hagion*, no definite articles, i.e. “power from on High, and not “the Holy Spirit”, as the text has it].

Prophets, God’s spokesmen, although human, spoke FROM God AS they were CARRIED ALONG by holy spirit, namely the power from ON HIGH, wherewith they had been endued.

Hence and to ensure that HIS Words were in fact the words employed in HIS “God-breathed” Scriptures, the Holy Spirit – God Himself – effectuated that His spokesmen were “carried along”, which is *pheromenoi*, from *phero*: to “be driven”.

To understand what this means, and to get the full force of this word *phero* being used about men when speaking “*from GOD as they were carried along by holy spirit*”, we go to Acts 27: 14- 37.

There we enter the large ship carrying the apostle Paul (and 275 other souls) near Crete:

“Before very long, a wind of hurricane force....swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven [*phero*] along.

As we passed to the lee of a small island... the men...then...passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together...they lowered the sails and **let** the ship be driven [*phero*] along.

We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.

On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard **with their ownhands**. When **neither sun nor stars** appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

On the fourteenth night we were still being driven [*phero*] across the Adriatic Sea”; (NIV; *emphasis Rotherham*).

THIS is how God's spokesmen – when providing words “from God” – are “carried along” by “holy spirit”, i.e. *power from on High*, namely like the irresistible force of a storm, *driving* a ship without sails and helplessly, on the wind and currents.

This is also evidenced by another phenomenon, namely the problems the prophets had understanding their own writings, when speaking the word from God, as carried along by holy spirit.

The Old Testament prophets often struggled with understanding their own prophecies, as it is written:

“Though you have not seen Him [Jesus Christ], you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, **searched intently** [*eks-ereunao* – the prefix intensifying the word] and with the greatest care,

trying to find out [*ereunao* : “searching with regard to” – *Young*]

- the TIME

- and CIRCUMSTANCES

to which **the Spirit of Christ in them** was **pointing**

when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow.

It was revealed to them that they were **not serving themselves but you**, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you....

....Even angels long to look into these things” (1 Peter 1:8-15, NIV).

The prophets themselves – searching their own writings even intently - could not work out “the time” and “circumstances” regarding our Lord’s sufferings – and the glory to follow, when GOD – through them - spoke about these things. And neither could the angels.

We also note that it was “*the Spirit of Christ*”* which was within them, when they prophesied.

* [Literally: “...searching for what or what sort of time made clear the in them Spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] forewitnessing the for [*eis*] Christ sufferings...”.

“the Spirit of Christ” is correct Greek – and so all versions translate without exception.

However, we point out to the reader, that it would be equally correct Greek to consider that the genitive “*Christou*” would be the very common “genitive of relations”, which then translates “the in them spirit pertaining to Christ”. *Only* the context can decide this.

In fact, the position of *pneuma Christou* before the word “forewitnessing” would marginally favour the latter rendering.

Both renderings express the same truth in essence: that the Holy Spirit, Whose work it is to “glorify ME”, even the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:14), does so *inter alia* therein, that HE – the Holy Spirit – “shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: FOR [*hoti*: “because”] He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you”. (John 16:13-14, KJV)].

Finally, we consider also another astounding matter relating to the deep, mysterious and magnificent fact that “EVERY SCRIPTURE: GOD-breathed”.

Consider –*literally* and most carefully, yeah, read like a child would understand it, *what* the Scriptures tell us in these four texts:

“And the *LORD GOD* formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the **breath OF LIFE**; and man became a **LIVING** soul” (Genesis 2:7, KJV).

“Every Scripture: GOD-breathed”.

“...take... the **sword of the Spirit**, which **IS the word of God**...” (Ephesians 6:17, KJV).

“For **the word of God** is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged **sword**, **piercing** even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12, KJV).

DOES THIS NOT TELL US that

- **AS** man became ALIVE when **GOD breathed** into him **the breath** OF LIFE, **SO every Scripture** is ALSO ALIVE by being **GOD-breathed**.

Does the “word of God” being truly alive in itself, does that not exactly explain why “the word of God” itself is specifically stated to be “a discerner” [*literally*: *kritikos*: “able to judge”] of thoughts and intents of the heart.

THEN consider also *literally* and most carefully these texts:

“**Being born again** [*literally*: “having been regenerated”] **not** [*ouk*: full and direct negation; denies absolutely and directly] **of corruptible seed** [i.e. a *living* thing],

BUT [*alla*: the stronger, more emphatic, adversative particle] **of incorruptible** [i.e. an incorruptible *living* seed]

BY [*dia*: i.e. “through”] **the word** [*logos*] **of God, which liveth** * [*zaō*: “to live”] **and abideth*** [*menō*] **for ever**”; [all critical texts omit “for ever”; however, it is stated in v. 25 below]. (1Peter 1:24; KJV).

[*literally*: ”through [the] word living God’s and abiding
dia logou zōntos* Theou kai menontos*

* [Both *zōntos* and *menontos* are present active participle. The active voice represents the subject (here *logou Theou*: “the word of God”) as the doer or performer of the action, i.e. “the word of God” being living and abiding].

FOR all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away [and note that the comparison with something *living*]

BUT [*alla*: the stronger, more emphatic, adversative particle] **the word** of the Lord **endureth** [*menō* **] for ever” (1Peter 1:23-25, KJV)

** [Again Present Active, here in indicative: The indicative mood is a simple statement of fact].

[Here the “word” is *rhēma*: “that which is or has been uttered by the living voice, thing spoken, word; a series of words joined together into a sentence (a declaration of one’s mind made in words)” – *Thayer*.

And WHOSE living voice and mind speaks this word? The Living God.

Similarly:

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the **word** [*rhēma*] of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3, KJV).

[“*were framed*” is in the perfect *passive* infinitive, i.e. “the worlds” were the recipients of the action carried out BY the *rhēma*]

And does a truly living word not exactly explain, why Romans 10:17 has this rather strange particular text:

“So **faith** comes from [*ek*] hearing,
and **hearing** THROUGH [*dia*] **the word** [*logos*] **of Christ**” (ESV).

And does a *truly living word* not exactly explain why 1 Timothy 4:5 has this rather strange and particular text:

“FOR every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

FOR it is **sanctified THROUGH** [*dia*] **the word** [*logos*] **of God** and prayer”.
(1Timothy 4:4-5, ASV).

And does that not exactly explain why the apostle Paul uses this rather strange particular expression in 2 Timothy 2:9:

“wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; **BUT the word of God is not bound**”
(ASV)
[*deō*: “to bind, fasten with chains, to throw into chains”].

And does that not exactly explain why the apostle Paul uses this rather strange particular expression in Titus 2:5:

“...the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands,

that [*hina*: implying purpose] **the word** [*logos*] **of God** be not **blasphemed**”

[*blasphēmeō* is in the *passive* voice representing that the subject is the *recipient* of the action, i.e. the word can be blasphemed, which is only true of something *living* and *sentient*].

Let us then also consider carefully exactly what it is Vine says in a note on “the Scriptures” in his “*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*”:

“The Scriptures are frequently personified by the NT writers (as by the Jews, John 7:42)

(a) *AS speaking with Divine authority*, e.g., John 19:37; Romans 4:3; 9:17, where the Scripture is said to speak to Pharaoh, giving the message actually sent previously by God to him through Moses; James 4:5;

(b) *AS possessed of the sentient quality of foresight, and the active power of preaching*. Galatians 3:8, where the Scripture mentioned was written more than four centuries *after* the words were spoken.

The Scripture, in such a case, stands for its Divine Author with an intimation that it remains perpetually characterized as the living voice of God. This Divine agency is again illustrated in Galatians 3:22 (cp. Galatians 3:10; Matthew 11:13)” (*our emphasis*).

Now, this is of course the normal and generally accepted explanation for this “personification” of the Scriptures.

However, *we* invite the reader to consider – in view of what we have written above – the much more simple and literal explanation, that “the Scripture” is personified for the simple reason that it *is* a living and sentient creation by God, and hence vested with *life* and the special capabilities required to carry out God’s purposes.

Hence God also warns us, that:

“Whoso *despiseth* the Word shall be *destroyed*” (Proverbs 13:13, KJV),

“Let all the earth **fear the LORD**: let all the inhabitants of the world ***stand in awe of Him***”
